

#CareerFocus with Mandy Davis co-managing director at Penguin

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Get ready to delve into the story of Mandy Davis, the woman behind the title, as she shares her insights, challenges, and plans for the future.



1. Tell us a bit about yourself. Who is Mandy Davis?

My close colleagues and (adult) children call me the Honey Badger, tough as nails and get right back up after being knocked down (literally even being run over by a bicycle and a car – story for another day). I do, however, have a very soft and kind heart, with (what I think is) a hell of a sense of humour. I just absolutely love to laugh and make others laugh or smile. I'm a single mom of 3 kids and 2 grandchildren... they call me Glammy. I've never been a 'half-ass' kind of person, whatever I do is done with passion and is outcomes-based. Besides loving what I do in my position at Penguin, I love interior design and renovating rooms – so not your average bean counter. I am also extremely competitive, both in my personal life and within our agency.

2. Tell us about your role at Penguin and the work that you do?

I share the role of managing director with another colleague, so co-managing director. I'm not your typical managing director though. I'm very much focused on finance and operations and steering the company and our employees to continued growth and success. I am great at spotting opportunities and problem-solving, and love that part of my role.

3. How long have you been in the industry?

I've been in the advertising industry for 26 years.

4. Has your work always been your passion? Tell us where your passion for what you do began.

I have to be honest and say that I was never passionate about accounting as such (where I started after I left the retail industry). My passion and drive have always come from wanting more than just the mundane day-to-day. I've always been a curious person, asking questions, spotting opportunities, and learning how to do things bigger and better. What I'm passionate about is being able to make a remarkable, positive impact on the company that I'm working for, or the project(s) that I've committed to.

5. Being a woman in the industry – what does it take?

To be blunt, the answer is that it takes lady balls of steel and a whole lot of determination. It's difficult enough being a working mom and trying to devote yourself to your children and your career, but it was an incredibly tough journey being a single mom and working my way up the ladder to success.

6. What has been the most difficult challenge of your career that you have faced?

Deciding to leave a position in an agency where I was the COO, to start a new business, in a completely different field (a first in South Africa), with almost no money. I made it work though and created a successful business, which I got bored with very quickly and handed the business over to my mom. As challenging as that period was, it was incredibly rewarding and I had tons of learnings along the way.

7. What advice do you have for other women in your industry or those wanting to follow a career like you?

I think the most valuable advice that I wish I'd received earlier on in my career journey, would have been to knock that 'imposter syndrome' monkey right off my shoulder. It's taken a lot of work for me to believe that I am as good as the next person.

8. What are your plans for the future?

I'm excited about building the Penguin 'empire' with my incredible colleagues and our shareholders.

To get in touch with Mandy, please visit the Penguin website: <https://www.penguin.co.za/> or reach her at LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/mandy-davis-87195a36

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