

Vuyo Henda steps up to the plate as Spur Corp's new chief marketing officer

By  Lauren Hartzenberg

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Restaurant franchisor Spur Corporation, owner of brands including Spur Steak Ranches, Rocomamas and Panarottis, has appointed Vuyo Henda as its new chief marketing officer.



Vuyo Henda, chief marketing officer at Spur Corporation. Source: Supplied

Henda grows the already strong female representation in the company's executive team and brings with her an impressive track-record in marketing, both locally and globally in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry.

Henda holds a Bachelor of Business Science (Finance) degree from the University of Cape Town, and boasts more than 10 years' business experience, with her most recent role leading the Foods business for Southern Africa at Unilever.

She joined the FMCG giant in 2009 and has worked in various roles across customer development and marketing. Henda also spent some time abroad working on the biggest Unilever Food brand, Knorr. Since her return from London, she has a built upon her expertise in foods within FMCG, including working on the development of a plant-based strategy.



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Passionate about the empowerment of girls and young women, Henda is part of the founding exco team for the Durban branch of the DreamGirls Academy, and in 2020 became one of 20 [Dalai Lama Fellows](#).

 **Vuyo, congrats on your appointment! What's at the top of your to-do list in your new role?**

Getting out to meet franchisees and customers in restaurants, as there is no better place to learn! I am also looking forward to getting to know the people within the organisation and forming the connections needed to be effective. I am also

implementing key strategic initiatives that will support the ongoing development of the company and key brands.

■ ***How do you believe your time working in FMCG at Unilever has prepared you for your new position at Spur?***

Unilever is renowned for its marketing prowess. The principles of building and leading purposeful brands have been instilled in me, which has set a solid foundation for the work I need to do at Spur.

I also have experience in roles of a commercial nature, including in other countries. This makes me comfortable engaging on topics franchisees care about. The broad exposure I've had to the marketing industry both from a strategic and operational perspective will be invaluable in my transition.

■ ***You've spent some time working on plant-based strategy in the past. Any big learnings you've gained in this area that you're aiming to apply in your work at Spur?***

People are conscious about health and seeking better choices. The opportunity to appeal to flexitarians (people who aren't vegan or vegetarian but seek to reduce their meat consumption occasionally) is significant in our market. We've seen a revolution both for in-home and out-of-home menus as plant-based offerings start to be the norm.

It's important for food brands to make these alternatives more accessible. It's also important that we dispel the misconception that plant-based means forgoing taste and exceeding your budget. I'm excited about building on the initiatives the group has already started in this category, such as Modrockers, which is in proof of concept currently in Rosebank in Johannesburg.



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■ ***In your opinion, what are the qualities of a great leader?***

There is no one-size fits all, but I do believe a leader has to be adept at creating the conditions necessary for teams to thrive. A leader who has an inclusive mindset is vital for the diverse partners and customers we serve. Being decisive and retaining a sense of inner balance in times of volatility is key as well. Above all, I think humility and a concern for the greater good is essential for a leader leading in the time we are in right now.

■ ***Anything in particular you're currently reading, watching or listening to for work inspiration?***

I am currently reading *Work with Source* by Tom Nixon. This challenges conventional wisdom around leadership and managing complexity. It is a refreshing take on systems thinking and I am finding it thoroughly engaging.

■ ***What impact do you hope to make in your industry?***

Wow, what a big question! I hope to impact the customers and franchisees we partner with for the better. My purpose is to activate greatness in everything I do and those I work with. At Spur this will be developing our brands and leading for the greater good.

I also hope to show Black young women that they too can play a role in this sector and that my leadership supports the positive development of young people and leads to more women playing a role in the sector.



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■ **Could you leave us with some valuable career advice?**

I think it's important to challenge yourself as often as possible by stepping out of your zone of comfort. My best career opportunities and growth moments have come from doing things that pushed me to dig deep and to go beyond what I felt safe doing.

Have a trusted group of people in your life that you know will be honest with you no matter what. This will help you remain balanced. Treat others the way you want to be treated.

Be obsessed with serving your customer well, whatever line of work you are in. Focus on creating an inner state that is positive, and be vigilant against entertaining a negative inner critic that produces self-doubt. But above all, enjoy the journey!

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