

Well-known media personality joins GSB

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Radio personality and TV presenter Saskia Falken-Hickey has joined the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business (GSB) as the new head of marketing.



Saskia Falken-Hickey

South Africans have come to know Saskia Falken as a radio personality, television presenter and public relations specialist. She brings all of this and more to her new role as marketing intelligence and strategy manager at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business (GSB).

Not many people know that this versatile media expert - who now goes by her married name of Hickey - also has a keen business brain coupled with a deep social conscience.

"The GSB is such an exciting brand to work with," says Falken-Hickey, explaining that she will be reviewing the brand and helping to take it forward in line with the vision of the school's director, Professor Walter Baets, who has just been awarded another five-year term.

"We will be reviewing where we are in the marketplace as a brand and then begin to formulate a strategy that is in keeping with our passion for values-based leadership and social innovation."

The GSB is recognised as Africa's top business school and has recently risen to a prestigious 59th place on the Financial Times global ranking for full-time MBAs. But Falken-Hickey says there's still lots of work ahead. "I think we need to tell more of our stories. While we've done incredibly well in the rankings; that is just one story to tell about the GSB. Another would be that the GSB offers not only the best business education on the continent, but also the space where the leaders of tomorrow's emerging market environments are shaped."

Falken-Hickey recently completed her MBA at the school and says doing the degree changed her life. "I was looking to make a career transition and after being exposed to so many things during my studies it was difficult to go back to what I was doing. In a sense it was a bit one dimensional. I wanted to be part of effecting change."

With her background in media (she worked at the SABC, Heart 104.9 FM and ENCA), she brings a wealth of experience and contacts in the PR and marketing world. She credits her years of experience in the industry with knowing how to build good relationships and really listening to people, as well as understanding markets and how to communicate important messages.

Professor Baets says Falken-Hickey's appointment is part of the GSB's drive to consolidate and build on the school's growing reputation as an emerging market business school on the move. "Saskia brings new energy and ideas to the marketing mix and we are excited to have her as part of the team," he says.

Falken-Hickey, 38, lives in Cape Town with her daughter, Ella and music producer husband, Patrick. She says while she often has trouble switching off once at home, the first thing she does every morning is have a conversation with five-year-old Ella. "She is like me, a real chatterbox! So we talk about what is on her mind really."

It is this natural affinity for narrative, conversations and stories that Falken-Hickey will use to advance and strengthen the already powerful brand of the GSB in South Africa and on the rest of the continent.

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