

## ***Financial Mail* AdFocus applauds SA's advertising industry changemakers**

Amidst the many challenges to business-as-usual of the past year, the South African advertising industry has needed to act quickly to maintain sales revenues for clients. To ensure effectiveness in a fast-evolving media, technology and consumer landscape, agencies have been compelled to re-think their strategies and act faster than they might have anticipated in the pre-pandemic era.



Dale Hefer, 2021 FMAFocus project director

This year, to celebrate the industry's triumph over circumstance, the theme of the 2021 *Financial Mail* AdFocus Awards and brand communication review will shine the spotlight on 'How Advertising's Game-Changers Take on Change'.

Since their inception in 1990, the *Financial Mail* AdFocus Awards have established themselves as the leading platform for individuals and agencies to be recognised - not only for their creative marketing skills - but for their overall business acumen. The Awards have grown to become a landmark on the South African marketing and communications landscape, where business effectiveness is the primary measurement tool.

The innovation that has been adopted and the direction that many agencies have plotted should be an encouragement to the broader marketing industry, says FM AdFocus jury chairperson Tumi Rabanye.

“Many agencies - big and small - have pivoted at lightning speed. Not only have they learnt to cope with the disruption to the traditional work environment and working remotely in a socially-distanced manner, but the media and consumer landscapes have also irrevocably shifted as people depend more on digital platforms and devices to live their lives.”

For many, the curve-ball has fuelled a unique ability to drive change and do things differently - often taking agencies to the very edge of their comfort and competency zones, pushing them to extend their horizons. Rabanye, now in her second year as jury Chair, says the determination and no-holds-barred innovation that has been achieved in a relatively short space of time must be celebrated.

Respected marketing industry leader and CEO of the Nedbank IMC Conference, Dale Hefer, also takes the reins as the 2021 FM AdFocus project director.

“Now is an important time to examine how agencies are re-inventing themselves with a focus on ROI,” says Hefer. “This is what has shaped this year’s theme” she says.

The FM AdFocus publication is South Africa’s leading brand communication review and will be published on 25 November. It will examine how agencies will address the business of change by unpacking issues such as transformation, the move towards taking advertising functions in-house, and the growing influence of digital marketing. It will also showcase the agencies that partner with their clients to deliver on creativity, reach and reward, and who are changing their game as the game changes.

Entries for the 2021 FM AdFocus Awards closes at midnight on 10 September 2021. Award categories, closing dates and entry criteria can be found at [www.adfocus.co.za](http://www.adfocus.co.za). The winners will be announced on 24 November 2021.

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