

Contracts, communication and collaboration

In the fourth episode of Bizcommunity and the Association for Communications and Advertising's video interview series, marketing industry leaders Mzamo Masito, CMO of Google Africa and Boniswa Pezisa, CEO of Net#work BBDO discuss transformation, creativity, contracts, collaborations and common interests.

This interview is also available on [YouTube](#), and at [BizTakeouts](#), via downloadable [App](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#) and [IONO.FM](#).

Rutendo Nyamuda hosts this series, which is aimed at unpacking the economics and contribution of advertising to business in a post-Covid economy. Here, some powerful insights from Masito and Pezisa, pointing the way to futureproofing economies...

Pezisa opened the conversation speaking about the opportunities for change and said that over the years (and not only in South Africa) agency revenues and margins have been shrinking for a while and that impacts transformation in every sense of the word because with transformation there is a need to share your skills. So when the margins continue going one way, down, that impacts negatively on transformation.

Pezisa said she believes that contractual obligations, financial agreements and ways of working also need to be transformed. She said what is required is to really bring fresh talent, because fresh talent brings in creativity and innovation. "A lot of it comes from young people. However young people need to be trained, whether it's on the marketing side or on our [agency] side, they need to be trained and we have got to be intentional about it."



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Boniswa Pezisa 9 Jan 2020



Meanwhile, Masito said the most important thing about transformation is that you need to ask, "Who are we transforming for? And why are we transforming?" He answered the first part by saying, "We want to create content that is helpful and useful and relevant to the end-user that we are serving. So we want to serve the consumer honourably at a profit. So that's the end goal. That's why it makes business sense to do it."

"Of course, for South Africa, or the continent of Africa, to not add the moral sense in it, is also then wrong. So, there is also a moral imperative to it because we have to redress the imbalances of the past. We can't get great output to the end-user without a great input. So, as already indicated, we need a moral representative internal structure, as in gender, race, LGBTQ+, language... Over 90% of ads here tend to be in English. For who? Who is the end-user? Because only less than 8% of South Africans has English as their first language at home. So who are we making these ads for?"

He said that when we are "doing transformation", we need to ask ourselves, how does it benefit the end-user, and he reiterated that we still have a long way to go. "How many black-owned agencies do we have in South Africa? We also have a long way to go in defining what does black-owned mean. What is the definition of black-owned?" He said he sometimes gets confused with some of the BEE structure deals. Because, is it black-owned or is it technically black-owned because there is a structure behind it?" He said that this is also something that we need to unpack. Bottom line: transformation when done well, will serve the end-user well at a profit.



Meet Mzamo Masito - Chief Marketing Officer, Google Africa and DStv Seminar of Creativity speaker

Loeries 26 Jul 2018



Pezisa said she agreed fully and that mutuality is what is required in all of this. She said she liked what Masito said about language.

“ Language evolves and culture evolves and it is rich, and when we are not doing this transformation properly, we miss out on those things and the brand growth then is stunted. Therefore, business and the economy and all of those things are not benefitting. Transformation, in every sense of its intention, was meant to actually grow the economy, improve people's lives... ”

When asked about his personal take on being in a major position of influence at a multinational digital agency such as Google, Masito said that his grandmother always used to say to him, "When you are visible, your job is to make others become visible." So your job is not to hog the light and loadshed everyone, he said. "The way I see it is that I have an interest, which is aligned with the company that I work in, which is, I would like to see Africa regenerate again, because I

know that Africa was great at some point, before the Berlin conference, before colonisation, before Apartheid. I have enough historical evidence that Africans are smart, intelligent, capable. I know it's possible, so now the only thing is to use the Google mission, partner with Google and use the power of technology to democratise opportunities for Africans. And how do we do that using technology?"

He continued:

“ My responsibilities right now are that I need to figure out a way how, in partnership with Google, to use the power of technology and the power of Google products and services, to democratise helpfulness, to democratise opportunity to every African. Whether it be a small or medium business owner, a black-owned small/medium business owner or through education. ”

Pezisa agreed and said that technology has broken barriers for her. She said: "If there is one thing that we got out of this Covid pandemic, is that it has broken barriers." She also said that she agrees with what Masito said because it speaks to education. "I don't know when education became a luxury item, because it has become that. Whether it's formal or informal, it has become a luxury thing." She said nowadays it looks like people are thinking, 'It's better for me to hog, rather than share and be helpful and partner'. She said: "When we are mutually benefiting in our mindset and in our objectives and in our approach, things get better."

Commenting on cooperative working spaces and their benefits, Masito said, "Fortunately, the joy with Africans is that they are already communal. So that is the beginning. At least, you're not starting from zero. You are starting at a foundation of people who naturally, instinctively know what it feels like to be communal."

He said that we have been fed certain cultures and when we get to business we just assimilate that culture, rather than say, 'What is it that is already in our culture that we can also infuse in business?'.

He said as an African he can tell that it is actually a call to say, "Why don't we decolonise a little bit of the business as well and bring some of what is naturally something that Africans know how to do? And we know that when we do it, we know the results, it works, and we also know individual brilliance will win you game, but it takes a team to win a tournament."

He also said,

“ Great creative and great creative output and great ideas come from these collaborative spaces, and some of the ideas that we have come from small startups that collaborate with Google or that collaborate with agencies. Or some of the ideas that we end up with come from partnerships with agencies and clients. ”

Commenting on transformation in South Africa and abroad, i.e the Black Lives Matter movement, Pezisa said that these are deeply ingrained issues in society as a whole. "I mean, Black Lives Matter is not a South African issue, it's across the globe. At the same time, it requires psychotherapy on all levels, and what I mean by that is, one, at home when we bring up our children as mothers and fathers, we've got to be joined at the hip with this thing. We need to talk about equality from a young age."

This industry-wide initiative for conversations around sustainable solutions to common issues facing SA's marketers and marketeers, to future proof the industry, is made possible by the Association for Communication and Advertising. Join the ACA at

www.acasa.co.za | www.bizcommunity.com/ACACaresCovid19.

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