

#BrandAdland - Building leadership, livelihoods and legacies

Watch now as Mathe Okaba, CEO of the Association for Communications and Advertising (ACA) and Brian Yuyi, CEO of Masa discuss leadership, legacy, accountability and how advertising, marketing and industry organisations can work together to continue to build livelihoods in South Africa. The final episode of the Biz ACA series conversations on the value of the advertising and marketing sectors to futureproofing economies, was made possible by the ACA and hosted by Rutendo Nyamuda.

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

In her 2020 BizTrends contribution, Okaba wrote that 2020 will be what we make it, not what it does for us. "It's time that we strategise to solve our own industry problems, build brand 'adland' to our own benefit, and give back and drive consumer perception, as a consolidated voice around societal issues which affect all of us."



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Mathe Okaba 10 Jan 2020



Elaborating on her vision for building brand adland, Okaba said: "Building brand adland does not take just us, as advertisers and our profession, it takes us collectively to build brand adland. And I think for us, as advertisers, we see the importance of the relationship between advertising and marketing. Because without marketing there is no advertising. And when we understand that relationship, then we are able to make decisions that build this profession, protect our profession and enhance our profession."

She also said that they have tried to do that through the #ACACaresCovid19 series on Bizcommunity, having different kinds of engagements. She said we can't have engagements in isolation, we have to have engagements together.

Okaba said we're all not in our comfort zones anymore. "We've all been shaken out of that, 'this is how I do things' bubble. We've all had to go back and ask ourselves, 'What am I capable of?' As individuals, businesses and brands, asking what are we capable of and then unearthing that inner being.

She said that access and inclusion have been very important. "Moving forward we need to start including smaller businesses, within the advertising industry." For that to happen, she said she looks to Yuyi and Masa and said that he has to speak to the marketers and say, 'Guys, let's open doors for smaller businesses and how do we do that?'" She explained that she can't do it because she's a service provider wanting to partner and create a symbiotic relationship and beneficial relationship.

She referred to the Covid-crisis and said that these small businesses were the first to crash because they didn't have the support. She said we can't continue not supporting smaller agencies and asked how do we build this industry and this profession if we don't enable previously excluded people into the fold?



#ACACaresCovid19: Unlocking value chains in smaller, transformed and Black-owned agencies

18 Aug 2020



Yuyi commented on the ACA and Masa's initiative (a virtual industry event/meeting) to help future proof the industry that happened earlier this year and said that Masa and the ACA, as organisations saw a need and joint forces to make it happen.



ACA and MASA's joint initiative to future-proof the industry

25 May 2020



He stated that for anything to work, whether in the commerce industry or the marketing industry, it is a combination of the relationship between ad agencies and marketing within specific entities. "Some of the most successful work we've ever seen in our industry has been due to very strong symbiotic relationships between client-side and agency-side."

"We should carry on working in that way because there should never be any power games involved. If you want to make a success of what you're doing as a brand, you better be hand-in-glove with your agency. Similarly, as an agency, if you want to make your work, work, you have to be hand-in-glove with the client-side."

He said that this is only the beginning and from a Masa perspective, he said his role is to ensure that these conversations carry on happening. But that beyond conversations, we also need to see some action.

Okabe also commented on the industry giving back and said that we (as the advertising industry) can give back in a multitude of ways. "Us, as the ACA are well-positioned to ensure that the young people who are interested in this career, are well-versed, well-prepared, well-educated because I know other professions don't think advertisers need to go to school... But what we've done as the ACA, and that is the representation of the industry, we've managed to solicit and to educate young learners at the AAA School, to ensure that they are fit and ready to come into the fold.

"We need to build and just let young people know that we got your back. You're not on your own. Industry leaders are continually mentoring young people, agencies are continually taking on young people for internships, so, that's a part of the giving back that we do," she said.

She also said that the ACA expects agencies to create a new collective of privilege, as in "new people who come into the privilege swing of things, where they're people of colour". Because she says we know the privileged people right now are not people of colour.

Yuyi said that there's no doubt that the South African marketing industry, especially on the client-side, is one of the strongest, not only on the continent but globally. He said some of the best marketers you've ever come across in strong positions in the global industry are South African or were trained in South Africa.

“ Can we do more? Yes, absolutely, we can and to Mathe's point, transformation is key. Now we can have a long conversation about the advantages of transformation, but I think one can say, in summary, we need to move from the talking to the doing. ”

Okaba said a heavy cross that they both have to bear with regards to transformation is that: "I can't be a black female sitting in this organisation and Brian, be a black male in that organisation, and we don't see change. We would not have an excuse when we walk out of these positions and things have not changed. Then it would show that we are not passionate about our profession and passionate about our people."

Yuyi agreed and said there's quite a lot of work that still needs to be done regarding transformation. "We need to continuously have the conversation. But at the end of the day, it all comes down to one thing and one thing only: we need to continuously feed the pipeline."

Commenting on this Okabe said:

“ Change is like making a U-turn with a big aeroplane. It takes long and it takes so many people to consult and some people are uncomfortable with change, and we've got to take them with us. You can leave the people who are uncomfortable, right there at the back, because they might be the critical part of the puzzle. And, Brian is quite right, it's not a conversation we can have in two seconds. It's not a conversation that only Brian and I have solutions to the bigger problem. Solutions are within our professions but also we have got to have people who have the heart to change. If you don't have the heart to change, you will keep on making an excuse about change. It's continuous... ”

"Transformation has quite a few tentacles," she said. "We are quick to look at transformation as a white and black thing and it is not a black and white thing. There are multiple things that need to happen within the industry to show inclusion and to create access for all kinds of people within our society."

Yuyi said that the client-side should also ensure that with all these other conversations going on, transformation, inclusion, training, bringing people in, the creative side of this industry needs to be protected.

For more of Okaba and Yuyi's learnings and insights, [watch the full interview](#).

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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