

EXCLUSIVE: Paula Hulley reflects on her time as IAB SA CEO

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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With the recent announcement of Paula Hulley's resignation as CEO of IAB SA, we spoke with her to find out more about her time as IAB SA's CEO.



Paula Hulley

Although Hulley is still in her role until December, the search for her successor has started. Here, she tells us more about highlights in her career with IAB SA and what she hopes for the future of IAB SA...

■ *Could you specify some highlights and achievements during your time with IAB SA?*

The people: Aligning globally with 47 countries in our ability to empower the media and marketing industries to thrive in a digital economy and our 2018 conference in London was a big highlight for me. To meet and talk to so many country leads coming together in support of the industry and articulate the key challenges we face together while collaborating on solutions defines what the IAB network is all about.

This process and experience of sitting around the table (even if virtually) with leaders and future leaders from agencies, publishers, brands, platforms, tech, education and specialists to define and solve challenges and open up the digital opportunity is a big highlight for me. It was part of our process at Ogilvy and Gloo (in my previous roles there), and I am grateful to all my colleagues who helped shaped this way of thinking and operating, and those who continue to do so under the incredible leadership and safe hands of our current IAB SA chair, Haydn Townsend and IAB SA vice-chair, Claire Cobbledick.



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The projects and programmes: Our culture - to collaborate and to cooperate - in our focus to move the industry forward, and the people who live it every day, are instrumental in the expansion and delivery of projects like the IAB SA Annual

Digital Landscape Survey; the annual IAB SA online advertising revenue report; our monthly online audience consumer insights reports with Narrative; and our programmes such as the IAB Insight series of monthly webinars, IAB SA Trusted Brand Round Tables and lots more.

IAB SA is also enabling a more robust discussion around Transformation and Education and creating access and value – including the IAB SA Digital Skills Gap report with Red & Yellow, IAB SA Youth Action Council, the newly transformed IAB SA Transformation Council and working groups, along with key projects such as IAB SA Front Row, IAB SA Future Masters, IAB Youth Action Townhall, IAB Learning, #AlliesinAction and key collaborations with our fellow local bureaus on the global WFA D&I survey, as well as collaboration locally with SheSays and Kantar on the IAB South Africa survey on gender representation, as an example.

These are just some examples of the work I had the privilege of being a part of. During 2020, we all navigated a global health crisis (ongoing), we took the opportunity to open up access to digital learning by moving our IAB Insight Series and 2020 Bookmark Awards online and free - a testament to the priorities that exist at IAB SA.



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The partnerships: As a volunteer-based NGO and NPO business, none of our work would be possible without key partnerships to bring all our ideas and projects to life. We have so many great programmes and projects – some still in the pipeline (IAB Play, IAB Open Source +) that are only possible with our partners and the value they bring – in capacity, thought leadership, content creation, access, expertise, amplification, software, sponsorship, and in opening doors for more partnerships. 100% of our projects are brought to the industry because of these incredible partnerships – I am so grateful to all our partners, many of which are years in the making and will continue with us into the 2022 year and beyond.

📌 ***What are the greatest lessons you have learned during your time with IAB SA?***

To listen to both the challenges our members face and the great ideas and solutions our members have to solve them through our board, councils and committees. That's where the magic is, our role is simply to nurture and deliver on them.

To have patience – hard work pays off, sometimes you just don't know when – so keep on swimming (with breaks!) and watch it come to life.

To be grateful – I am bowled over every day by the stretch and resilience of our industry and the joy we experience together in the in-between moments. I am grateful for every minute and every WhatsApp and idea I receive to help move the industry forward and help others along the way.

That challenges are opportunities – I am still working on this one!

▣ ***What challenges do you expect your successor to face?***

Again, challenges are opportunities - and to see that creates clear direction. There are big changes in our industry, as always. Hopefully, as I was enabled to build on the platform handed to me – our new CEO will be able to leverage our current platforms, projects, programmes and partnerships to do the same – it is the most exciting time.



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▣ ***What qualities are essential, in your opinion, to be successful as CEO of IAB SA?***

Google search says these qualities are essential; vision, receptiveness, motivation, adaptability, and trust. I can't argue with that!

▣ ***Any last pearls of wisdom to impart with?***

We can't do this alone – find the people, partnerships (and bureaus) to support and evolve your vision, your culture, your objectives. Bureaus and industry bodies are a vital part of our ecosystem to create the support, momentum and change we need to move the industry forward.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

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