

Kinola Pather, head of strategic marketing at NMG Benefits

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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We caught up with Kinola Pather, head of strategic marketing at NMG Benefits. With over 17 years of experience in the sales and marketing industry, she possesses a wealth of expertise spanning various sectors, including banking, travel, hospitality, aviation, retail, retirement funds, and healthcare.



Kinola Pather, head of strategic marketing at NMG Benefits. Source: Supplied.

 **What do you enjoy most about your industry?**

It's the ability to change lives positively. To make an impact in peoples lives by educating and informing them of steps that they can take to improve their mental and physical health, preparing for retirement, taking control of their finances and leaving a legacy.

📌 **What is a typical workday for you?**

The role of a strategic marketing head can be dynamic and often involves a mix of strategic thinking, team management, data analysis, and creative decision-making.

Flexibility, adaptability, and a deep understanding of both the financial services industry and marketing principles are crucial for success in this role.

My workday typically starts by checking my calendar and checking mails. A large portion of my day is attributed to collaborating with the executive team to align marketing strategies with overall business goals. Off the back of this, I will review and refine the long-term marketing plan, considering market trends, competitive landscape, and company objectives.

I have learnt early on in my career that you are only as strong as your team, so I am in continuous engagement with my marketing team to discuss ongoing projects, provide guidance, and address any challenges.

I close out my workday by reflecting on the day's accomplishments, review any pending tasks, and prepare a to-do list for the next day. It is important for me to celebrate wins, no matter how small as well as to look for learning opportunities to expand on my knowledge and experience.

📌 **Describe your career so far.**

It's been exciting, challenging and fun. I have had the pleasure working with really strong, intelligent and ambitious women, who understood me and always challenged me out of my comfort zone.



#BehindtheSelfie: Stef Adonis, head of communications at Helm

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I was just under six years at Absa when the opportunity to join NMG Benefits came across my desk. It was an opportunity to make an impact in a medium-sized business who were member-focused and who needed someone to build the strategic marketing function from the ground up. I love a good challenge and it was a role I could not turn down.

The NMG culture is unlike any I have ever experienced in my career – in a positive way. It is non-bureaucratic, agile, family orientated, fast paced, entrepreneurial and promotes autonomy through trust in its people.

🔴 **What are you currently streaming/reading/listening to?**

My reading pleasure is typically geared towards Christian based or Psychology based books. I am about to start reading *Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman.

My listening pleasure is also around my faith and I listen to sermon messages by Steven Furtick, Robert Madu, TD Jakes, Michael Todd.

🔴 **Who inspires you?**

There is no single person that inspires me. I get my inspiration from authors and pastors, however, what inspires me to be the best version of myself is my daughter. I want to be a role model to her and inspire her to be the best version of herself, never being afraid to dream and have big plans for her life.

What did you want to be when you were a child?

At first I wanted to go into political law and then later into child psychology. It was a career assessment that steered me in the direction of Commerce, however, my passion and interest in psychology still burns and I'd probably pursue that downstream.

🔴 **Give three pieces of advice for young people waiting to enter this industry**

1. Don't be afraid to start in an entry-level position. Take in as much knowledge and experience when in the industry to build on your educational foundation and if you are in a company that offers bursaries or study loans, take it up. Make the short-term sacrifice for long term gains. The unemployment rate in SA, ranks one of the highest in the world and the largest segment which sits in unemployment is the youth. Take the job. Take the entry-level pay. Work hard. Play hard. Invest in yourself. Very much like strategic marketing, success is a marathon not a sprint.
2. Come in with the right attitude. Never ever say "this is not my job" or "that's above my paygrade". It is a common statement I've heard more prominently in the financial services industry. Use every opportunity to showcase and build your personal brand and awareness in the industry.
3. Be solution driven. You will always encounter problems and challenges in the financial services industry. Instead of speaking about the problem, look for solutions.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

Karabo Ledwaba is a Marketing and Media Editor at Bizcommunity and award-winning journalist. Before joining the publication she worked at Sowetan as a content producer and reporter. She was also responsible for the leadership page at SIVag, Sowetan's lifestyle magazine. Contact her at karabo@bizcommunity.com

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