

# Provoke Media's Innovator class in EMEA: 3 innovators from Africa, 3 from the Middle East

Provoke Media's Innovator class in EMEA includes three innovators from Africa and three innovators from the Middle East Region.



Source: © PROvoke Media [PROvoke Media](#) Provoke Media's Innovator class in EMEA includes three innovators from Africa and three innovators from the Middle East Region

From South Africa are Dustin Chick, CEO, Razor and Pippa Misplon, managing director, Retroviral. From the Ivory Coast is Kwame Senou, executive director, of The Holding Opinion and Public.

All three innovators from the Middle East are from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Huda Al Shamsi is VP of marketing, brand & communications, Abu Dhabi Airports, Kirsty O'Connor is regional director of innovation, METIA, Hill+Knowlton Strategies, and Rania Rostom is head of global marketing & communications, GE.

There are 12 Brits in the EMEA list this year: unsurprisingly, the highest proportion of the class is based in the dense UK market, with other markets represented including the UAE, South Africa, Germany, France, Ivory Coast, Sweden and Italy.

As in the past three years, 56% of the innovators for 2023 are women, and the list is again diverse, with 32% being people of colour, including 12% who are Black.

Over half (56%) of the cohort come from an agency background, and 44% are in-house practitioners.

## Breaking down barriers

This is the ninth year of Provoke Media's annual Innovator 25 class in EMEA. Provoke Media describes this year's list as "remarkable innovators who are addressing the industry's challenges with ingenuity and creativity to make meaningful (and hopefully lasting) change at a time when it's needed more than ever.

The tumultuous past three-and-a-half years have forced the industry to embrace change and continue to reimagine the future of work and communications."

It adds that many on the 2023 list are leading the way – "often vocally – on breaking down barriers and moving beyond talk

to action on all aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion, both within the communications world and in wider society”.

There is also a strong focus on ESG and sustainability, with professionals doing ground-breaking work in environmental communications and around public health, and a number who have applied innovation to business operations.

The EMEA cohort also includes strategists and branding specialists, digital and influencer experts, and those with job titles which range from dedicated innovation roles to corporate communications.



### **Dustin Chick**

A rare exception to our rule that individuals can only appear once in the Innovator 25, but his achievements since he last featured in 2019 in his previous role at Ogilvy are too notable to ignore. Chick, who set up Razor within M&C Saatchi South Africa in 2020, has become nothing less than a fire starter in the PR industry, not only in his native South Africa but around the world.

View his full profile [here](#).



### **Pippa Misplon**

South African agency Retroviral – PProvoke Media’s Africa consultancy of the year for 2023 – turned 13 years old this year with an impressive teenage growth spurt, largely through the impact Misplon has had as managing director. Since joining the agency in 2021 from Ogilvy, Misplon has been a whirlwind of change – she has been

described as “operational fairy dust”.

View her full profile [here](#).



### **Kwame Senou**

Senou has spent his career working in agencies of all sizes across the West African countries of Ivory Coast, Benin and Togo, including OPRG and latterly as senior vice president of Opinion & Public BCW, but always with a singular focus of bridging the gap between Francophone and Anglophone Africa. Last year, he set up his agency, The Holding Opinion & Public.

View his full profile [here](#).

### **Huda Al Shamsi**

A passionate Emirati, Huda Al Shamsi is admired across the UAE communications industry as a leader who is obsessed with bringing brand stories to life through strategic communications and experiences to deliver impact. As VP of corporate marketing, brand and communications at Abu Dhabi Airports since 2019, she is responsible for the overall brand management of the group’s five airports.



Read her full profile [here](#).

### **Kirsty O'Connor**

Kirsty O'Connor started building H+K's regional Innovation + Creative Hub in Dubai in 2019 and has grown it from a team of 12 to 120 creators, designers, social media strategists, data analysts, digital media buyers and innovators across UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and India.



Read her full profile [here](#).



### **Rania Rostom**

As global marketing and communications, talent development and customer education lead for GE, Rostom is responsible for the company's brand, thought leadership and reputation across international markets, including strategic positioning on sustainability, D&I and stakeholder partnerships.

Read her full profile [here](#).

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