

Kumari Moodley steps into new COO role at Avatar

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Kumari Moodley was recently appointed as chief operating officer at the Avatar Agency Group. No stranger to the agency, she has been with Avatar for nearly a year, her new COO role aims to bolster Avatar's leadership structure.



Kumari Moodley, chief operating officer, Avatar Agency Group

■ ***The Avatar environment is not new to you, as you have been head of client service since April, 2021 – almost a year to your new appointment as COO. What is different in your new role as COO?***

So instead of just being responsible for the quality of output from account management, I will lead Avatar's operations to increase efficiency and cohesion across all operating departments including account management, creative, strategy, technology, digital, social, traffic and project management.

■ ***What excites you most about taking on this role?***

The fact is that I can take all my experience and knowledge and operationalise it in a systematic manner in an environment that is truly open to transformative thinking and execution.

“ Step up. Stand tall. Put your hand up. ”

■ ***You are no stranger to the world of advertising and have spent your 27-year career in both agencies and on the client side. How will your background being on both sides of the fence, so to speak assist you in your new role?***

Being back from the “other side of the fence” allows me to play devil's advocate before putting work in front of our clients. Having the “client” perspective makes me ask the right questions internally; “If I was still a client would I sign this off?” “Would this campaign make me want to put more budget behind it?” “Does this really push me and make me want to be brave?”

■ ***Given the advertising industry has been slow in transforming, why is it important to be a woman in a leadership position in this industry?***

To quote our group CEO, Mzamo Xala: “Women represent one of the biggest consumer groups through their

influence and buying power, and their impact on the economy is growing every year.” So how can we as an industry not see the power in this? So, appointments like mine must become more deliberate and I am honoured to be part of an agency that not only speaks it but leads the way.

■ *What advice would you give to women looking to enter the industry?*

Step up. Stand tall. Put your hand up.

■ *Your philosophy is “Lifting as I Rise”. Explain to us why and what this means in your everyday working life?*

So “Lifting as I Rise” is not just a philosophy I bandy about lightly – for me it is an action phrase. It is about fearless passion for growth of future leaders especially young women in the business and outside of the business not just through regular mentoring and coaching sessions, but real-time on the job training and for me this happens all day, every day.



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■ *What do you love most about your career, the industry, and what you do?*

My career has taken me to the most unique, exciting, and challenging places. I have had several things ticked on my bucket list (and some that were not) ticked off working in this industry. What I do has afforded me the opportunity to be on planes, trains and in automobiles around the world and meet *the* most diverse and incredible human beings.

■ *What has been your most challenging moment/time in your career?*

Hands down the period during Covid, however even during that time opportunities rose to the fore.

■ *What has been a highlight in your career?*

Being appointed chief operating officer at Avatar Agency

■ *Who do you look up to or view as a mentor in your life?*

My mom. Her courage. Her strength. Her perseverance. Raising three children whilst establishing her own career.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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