

Ed Jardim from M&R

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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Meet Ed Jardim, group investor and media executive at construction, engineering and mining contractor Murray & Roberts. He's the man behind the brand of the multi-national group. In his view, content is king.



Ed Jardim

■ Tell us about a day in your work life.

Depending on the projects we have running throughout the year, I'm at work by 6.30am to go through early emails (we own companies in Australia and the US) and read the newspapers. By 8.30am, the team (one designer and one communications manager) is in the office and we touch base to see what's planned for the day/week. I manage our investor relations function too, so I am often in the CEO and CFO's offices working on shareholder queries. Meetings normally take up half the day, the rest is spent on planning, writing and admin. I normally wrap up around 6pm to head out for my daily 10km run.

■ What does brand management mean to you?

A brand has an identity or a personality. The way this identity is perceived, showcased and displayed should be managed in a manner that doesn't harm its personality. It's also the way in which stakeholders, internal and external, interact with its personality – which needs to be managed.

■ Could you explain your specific brand management strategy, and how it ties into Murray & Roberts' overall marketing/corporate communications?

Murray & Roberts can trace its roots back to 1902, starting as a South African engineering and construction business. Over the past 15 years, the group has transformed into a multi-national (we work on five continents) engineering, procurement, construction, commissioning and operations & maintenance business, with the construction segment only constituting about 15% of the group's profit after tax. Managing the group's brand perception against the belief that we are still a pure construction company is the main challenge we face. The plan to alter stakeholders' views on who we are is deeply integrated into all of our communications initiatives. It started internally, as we have potentially 20,000

employees/brand ambassadors globally who can tell our story. Externally, we ensure that the brand message is told through all our marcomms activities, supported by our common purpose, vision and values.

■ **What's on your wish list for brand objectives for 2016?**

A bigger budget! More group director time on brand/marketing initiatives. A brand can sometimes be compared to the long forgotten cousin living in another country. It's not often seen as a business imperative, especially if you are not a B2C brand.

■ **Are you using content as part of your marketing strategy for Murray & Roberts?**

Absolutely. Content is king in my view – content which people can relate or have a connection to.

■ **What do you see currently as the main challenges and or opportunities for the building & construction sector?**

We are the ugly duckling at the moment and have fallen out of favour with many market commentators and media. What our fellow South Africans often don't appreciate, is that this company has installed critical infrastructure in South Africa for more than 100 years. If you turn on a light, it probably comes from the power station we built. If you are ill and need to recover, you're probably doing it in a hospital we built. If you driving to work so you can provide for yourself/family, you're probably driving on a road we built. We are a large social contributor to the country's sustainable development.

■ **What brand marketing campaign have you noticed and been impressed by recently?**

The Careers24 ad campaigns - "Get a career you can be proud of". Short, memorable, humorous, punchy and touches on something I believe most people want – a great job that provides you with a sense of purpose and that you can tell your friends about.

■ **What do you love most about working on the Murray & Roberts brand?**

The fact that we have a 114-year heritage. Our brand has an interesting story to tell. The story has changed significantly over the last 15 years, so only time will tell what the narrative will be going forward.

Jardim joined the group in 2009, but has worked with Murray & Roberts since 2003. He has overall responsibility for group investor relations, media, internal and external communications and brand. Jardim has previously, as a consultant, managed communications for Barclays Africa & Middle East, JSE Debt Market (previously Bond Exchange South Africa), Hewlett Packard South Africa and McDonald's South Africa.

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