

Kaya 959's Sibongile Mtyali's love affair with radio

By  [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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It's been a year since her appointment as Kaya 959's managing director, and Sibongile Mtyali is proving that her vast knowledge of radio and years of experience in the medium is an asset to the Gauteng-based commercial radio station.



Supplied. Kaya 959's managing director, Sibongile Mtyali has loved radio since she was a little girl

Her current role is to provide strategic direction to ensure a successful turnaround of Kaya 959 to position it as a content business of choice in Gauteng.

From listening to driving radio

it's a far cry from the community radio station in Rustenburg where she started her radio career, and even further removed from rural Bophuthatswana where she grew up and as a young girl started her love affair with radio.

"I have loved radio since I was a little girl. I remember how I used to wait for everyone to go to sleep so that I could just take the small radio set to bed with me. I would put it next to my bed and switch between stations until I fell asleep.

"I listened to various stations, some of which I didn't even understand the broadcast language, the voices were just calming, and the music made up for the lack of language comprehension," she remembers.

Fast forward and years later she is no longer the listener but the one driving the medium.

From community to commercial radio

Previously she was a producer at SABC Education, responsible for generating and managing youth development content for 11 SABC radio stations before becoming project manager at SABC Education and then the first radio commissioning editor (Children's Division) at SABC Content Enterprises.

In 2006 she moved to Motsweding FM. Two years later she become station manager for Thobela FM in Limpopo, for a short while, before returning to Motsweding FM and being appointed station manager in 2010.

After five years there she took up the same role at Radio 2000 before her appointment to the position of business manager at South Africa's largest commercial radio station, Metro FM, in April 2015.

Following a major restructure at the national broadcaster in 2020, she was tasked with overseeing the radio portfolio of some of the biggest stations in the country as general manager: radio.

Women need to take up space in the industry

Over these years she says the biggest transformation she has seen radio undergo is digital convergence.

"This has presented great and exciting growth opportunities for radio as the medium now has a plethora of platforms beyond the FM platform for content delivery. The relationship between radio and social media requires broadcasters to reinvent themselves and their offerings and to remain in touch and relevant to audience needs," she says.



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Where she would like to see more change in the industry is in the role of women.

"As much as the industry has transformed over the last few years, women still need to take up space that matters in the broadcast industry. Radio management is still very much male-dominated and primetime radio is still very much male-dominated.

"Women can no longer wait to be given an opportunity, they need to create opportunities for themselves and other women. There is also a need to address issues faced by women in the industry, including pay gap challenges," she says.

An unwavering love

But despite the challenges in the industry, her love for the medium remains unwavering.

In keeping with this, she is a firm believer that we are blessed to become a blessing.

"As much as time is a commodity, giving a few hours to community work comes with contentment and fulfilment that money cannot buy," she says.

Mtyali volunteers her time to speak to young girls at schools to motivate them to want more, look for more and be more.

"I also take my kids to get involved with community projects where they can lend a hand. I do this to open their eyes to the

realities they might not be aware of, and to learn to care about someone else other than themselves,” she says.

Radio: anything to anyone any time

“I do this to instil a sense of compassion and Ubuntu because we live in self-centred and self-serving times. We should never forget that *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* and that the only difference between the fortunate and the people who are less fortunate is grace,” she adds.

Radio can play a big role here. “Besides the fact that radio is an affordable vehicle for behavioural change, a platform for learning new things and a medium that keep you abreast of trends, news and entertainment content, radio is a companion that keeps you connected.

“Radio can be anything to anyone at any time,” she says

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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