

# EXCLUSIVE: The power of three: Driving the ingredients of creativity

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

24 Mar 2022

Nahana Communications Group recently has made some leadership changes. Brett Morris has moved from his position for the last eight years as CEO to role of executive creative chair. Filling the CEO spot is Thabang Skwambane, who was group MD of the FCB Joburg and Hellocomputer Joburg agencies, with Joey Khuvutlu moving into Skwambane's previous position.



Brett Morris, executive creative chair, Nahana Communications Group

The titles might be different, but all three share the fundamental belief that as a business it is the power of creativity that is the economic multiplier for the agency's clients.

"If anything, my role as CEO highlighted the importance of creativity and the value that adds to our clients' business," says Morris.

This, he says, is something they have seen even more so over the last few years of Covid. However, Morris emphasises that going forward there is no doubt that creativity will benefit from an in-person connection. "It lets teams feed off each other's energy," he says.

Covid isn't the only thing that has brought changes to the industry.

"With the proliferation of media and the rapid rise of technology, there's been a big focus on performance marketing," says Morris.

He says this is a critical component. "We've invested in specialist talent to maximise the impact of our client's media spend."

## **An enduring truth**

Morris stresses that the enduring truth is that your communication needs to be relevant and engaging whatever the media.

"It all forms part of a bigger brand story and we believe that creativity sits at the centre of it, so it is about the intersection of those two worlds. When you get that right, the impact is exponential."

Morris, who was in the CEO position for eight years, and has worked for the last seven with Skwambane is more than confident in Skwambane taking over this position.

His advice to Skwambane: "Stay true to what you believe in."

Skwambane says that it is an exciting time for him to have Morris in the business as his "creative partner" and for them to drive creativity and value together, across the entire group.



Thabang Skwambane, CEO, Nahana Communications Group

"When Brett brought me in to run FCB Joburg seven years ago, he talked about talent and value as the two most important factors in the business," says Skwambane.

"What he has driven was really about the ingredients of creativity, which is talent and diversity," he adds.

## **Harnessing creativity**

Skwambane has an unusual background for an "adman". After graduating from UCT, he began his career working with Mark Shuttleworth as a crypto certification authority, and then as a merchant and investment banker.

"The complexity of marketing in the current environment requires multiple disciplines, new technologies and robust data sources are combined effectively to deliver economic and brand value.

"I need to use my experience in technology, banking, social development and marketing and communications to drive growth and value for our people, stakeholders and clients," he states.

"My contribution has been, and will be, to find more ways to harness that talent, expertise, tools and creativity of the business to deliver value to our clients," he adds.

Part of this is taking the agency's transformation even further.

"We have come so far as an organisation. From 1982, driven by Nkwenkwe Nkomo, to today, our transformation has been significant. We are now over 70% black, vertically and horizontally.

"But we have work to do to be more inclusive and have programmes focused on allyship, intentional inclusion and cultural sensitivity," he says.



Joey Khuvutlu, group MD of the FCB Joburg and Hellocomputer Joburg agencies, Nahana Communications Group

## Unleashing creativity

Khuvutlu, like Skwambane, boasts an entrepreneurial background. One could describe him as a 'serial creative industries entrepreneur' - he founded his first boutique brand consultancy, Plutonic, in 2005 while in the third year of his undergraduate degree.

"Our 'new normal' business environment is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA).

"Navigating this reality requires businesses of all sizes to embrace startup culture, not only survive but to innovate and thrive," he says.

He adds that businesses need to organise themselves in a manner that allows them to move fast, embrace change and encourage innovation.

"My entrepreneurial and digital background are rooted in startup culture, and this has greatly influenced my leadership perspective, a perspective that I believe is appropriate and relevant for our current circumstance and environmental context," he explains.

"We're now firmly settled into our new normal, and my primary goal is to nurture an environment for creative solutions to thrive to unleash 'creativity as an economic multiplier' for our clients," he states.

## Ever-evolving omnichannel environment

He believes that our changing landscape requires communication professionals to engage in continuous learning and for organisations to have a point-of-view of how they support and facilitate this life-long learning.

“While serving as chair of the IAB’s Education Council, we initiated a digital skills gap study in 2021.”

In the survey, 85% of the respondents said that their organisations were planning to continue to operate remotely post the pandemic and as a result identified ‘effective self-management’, as the number 1 skill for a remote working world.

“They describe self-motivation as an ability for staff to self-motivate, communicate effectively and develop trust,” he says.

Apart from this, he shares that 83% stated that they have to offer digital marketing and advertising training to new employees, regardless of their function within the firm or experience.

“It’s important to note that “regardless of their function and experience” reflects the reality of an ever-evolving omnichannel marketing environment,” he explains.

Nahana is a collective of specialist agencies that provide creative solutions across the marketing ecosystem. These include FCB Joburg, Hellocomputer Joburg, HelloFCB+, McCann1886, Fuelcontent, Meta Media, The Media Shop, Craft, Lucid and Weber Shandwick.

## 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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