

One profession. One voice. ACA announces broader, more inclusive membership

Issued by [Association for Communication and Advertising](#)

28 Apr 2022

In November 2020 the [Association for Communication and Advertising](#) (ACA), the official representative body for the communications and advertising profession in South Africa, launched its new brand identity in preparation for a new era in the broader communications sector in South Africa. The new brand identity provided the springboard along its journey of diversity and inclusiveness as an industry body. The next step on the journey, a more inclusive and accessible membership proposition has been announced by the organisation.



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Critical to the operations and effectiveness of any association, particularly one such as the ACA is the inclusiveness of the membership and constituency which it represents. When it launched its new brand identity, the ACA made a clear statement that it was in the process of overhauling the

organisation, its purpose, its offering, its activities, visibility, and now, crucially, its membership.

Mathe Okaba, CEO of the ACA, said: “Our profession is undergoing a transformation. The physical make-up of our members, and non-members has changed, and change as we all know is constant, defining and redefining our profession and activities. As the profession in our country changes and evolves, so have we as an organisation.”

At its core, the ACA believes in the power of creative leadership to drive sustainable change. It promises to protect its members, promote collective benefits and set policy. Within this, the ACA champions self-regulation and promotes commercial creativity, underpinned by transformation that empowers the industry to ensure a sustainable profession.

Further, the ACA is intent on providing valuable services and information to assist in improving the service of its members, supporting the move toward a more inclusive and diverse agency employee make-up while fast-tracking diverse and previously disadvantaged population groups to take leadership roles in the profession.

The new membership offering has been the key focus area of the ACA’s Membership Committee in the past year, as it was tasked with relaxing the ‘barriers to entry’ to becoming an ACA member and enabling a broader constituency to benefit from the immense value on offer to agencies and the broader profession.

According to Membership Committee Chair and Group CEO of Nahana Communications, Thabang Skwambane, “It has become necessary to expand the member base and engage a wider and more inclusive range of agencies, individuals and corporates. It is our intention to accommodate and represent a substantially larger collective within the broader marketing and communication industry.”

Okaba adds that a new tiered membership structure has been developed, providing an enhanced and more appealing offering to the broader advertising community. The previous structure excluded many smaller agencies, collectives, partnerships and individuals and students, as well as companies which failed to meet certain qualifying criteria, now all being brought into the fold. The new structure sees the inclusion of an Individual Membership offering alongside the existing Corporate Membership, which has been overhauled. Members will enjoy a varying range of benefits aligned to their respective membership, while fees have also been recalibrated to better reflect the new offering. Detail pertaining to the membership criteria and benefits are accessible via the [ACA’s website](#), or by contacting the ACA directly.

The benefits of membership are varied and numerous, including recognition of being a ‘member in good standing’ by the ACA - the profession’s recognised representative industry body; legal advisory services; exclusive industry rates for

insurance; workshops and training webinars; facilitation of tenders and pitches, and industry monitoring and conflict resolution services.

The new membership proposition will reinforce inclusion and the access created for industry players and previously excluded professionals. While the new membership offering could be described as a radical departure from the past, it remains additive to the essence of the association.

This essence is defined by the founding principles of the ACA which include the protection and promotion of the profession, while driving policy in the sector. With a more representative and expanded constituency, the ACA will be better placed to engage industry stakeholders; further highlight and educate the profession and government with respect to the commercial importance of the industry; emphasise the value of ACA membership; reinforce the essential nature of self-regulation, and be better positioned to enforce normative behaviour in the profession, amongst agencies and their clients.

The bold decision taken to make the ACA more accessible is rooted in the ACA positioning statement, One Profession. One Voice. The decision catalyses a stronger and more effective association to the benefit of all involved, building on the unity, diversity and brilliance of a profession which adds immense value to brands and the lives of consumers daily.

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