

Ryan Nofal, managing director at Penguin

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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Meet Ryan Nofal, the managing director at advertising agency Penguin.



Ryan Nofal is the managing director at Penguin. Source: Supplied.

■ ***What do you enjoy most about your industry?***

I see the Ad industry as being just below the tech industry in terms of being at the forefront of innovation. We are constantly trying new ways of doing things in order to reach new audiences.

■ ***What is a typical workday for you?***

It has taken me a long time, but I realised about a year ago that structure is the key to successfully managing a day so, below is the structure for a typical day for me. I get up at 3:30am, listen to an audio book for approximately 30min before meditating. I then gym or do some form of exercise at 5am.

Afterwards, I get my kids ready and do the school run and then check emails from 8am to 8.30am. I then set aside time for focusing on key tasks from 8.30am to 10am. My meetings are scheduled between 10am to 12.30pm, then lunch for 30min, and repeat the morning schedule until 4pm.

■ ***Describe your career so far - What have been some of the highlights and your journey to where you are now?***

I've had a disjointed career in multiple industries, so think it's best to run through them with some highlights.

Career path one: Hotel industry with the goal of becoming a chef. I loved being in the services industry as it taught me the value of the customer care but didn't enjoy the hours' structure, or the pay.

Career Path two: Golf course industry – I worked in multiple disciplines in the golf course industry. I loved the industry and would probably have still been in it, if I wasn't retrenched from my company in 2008 when the property industry took a serious knock during the recession.

Career Path three: The Ad World- After approx 10 months of being out of work, I found myself starting all over again at Penquin in 2009 managing a small call centre focused in essence on fielding complaints about an incentive program we ran for one of our clients.



#BehindtheSelfie: Sam Gqomo, director of Womandla Global Network

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I started in the CS team as a Junior AM working on the IBM account and helped build what was in essence an AdHoc client into an account with regular activities that required daily management. My relationship with IBM led to me being offered a position with them and leaving Penquin in 2013.

I learnt then, that I'm not built for a corporate environment in that I enjoy the services part of an agency and returned to Penquin after eight months to work as an AD on the Suzuki Auto SA account which I guess is where my career started to flourish. The rest is history, with me moving up the ranks in CS to a business unit director followed by the client service director. At this stage, I was exposed to inner workings of running the Penquin business and becoming a shareholder, culminating in my current position as the managing director of the business since 2020.

📺 **What are you currently streaming/reading/listening to?**

I'm an audiobook nut and generally have two different types of books going simultaneously. One will be a fantasy type book that takes me to another world and the other will be spiritual/personal growth or business growth book. On the fantasy side, I'm currently listening to the second book in the *Demon War* series by Peter V Brett, called the *Desert Spear*. On the spiritual side, I am listening to Mindfulness Meditation by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

📺 **What's your favourite GIF to use and why?**

I don't really use GIFs. I'm more of a written word and emoji person.

📺 **Who inspires you and why?**

This is a tough one, as there are quite a few people who inspire me. I am currently inspired by spiritual authors, podcasters, and motivational speakers as this has been a large part of my recent journey, but throughout my life, I've been inspired by the journeys of personal and professional growth of the people around me.

For as long as I can remember, I've had an intrinsic desire to keep moving up and forward and so I've been inspired by those around me who have done this, and who continue to achieve. Whether they be my family, my colleagues, or random people I meet, their stories of achievement inspire me.

📺 **What did you want to be when you were a child?**

I started playing tennis at a very young age, so my initial dream was to be a professional tennis player, which morphed into a professional cricketer when I was introduced to cricket at school.

■ ***Give three pieces of advice for young people waiting to enter the industry.***

1. Just commit – You don't need to love what you do every day, but if you just commit to doing your best, in every role. You shall succeed.
2. Adherence to a mediocre plan trumps a perfect plan not executed. Spend time laying out the steps to your plan and then stick to doing them.
3. Find a senior mentor in your business who is genuinely interested in growing you as a person and listen to what they have to say. You might learn something.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

Karabo Ledwaba is a Marketing and Media Editor at Bizcommunity and award-winning journalist. Before joining the publication she worked at Sowetan as a content producer and reporter. She was also responsible for the leadership page at SiMags, Sowetan's lifestyle magazine. Contact her at karabo@bizcommunity.com

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