

Nandi Zuma on her new role as head of PR at OFYT

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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Earlier this month, Old Friends Young Talent (OFYT) announced that Nandi Zuma had been appointed as its new head of PR and executive committee member. Bringing to the role eight years of experience, Zuma says she feels optimistic and is keen to build on the already existing foundation at OFYT.



Nandi Zuma. Source: Supplied.

■ ***Congrats on your new role, how do you feel?***

I am looking forward to this new chapter in my career and the new responsibilities that it will bring. I hope to add value not only to OFYT but also to the PR industry as a whole.

■ ***What is first on the agenda?***

Building. It's important to take stock of the work we have done over this past year and start thinking of how we can then build on from the already existing foundation. It is imperative to me that OFYT is not only seen as an advertising agency,

but to expand our PR and Influence portfolio.

This means we need to prioritise truly understanding what our client needs are and ensure we are servicing them according to those needs. I also want to grow the PR team and expand our PR offering in a way that showcases the young talent we have in-house.

▣ ***What excites you most about your industry?***

Nothing beats coming up with an impactful campaign that is well-received by South Africans and to bring ideas to life that have the ability to reach millions.

Ditto for securing earned media coverage. To this day that still excites me as well as the ability to start a conversation through a campaign on social media. The rewarding part is seeing how genuine brand champions relate/respond to content.

▣ ***In your opinion, what makes a great leader?***

I've had some incredible examples of great leaders over the years, so I would say that a good leader is someone who understands people because everyone on your team is unique. A great leader needs to have integrity, self-awareness, courage, respect, empathy, and gratitude. Nobody wants to deal with a bulldog on a daily basis. Managers must also be able to be flexible and agile within their teams as well as communicate and delegate effectively. A good leader must also be able to build relationships among the clients, the internal team, and with management. You can be all of the above, but you'll never truly understand the work and team dynamics unless you're fully present.

▣ ***What are the biggest challenges in your industry right now?***

Recruitment. There is always a need for PR professionals, especially with the increased demand from brands to increase PR efforts. It is critical that we hire the right talent who are not only ambitious but who also care deeply about producing high quality communications outputs. It is extremely difficult to find people who are trustworthy, dedicated, and enthusiastic.

▣ ***What inspires you to keep going?***

My ambition and desire for change. I care deeply about my team and the clients we work on. It's important that they come to work feeling motivated and confident in themselves and their work.

This comes through understanding that they need time to learn on their own and the freedom to ask questions. Similarly, to what OFYT stands for - cultivating young minds and grooming/ growing the next gen of PR professionals is what keeps me going.

▣ ***What impact do you want to leave in the industry?***

It has always been important for me to uplift other women, especially in the advertising industry. My desire is for them to see themselves in managerial roles. I want to show them that leading is a possibility for them across all PR landscapes. I want them to know that their dreams are valid and I strive to reflect that with my choices and decisions in the industry.

▣ ***What is a piece of advice you wish you knew when you first started out?***

- Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty. PR isn't as glamorous as it looks in TV shows. We work extremely hard.
- Live, breathe and eat news. Our industry requires you to constantly consume media and have your finger on the pulse, especially with the world of social media. We have the world at our fingertips, we need to maximise on that.
- Trust your gut. Sometimes you need to trust yourself enough to make the next move.
- Another one is that you don't have to know everything, trust the journey and constantly ask questions to understand what is needed from you to do the work.

- Being a nice and consistent person will take you places. Being reliable and nice can help get you a seat at the table.
Be lekker, always.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

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