

Thabang Ramogase talks South African marketing, education and co-authoring book

 By [Emily Stander](#)

14 Jul 2021

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented significant change to many institutions in South Africa - education being one of them. The need for accessible education channels is necessary now more than ever, and new opportunities have presented themselves as a possible path forward.



Thabang Ramogase, chief marketing officer at Liberty Group

Marketing to South African Consumers is a free to download textbook, co-authored by Thabang Ramogase, chief marketing officer at Liberty Group. The textbook is meant to provide access to marketing education for those who are not able to afford it, but want to pursue that education.

We spoke with Ramogase to find out more about the book, education in South Africa and changes needed in South African marketing...

 ***Tell us more about the textbook you have co-authored - *Marketing to South African Consumers*.***

The work is a new free to download textbook, which we are proud to say has achieved 14,000 downloads since its launch in February this year. The book, which is published by the UCT Liberty Institute of Marketing, forms part of an initiative to help relieve financial pressure on students by eliminating the cost of buying textbooks.

I am delighted and honoured to be one of the executive members of the book's editorial committee, especially because of the uniqueness that the book offers. It's uniquely South African, and it was developed with the intention of shaping the future of our marketing discipline, so that future marketers can find ways to connect brands with people in ways that are currently unimaginable.



■ ***What was the inspiration behind writing the book?***

The inspiration was to delve deeply into the robust marketing landscape while creating equity around South African brands. Most importantly, it's our way of helping relieve the financial pressure on students by alleviating the cost of buying textbooks, especially given the backdrop of the fees crisis being faced by students and tertiary institutions alike.

■ ***What, in your opinion, is the role of marketing in shaping future brands?***

Marketers need to understand that their role is to create an experience beyond the product. Increasingly, service and services are the 'product.' Consequently, trust has a game changing factor in determining how well these experiences are received.

The gap between the brand promise and the brand experience is a challenge marketers are still grappling with. We need to get to a point where marketing permeates all the moving parts in solving business problems. We can do this by becoming more data driven AND intuitive in how the brand interacts with its clients to build equity for the future. The better we become at closing this crippling gap, the better equipped brands will be in the future.

■ ***What shift is necessary for education in South Africa in order to provide equitable access across the board, in your opinion?***

The advent of free open-source textbooks to address the access gap in education is a growing trend. However, corporates, government and NGOs have to collaborate more and do better to translate business needs to curriculums and then find and fund the resultant solutions.

We must find ways to promote greater economic inclusion and transformation by looking for South African solutions, rather than simply following the rest of the world. Digital fixes are currently at the forefront of thinking, but we must remember that simple issues such as hunger, the winter cold and lack of access to healthcare still have to be tackled. South Africa is a land of polarity, being both relatively rich, yet relatively poor.

■ ***Would you say that human brands are the brands of the future, and why?***

Absolutely. A human first brand has the potential to thrive even amid global events that disrupt people's livelihoods. The pandemic has undoubtedly tested the humanity in brands to the limit, and we have learnt some tough lessons along the way in our journey of transformation. I can honestly say that for many of us marketers, the pandemic was the teacher and we were the students.

Being a future-fit human brand means embracing the changing landscapes within our society, along with the challenges and opportunities these bring. The brands that embraced the opportunities the pandemic brought with it without losing their human essence are best placed for the future.

■ ***What advice would you give to anybody trying to enter the field of marketing and branding?***

Marketing as a discipline has evolved and it operates in an ecosystem of other business disciplines. My advice is simply that you need to be curious enough to understand the depth and breadth of marketing, be teachable enough to learn and unlearn and be brave enough to challenge the status quo, even beyond the typical marketing realm. It is a career that has gained entry into the C-suite, so be in it for the long-haul.

Marketing to South African Consumers is available for free [here](#), or can be downloaded from the UCT Liberty Institute's

website [here](#).

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

Freelancer specialising in games and entertainment | My first loves are writing, music and video games

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