

Lance Dodgen, Heineken SA's marketing manager: Cider



By [Jessica Tennant](#)

1 Apr 2021

Lance Dodgen, Heineken South Africa Marketing Manager: Cider is the custodian of the Dutch brewing company's Strongbow and Fox Cider brands.



Lance Dodgen

The company recently appointed Rapt Creative with creating digital campaigns for three of these. The agency already handles Windhoek Lager below-the-line, Miller Genuine Draught through-the-line, Sol through-the-line, Strongbow below-the-line and Fox Dry Cider below-the-line.

"Over the past year we have worked closely with the Rapt team to develop and conceptualise below-the-line campaigns on the new Fox Dry Cider brand," said Dodgen. "Because of the ongoing growth of our partnership and the level of creativity emanating from the agency, I'm proud to now work with the team across both Strongbow and Fox brands for below-the-line and digital." Together they're also going to be launching the Fox Dry Cider digital communication within a few weeks.

Fox is a new brand with no digital presence whatsoever, so Dodgen tells us what they're working on and their plans to launch the Fox brand into the social and digital space...

■ ***Lance, as Heineken South Africa's marketing manager for its cider brands, tell us more about your role and what it entails exactly.***

Heineken SA has a Cider portfolio consisting of the Strongbow and Fox Cider brands. Along with my team I have the opportunity to build these relatively new brands. This continues to be an exciting and ever-changing role involving many facets and complexities.

■ ***Growing up, what did you want to be?***

Part of the time I wanted to live my life disappearing into books - but the for rest I enjoyed the thought of becoming a lawyer. The idea of working within a set of parameters in order to achieve the best outcome for those you are representing (and morally good) in circumstances which weren't always the greatest always appealed to me.

■ ***Tell us about your career: what you studied and why, and how you ended up where you are today?***

I studied Business Science with a specialization in Marketing at UCT, marketing fascinated me – from the outside it appeared simply to be about making brand communication, but upon closer inspection the field itself is a mix of both artistry and science and the ability to combine the two to create a mix which will have an effect on everyone around. After UCT I spent some time at Ogilvy which was a great experience – really understanding the intricacies of what 'consumers of our brands' experience and how these things come to life on the forefront of their creation. After Ogilvy I proceeded to Brandhouse working on the Amstel brand as an Assistant Brand Manager and the rest I guess is history – moving in between various roles and brands within the Brandhouse and then Heineken SA portfolio of brands.

■ ***What do you enjoy most about marketing and working in the FMCG/alcoholic beverages space specifically?***

The alcohol beverage space presents a unique opportunity which I feel equally brings together all fields and intricacies of marketing – both the very commercial aspects as well as the more equity driven requirements. It's a wide and fast-moving environment with a unique set of limitations and responsibilities, having an understanding of not simply what's best for the brands but what is responsible for our consumers and broader culture.

■ ***Tell us more about your experience working with brands. I see on LinkedIn that you started out as an account executive for VW at Ogilvy.***

I've worked on a number of brands and for the most part have been able to identify and relate to various aspects of their personality. Each brand has offered learnings for myself as I grow and learn - from VW as an established brand at Ogilvy to Amstel on its journey back into the Heineken stable of brands; to Heineken itself which has been at the forefront of innovation and creativity. Now in the category of flavours it's not simply the brands themselves that are changing and growing but the landscape itself.

■ ***Any career highlights you'd like to share.***

Within each brand I've worked on there have been multiple innovations which have made its way to market – some successful and others are still in progress, additionally the events and activations, brand positioning work are some of the most intensive and exciting things to work on – as such it's the brands themselves – Amstel, Heineken®, Sol, Strongbow and Fox within the alcohol industry which have holistically proven to be the highlights. It's an opportunity a younger version of me would've dreamed of and which I've come to know and love intricately.

■ ***If you were mentoring a future you, what career advice would you give to aspiring young marketing and branding professionals?***

Brands are like people – with their own intricacies, personalities, dreams and ambitions. They aren't inanimate objects and so should be treated with respect and understanding but in parallel with passion. As marketers we are given an opportunity to care-take brands which (usually) have been around long before us, and will remain long after we have moved on. We should temper our own ambitions to make short term (sometimes reactive) changes but rather ensure the longevity and impact that the brands have on the communities around us - to ensure that when it's our time to stop caretaking the brands they are in a healthier space than when we joined them. In saying that some calculated risks are worthwhile and without them the brands would not be able to grow. It's a careful balancing act that should be treated with respect.

■ ***How has the pandemic and subsequent national lockdowns affected your work and the brands you oversee?***

The pandemic has had a wide spread effect, which everyone has felt and I don't think anyone has been immune to. From my perspective it has shifted 'our gears' so to speak. While some of the changes have been a long time coming others have been sped up dramatically, with a change in the landscape, how we approach work on the brands and our view of the long term. Consumption patterns and behaviours have changed and our reliance on Data has become more prevalent. With our brands in particular it's been taking the view point of being more pro-active and choiceful with our actions and investments.

■ ***You recently appointed Rapt Creative to create digital campaigns for three of your brands: Strongbow Cider, Windhoek Beer and Fox Dry Cider. The agency already handles Windhoek below-the-line, Miller Genuine Draught through-the-line, Sol through-the-line, Strongbow below-the-line and Fox Dry Cider below-the-line. Tell us how you came about Rapt and why you think the agency is a good fit for Heineken SA and these brands specifically?***

The RAPT crew are a group of young and dynamic individuals who work seamlessly with the brand teams. It's my experience over the last year+ which has shown me that their dedication for doing the 'right thing' combined with their passion and that proves that they are partners rather than suppliers and that the work and it's intended affect for the brands are of paramount importance. Rapt came on board with the Miller Brand through our procurement agency processes as a referral, through the pitch process they continued to show their creative mettle and have not stopped since.

■ ***You're going to be launching the Fox Dry Cider digital communication in a few weeks. As Fox is a new brand, it has no digital presence at all. How do you plan to take it into the social and digital space?***

Digital and social are of utmost importance, as the Fox brand is still very new we have worked tirelessly to ensure that how we bring the brand to life is within the brands character. Social and Digital can quickly become tick-boxes if not used effectively – it's from this perspective that we have been working with the Rapt team to ensure Fox lands in this space with excitement and difference!

Follow Lance on [Instagram](#).

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

Jess is Senior Editor: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com. She is also a contributing writer. marketingnews@bizcommunity.com

- Have You Heard's in Broadcasting launches conference series - 23 Nov 2021
- Kantar study looks at changing media consumption - 22 Nov 2021
- #Loeries2021: Grand Prix winner Joe Public United's 'Unity Laces' for Converse - 19 Nov 2021
- #Loeries2021: Grand Prix winner Havas Creative Middle East's 'Liquid Billboard' for Adidas - 18 Nov 2021
- Carl Willoughby comments on TBWA and Toasted Sam's Pendergast Umpetha win - 16 Nov 2021

[View my profile and articles...](#)