

BEHIND THE BRAND... McDonald's South Africa



Sechaba Motsieloa Marketing Director - McDonald's South Africa

Why is it important to corporate marketers that an industry association such as MASA exists?

Corporates need to be connected within their sector, and they need to be connected to the industry body that represents them because, at the end of the day, we are all trying to achieve the same thing. We strive to find the perfect balance when we work with our agencies, whether it's media, creative and so on, because they are not serving us.

We are all serving the brands, we are serving the customers, we are serving the clients. So, we need to find a way to work together that allows for everybody to extract the full benefits and value of MASA membership.

While McDonald's is a multinational organisation with a global brand, having local representation is also important. The global brand has a global footprint and a global strategy, but that needs to be executed in the different markets taking into consideration what the local context is. Each marketing team needs to interpret what the global brand's architecture is to express it in their market, so it is critical to understand the local market and the regulatory environment. MASA plays a vital role here in guiding us in these areas through its objective research, its partnerships and association affiliations, the networking opportunities and the professionalisation of marketers.

We are all custodians of brands whose performance has a direct influence on the success of the organisations we represent – the profit margins, the share price, even the economy. Managing these brands requires professionalism, competency, and the relevant skills to perform to the best of our abilities – and membership of MASA is integral to this success.

As a corporate brand, how has MASA influenced / assisted / benefitted your organisation's marketing approach?

We all know that corporates are in business to create value in society and to make profits, but they need to make fair profits, and I underscore fair, because fair means you have taken your share and you have left enough for others to take their share. This talks to being a responsible corporate citizen – being good to society, being good to your people, being good to the environment... your typical ESG stuff, to be fair in everything you do.

When you look at this from the viewpoint of a chartered marketer, there's a pledge that you sign when you receive your designation around how you conduct your business – to be ethical, to have the highest morals, to be fair as a marketing professional. MASA is ensuring that you are conscious of the commitment you are making in accepting and undertaking the designation and fulfilling the responsibilities that go with it.

Do the MASA designations have a role to play in the industry?

For McDonald's, it is certainly an important part of talent recruiting, and a measure to benchmark the minimum standard requirements. Having a professional designation – chartered marketer – cuts through all the fluff and we know on what level we can engage with that person, no matter the job title.

BEHIND THE BRAND... McDonald's South Africa

Sechaba Motsieloa

Marketing Director – McDonald's South Africa

Chartered marketers have gone through the process, and they can appreciate what they need to do to continually grow in their role, and what they can learn from their colleagues and industry peers in developing and building their talent within a framework that positively contributes to the marketing profession.

Why would you encourage other corporates to become members of MASA?

If MASA is the embodiment of the marketing industry, as members we need to ensure that there is a broad, deep representation across sectors. This will also ensure that the association remains financially stable to perform the incredibly important and vital work it does on the industry's behalf. This too would enable MASA to deploy more resources to some of the work.

The WFA pushes out white papers across a myriad industry topics and issues because it has the muscle and financial backing to power it. If MASA was in a similar position, it could push out South African specific white papers to influence not just the profession of marketing locally, but profile us on the global scale.

How important is it for corporate brands to receive recognition and acknowledgement for excellent work and best practice from industry peers?

Creatives winning awards is seen as sexy and glamorous. But we need to remember that for them to create award-winning work, somebody on the brand's marketing team would

have given them a brief, and a budget, and possibly the nod to push the envelope (sometimes!), and the approvals to flight the creative work that will then hopefully achieve the intended business results for the brand and the organisation.

For marketers to recognise good marketing is similar to somebody being conferred a professorship: it is your peers acknowledging you and what you have contributed. So, in that sense, marketing awards such as the MASA-endorsed Marketing Achievement Awards (MAA) have a very important role to play in that it is the industry, the sector, our peers, colleagues and competitor businesses that recognise us as marketers and the contributions that we make to our organisations, brands and the bottom line.

How does this, in your view, benefit the marketing industry overall?

Reward and recognition has a huge role to play in the marketing sector. This is evident in the industry partnerships that MASA has established with the likes of the MAA, Loeries, Effies, IMC and others.

Endorsing these recognition platform results in the credible nomination and recognition of professional marketers across the board. The systems are robust, and the integrity of the vetting and nominating process is transparent. There is the added value of recognising rising talent and who is making it in the industry through those being awarded. This again presents an industry benchmark and reference point against which excellent talent can be measured.

Let's also always remember that we work on branding – and, at the end of the day, it's just branding, so...

We need to have fun.

We need to be flexible.

We need to be bendable.

We need to enjoy ourselves.

We need to not take ourselves too seriously.

It's marketing – we need to continue to bring the fun back into it and make sure that the people who follow us will stay and make it even more fun.