

Avatar's Mzamo Xala: African creativity drives business impact

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

4 Sep 2023

Mzamo Xala, the group CEO of Avatar Agency Group, is speaking at this year's IMC Conference on *African creativity up close! Liberate it and drive business impact*.



Mzamo Xala, the group CEO of Avatar Agency Group is a speaker at this year's IMC Conference that takes place this month

Xala has over 25 years of strategic insight, making him a seasoned marketer and visionary leader, while the Avatar Agency Group, a full-service agency, is a proud sponsor of the 2023 IMC Conference.

■ **What does Africa have to offer in terms of creativity, specifically in marketing and advertising?**

Africa's creativity in marketing and advertising is shaped by its cultural diversity, storytelling traditions, vibrant art, music, and local influencers. Brands can draw from these aspects to create compelling campaigns that resonate with specific audiences.

Collaborating with local figures, addressing social and environmental issues, and adapting global trends for local contexts are key strategies as African cities become creative hubs, and digital platforms offer opportunities for brands to engage with audiences authentically.

“ Africa's creative potential in marketing and advertising is on the rise due to digital transformation, creative hubs, cultural resonance, and a youthful population ”

■ **Where is Africa now and how can we ensure Africa reaches its potential?**

Africa's creative potential in marketing and advertising is on the rise due to digital transformation, creative hubs, cultural resonance, and a youthful population.

African cities such as Lagos, Nairobi, Johannesburg, and Accra continue to thrive creatively, fostering talent and innovation across various creative industries, including marketing and advertising.

To ensure its growth, we should continue to invest in creative education and digital infrastructure, as well as empower local talent with tech capabilities.

Prioritising diversity, inclusion, and education that answers to clients' future needs as well as social impact while embracing innovation and adapting to changing trends will help further develop Africa's creative industries and contribute significantly to the global creative landscape while staying authentic to its cultural identity.

“ Creativity unlocks purchase intent. That means businesses can grow their share of wallet and share of heart among consumers ”

■ **How does creativity address business problems and give business results?**

Creativity unlocks purchase intent. That means businesses can grow their “share of wallet” and “share of heart” among consumers.

Creativity in business addresses challenges through innovative problem-solving, leading to differentiation, enhanced customer engagement, and strategic thinking. By encouraging creative approaches, businesses gain a competitive edge, sustainable growth, and positive long-term outcomes.

One example of where creativity, backed by insightful strategy, resulted in significant business impact was when the Edgars business went through a business change in 2020 (as most businesses did).

Through thoughtful consideration of creative outputs and campaigns, the business was turned around, proving its resilience

and relevance to its customers. Edgars worked with Avatar Durban to reinforce the perception that it is here to stay, focusing on offering real value to all South Africans by combining quality, price and a refreshed assortment effectively. Today, Edgars is a thriving business that is giving back to the communities it serves through the Edgars CommUnity engagement.

▣ Explain how creativity is a powerful tool for addressing societal issues.

Creativity is a potent tool for tackling environmental and societal issues by raising awareness, changing perceptions, promoting dialogue, and engaging communities.

As an example, Avatar addresses gender inequality and diversity representation in how we created the latest Isuzu D-Max ad. Opting to use a female lead in an otherwise male-dominated category (vehicles), the ad dials up a female lead and supports the notion that women, like men, make decisions about the cars they buy.

What's even more impressive is the all-female creative team that made all this possible – director, producer, agency producer, client service, and of course, clients.

▣ Where does technology come into the creativity equation and it is positive or negative?

Technology's role in relation to creativity and addressing societal issues is two-fold.

Firstly, it is a great partner to creativity in terms of speed of production and scale from a business point of view. Secondly, technology needs the human to help generate and refine new ideas.

Technology promotes creativity by providing access to information, enabling collaboration, amplifying marginalised voices, and offering innovative tools.

For example, we've used AI and machine learning to win some of our pitches and showcase data-driven insights, helping identify trends, needs, and gaps in addressing societal issues. This informs our targeted and effective creative solution approach to a business problem.

We see people and technology working together to help liberate African creativity that delivers growth for our clients.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and

publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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