

Redefining the agency-client relationship

Issued by [The Bar](#)

2 Oct 2023

Agency-client relationships can be fraught at the best of times. However, when an agency-client relationship shifts to a partnership and when the client has implicit faith in the agency, the space for magic to occur is created.

That requires that the client trusts that the agency understands its business, value-system and operating model, the competitive environment in which it operates, and what messaging will resonate with the target market.

That's certainly the case for The Bar Africa, communication and advertising specialists and business problem solvers and its client Workable, a business offering state-of-the-art flexible workspaces in Nairobi, Kenya.



Amar Bhatt, Beth Gitari (general manager, Workable), Maris Truter (managing director, The Bar Africa) and Samir Patel (CEO, Workable)

Centrally situated in Sanlam Tower, Westlands in Nairobi, Workable offers 32,000 square feet of workspace for solo entrepreneurs, private offices businesses for up to 40 people and enterprise solutions on entire floors. One of its biggest advantages are leases that are significantly shorter than Kenya's typical five-year commercial leases, offering tenants flexibility.

Workable founder and CEO Samir Patel's past experience in the hospitality industry is very apparent at Workable, providing a significant point of differentiation from any competitors. "Essentially, we're differentiating Workable's physical product with a state of the art technology offering, sophisticated heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems and a gourmet restaurant as well as curating the experience tenants receive in order to attract them back to the office," he reveals, adding that the curated experience includes a business concierge service to assist tenants with tax and legal services, renewing driver's licences and even booking hotel accommodation as well as weekly massages and regular social functions, amongst others.



Breakout room at Workable on the new floor

As Workable's business grew, Patel realised that the brand needed to better define its identity and ensure that its tone and communication messaging was on point. "We talked to a number of agencies but struggled to find one that was a good fit with our brand and that understood our business," he reveals.

It was only after being introduced to the team at The Bar Africa that Patel was confident that here, finally, was an agency that understood his business, what differentiated it from its competitors and the highly competitive sector in which it is involved.



Reception at Workable on the new floor

Marls Truter, co-founder and managing director of The Bar Africa, reveals that the agency invested a considerable amount of time in understanding the business, the challenges it faces its brand personality and its goals and ambitions. “We conducted an immersion with the entire team at Workable in order to ensure we understood the brand and business from all aspects before we made any recommendations,” she reveals.

Although Workable was providing its tenants with a number of added value and unique offerings, not only were they not communicating these services to prospective tenants but the business had struggled to effectively position itself as a leader in its space.

“There are frequently cases where traditional form of thinking won’t effectively solve a brand’s business challenges. That was certainly the case with Workable. Instead, we build a brand strategy, a more refined identity, soon to be launched new look for the brand and helped the team develop a consistent elevator pitch when marketing to prospective new tenants,” explains Truter.

Working with The Bar Africa has been a hugely positive experience, reports Patel. “Their creative output cleverly captures the essence of our business and positions Workable as a player to be reckoned with in the flexible workspace market. To my great relief I haven’t had to micromanage the agency in any shape or form.”

Key to the success of the agency-client relationship, says Truter, is that it is built on a foundation of trust and respect. “There is a great deal of synergy between our two businesses with the result that we have not built a traditional client-agency relationship but rather one that epitomises all the elements of a healthy partnership. It also helps that there are no egos on either side of the partnership but instead a genuine desire to develop work that moves the needle.”

The big differentiator, insists Patel, is the amount of time that Truter and her team have dedicated to Workable and its business. “There’s nothing half-hearted about their service or creative output. We are in no doubt about the agency’s commitment to our success.”

Now positioned sustainably for the future, Workable is looking to further evolve its offering by expanding the amenities on

offer and growing the number of meeting rooms on offer. Watch this space!

<https://thebar.africa/> | <https://workable.space/>

About The Bar:

The Bar Africa is a collective of creative practitioners based in Nairobi, Kenya. With over 40 years of experience among its founders and a proven track record of creating campaigns that surprise, entertain, live in culture, put brands on a pedestal and of course, sell. As the name suggests, The Bar Africa aims to set and continually raise the bar for creativity in the region.

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