

Diversity is key to unlocking creativity

 By [Zubeida Goolam](#)

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Humans create ideas and technology helps us share them. Finding a team that can marry the two, will give any brand a competitive edge. The human behind the tech always has to ensure that their ideas are culturally relevant to the audience and that the tech used is accessible to their market. An organisation with a team of diverse people is always at an advantage. They can formulate strategies from a point of empathy, and empathy is always relatable.



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Transformation in digital marketing must begin internally to leverage external opportunities. It's up to the organisation to create an environment where their team can combine their skills and culture with the power of digital technologies. The adoption of new technologies should only eliminate communication barriers between the brand and its audience, not worsen the experience. The human element is always key to transformation.

South Africa is a unique example of how diversity is necessary in order to speak to a broad audience. A country that is so rich in language, culture, religion and ideologies. A country that speaks several official languages, yet one united language at the same time. We know what we want to say, but sometimes we are unsure of how to express it.

Strong creative DNA

We come from different backgrounds, but this is what makes our creative DNA that much stronger. Think about it... for one creative idea there could be multiple perspectives and concepts that can touch a larger range of different audiences. It makes for great conversation and often hilarious outcomes. South Africans are growing in creative leaps and bounds, we constantly challenge each other, asking questions to better understand one another and are eager to learn more about our Rainbow Nation.

The question is: How do we get there?

And the answer is actually quite simple. We need to have conversations. That's all...i-ringas, a chin-wag and a lekker kuier. It might take some courage, a lot of understanding and a generous dose of good old South African humour to push us out of comfort zones at first and sometimes we'll fail along the way.

But that is because humans aren't machines, we come with the hurt of past transgressions. We come with flaws and egos. In essence, we come with factory faults. But, the good news is that we also come with big ideas and unwavering passion, and those are things that technology simply cannot replace.

We strive to have the right conversations; we crave an increase in awareness of unconscious bias. We yearn for the organisations that we back to be more inclusive, diverse, and equitable places. So why do these conversations feel uncomfortable? And more importantly, why does it feel so intimidating to take the first steps?

Firstly, we strive for perfection. That's the first pitfall.

Humans are imperfect

By stumbling along the way is ultimately how we grow and learn. It's what makes us so interesting and multi-faceted. When we let perfection become the enemy, we can't express ourselves fully in a creative way. We become afraid of asking the wrong questions and certainly don't want to offend anyone. Think about art and literature and how these can be open to interpretation, the same applies to our ideas and conversations. The good news is that we change that, and we can't allow fear of failure to hold us back.

Secondly, we need to speak to our audience authentically. The only way to get that right is to be authentic ourselves and let the voice of our company be the voice of millions of South Africans.

Some South African brands are already doing this really well.

It's so exciting to see that more and more people want to make a difference with their ideas and creativity and that the human connection in the world of digital communication is the key to unlocking strong messaging.

With the onset of the Covid-19 outbreak, we were catapulted into the digital space so suddenly, that some people struggled to adapt. Digital meetings, online schooling and virtual coffee dates became the norm and the fact is simply, plug in or miss out. The need to be present digitally is now not just nice to have, but an absolute necessity.

It's a fast-paced digital world and the appetite to get into the game is more now than ever. People now have the opportunity to harness their creativity in a way that can transcend the barriers of the past. As the digital industry in South Africa continues to grow, the need to have more creatives join this space is never ending.

Their voices can be heard and their artistry imagined.

ABOUT ZUBEIDA GOOLAM

With a rich history and culture, Zubeida had an impressive repertoire, spanning over many years at industry giants, before starting and then dominating with her own company Valiant. Valiant incorporates multiple levels of marketing including but not limited to consulting, social media, storytelling and full content creation. With years of experience and a passion for creating, Zubeida now heads up the storytelling team along with co-founder Wayne Fleming, creating online campaigns that both inspire and drive critical engagement.

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