

Group Marketing at Nedbank

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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This week, we go behind the selfie with Nthabiseng Matshekga, executive head: Group Marketing at Nedbank and #NedbankIMC2020 speaker...



Nthabiseng Matshekga, executive head: Group Marketing at Nedbank

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I live in Dainfern, and work in Sandton or at home during lockdown. I love being home, and when I do go out to play it's usually at a friend's house, out in nature with a hiking group or anywhere I can enjoy good food, sunsets and a relaxed atmosphere with friends and/or family.

2. What's your claim to fame?

I can have a conversation with most South Africans in their home language because I'm fluent in seven of the 11 official languages. I ascribe this to growing up in Soweto, having grandparents from Eswatini, attending a primary school where Sesotho was the medium of instruction, and speaking isiZulu outside of school.

3. Describe your career so far.

I would describe my career as a reflection of good fortune. Immediately after graduating, I was offered a place in a graduate programme at Master Foods SA. I credit my solid functional foundation and egalitarian approach to leadership to these three formative years of my career.

Subsequent to that I joined Simba/PepsiCo and quickly progressed in various roles over a period of eight years, leading some of SA's most-loved brands.

My move from the FMCG industry to telecommunications was by far my biggest adjustment to date. I spent nearly five years at Vodacom in various roles as part of a pioneering segment marketing team in their consumer and enterprise businesses.

I have been in my current role leading the Group Marketing team at Nedbank for 18 months. I feel very connected to the brand's purpose and my role in ensuring that as an organisation we are uniquely positioned to deliver and manifest it, whilst enabling our vision.

Throughout my career, I can say I have had the privilege to do great and fun work, conquer many challenges, see many parts of the world, work with inspiring leaders and have numerous affirming conversations with myself.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Firstly, anything that makes me laugh qualifies as a favourite, whether it's the things my kids say, TikTok, some peculiar local TV shows, or those 1am conversations at a gathering where everyone has overstayed.

Secondly, I have a keen appreciation of visual arts. My favourite owned piece is from the series *Dirurubele* by artist Thabang Lehobye.

Lastly, my favourite pastimes include reading, word games, Sudoku and finding new herbal teas to try.

5. What do you love about your industry?

The financial services industry is dynamic and offers fast-paced learning and opportunities for career progression. As a marketer in this environment, I love that it sparks my creativity and love for numbers; and stretches my ability to establish connections with clients, and an array of stakeholders and partners.

The industry, through partnership, supports many important parts of society including sports, arts and education, so there is always a different world to see and give into as a marketer.

Additionally, given the importance of financial inclusion in our country, I feel like I'm playing my part in a very important and purposeful mission.

6. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

Such a thing does not exist in my world. However, if you took a peek into my workday pre-Covid, you would see many meetings, reviews and approvals pertaining to strategy, creative concepts and marketing plans; a fair amount of administrative tasks like approving leave or costs; some travel to off-site agency meetings, media engagements or the

sponsorship and cause marketing events we conclude; as well as some check-ins/conversations with my team, agency partners and various marketing committees.

“ During this unprecedented time working from home, you can keep everything that can be replicated in a virtual world. The travel piece has been replaced with running a tight ship of online home schooling because my work and life are now fully integrated under one roof. On some days I would call it an outright collision of the two worlds. ”

7. What are the tools of your trade?

I'm a firm believer in marketers that embed a customer insight-led culture in organisations, and use actionable insights to influence decisions about where to play and how to win at making clients more satisfied and more valuable. The ability to challenge complexity by providing a focused effort and creativity in building a brand's purpose, positioning, architecture and communication is also key. This, combined with the adeptness to collaborate and influence at all levels in the organisation are important skills in our profession; if one is serious about delivering outcomes that matter the most; and are better for clients and the societies we operate in.



The Nedbank IMC 2020 virtual conference gains traction

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8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Nedbank of course. The [2019 Secrets campaign](#) is by far one of the most distinct, creative, meaningful and *awarded in financial services (*New York Festival, Prism Awards, Pendorings, Creative Circle, etc.). I believe it also provided the runway for maintaining contextually relevant marketing presence during a crisis.

“ There's only one thing colder and harder than cash, and that's the truth behind it.— Nedbank (@Nedbank) [July 18, 2019](#) ”

Casting the net widely in marketing outside of financial services, I would say brands like Nando's continue to win in the content creation and engagement stakes. I'm always in awe of the love that people have for this brand, and the candid exchanges they have with their community managers on social media.

Finally, I've also been proud of the responsiveness of brands in South Africa overall. Brands like Pick n Pay got that right at the onset of Covid with their dedicated shopping hours for senior citizens.

9. List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

The industry can improve in enhancing brutal simplicity in offerings, and doing more to build brand categories as a whole. I also think that although much continues to improve in the service experience, the opportunity to use data-triggers to better understand/orchestrate consistently excellent customer journeys still exists.

10. What are you working on right now?

I'm working on a number of business planning and related future-focused initiatives for my function, whilst supporting my team in executing our marketing plans for the balance of this year. Whenever possible, I also invest time in my own formal learning online and reflect with others on topics concerned with effective leadership in a remote environment.

11. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and

some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.

“ If I had a penny for every time someone said, “pivot”, “agile”, “sentiment”, “Covid reality”, “data university”, “gold standard”, I’d be ready to retire a very wealthy woman! ”

My team would say I am guilty of uttering some of these, and other catchphrases like “scaling agile delivery”, “marketing in a digital world”, “data-triggers”.

12. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

Without a doubt before I get out of bed in the morning, during those precious few minutes at the cusp of being fast asleep and being awake enough to reach for a cell phone.

“ Some more money tips from [@Nedbank](#)’s Nthabiseng Matshekga [#ExpressoShowpic.twitter.com/GptPcS3xY3](#)—
Expresso Show([@expressoshow](#)) [May 13, 2020](#) ”

13. What’s your secret talent/party trick?

My singing pipes are not too bad at all. Lauryn Hill’s *Doo Wop* and Alanis Morissette’s *Ironic* are my go-to karaoke tracks.

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

I’m very enthusiastic about technology (for its utility), so I would describe myself as a technophile. The benefits are not just limited to my work, but extend to my personal life as well. As a parent of young children who are all digital natives, there’s little room to be a laggard in this regard.

15. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

You would find a lot of WhatsApp groups (many muted and archived), plenty emails and a few articles that have earned a place on my home screen. I also have the new super app Avo by Nedbank... as well as apps for everything else from banking, to social media, games, collaboration tools, meditation, media platforms, airlines and apps to be creative or make using my electronic appliances easier.

16. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?

Use every critical experience and opportunity at your disposal to learn enough about all areas of marketing on the job from the onset of your career. Be sure that you are passionate about designing growth strategies and building brands. Decide what type of marketer you want to be and design your career to deliver that. Reading and expanding your horizon and learning agility through engagement with other marketers and leaders is an absolute must. So is ensuring that you are learning on the job, showing discretionary effort, and taking responsibility for your learning and progression. Lastly, have a blast! You probably have the coolest job in your organisation.

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*Interviewed by [Jessica Tennant](#).

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