

Philasande Sokhela partners with Artifact SA

 By Jessica Tennant

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Artifact SA recently partnered with Philasande Sokhela, taking the ad agency to level 4 BBBEE (under the new MAC codes) with several divisions offering specialities where needed, including digital (level 4 SME), promotions (100% black-owned), integrated (51% black-owned) and print (51% black-owned).

"We are immensely proud and positive about our new shareholding, especially since it is a completely transparent partnership, bringing new ideas to the business and offering increased value to our customers," said Artifact MD Andy Taoushani.

With a BSC in construction studies, Sokhela was working as a quantity surveyor but had been determinedly researching the possibility of beginning a promotions company when he started liaising with Artifact, and he's since brought a network of smaller suppliers and entrepreneurs to the table. "We need to keep enterprise development top of mind. There are many small entrepreneurs who have not had these opportunities and we want to extend our vision to include them."

I asked Sokhela why he decided to buy into the group and what his new role entails...

■ **Why did you decide to buy into Artifact SA?**

I bought into Artifact because I believe that Artifact has massive growth potential, it is a unique and progressive agency, it possesses dynamic and incredible people which filter into the company culture and spirit. It felt right and was definitely the right move to make.

■ **Comment on your role as a shareholder?**

I primarily fulfil the role of a new business director. I am also building and establishing our promotions division.

■ **What do you bring to the agency?**

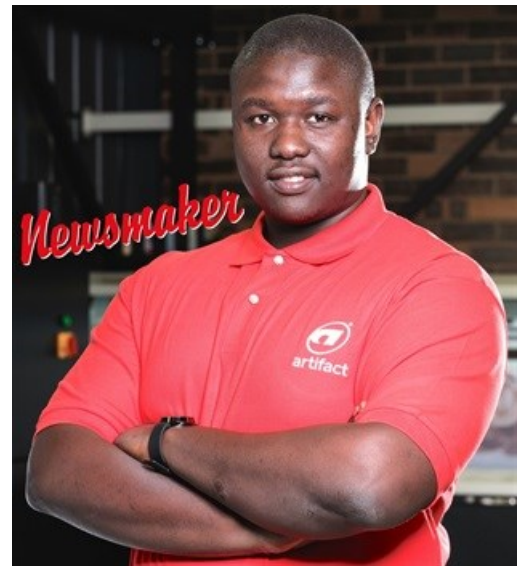
I bring a wealth of project management skills. I also bring an exuberance of youth that changes the dynamic of management in the agency. This will inevitably bring the right blend into the mix.

■ **Why, in your opinion, should enterprise development be top of mind?**

The reason why enterprise development is so important is because of the lack of opportunities that are currently available to young entrepreneurs. South Africa, unfortunately, does not have favourable conditions for startups or small business to thrive in.

■ **What about the industry lured you in?**

I have always been interested in the creative arts. The creative nature of the industry is quite unique. There is just something there for me in actually creating new concepts, observing how they develop and how consumers actually engage with brands.



■ ***Tell us about your vision to start a promotions company and how do you believe this partnership has created an opportunity for you to achieve this in a way?***

Because I have always had an appreciation for the creative arts and brand communication, I began trying to find a way to leverage the two together. I noticed that brands do not always communicate the correct message to the relevant consumer. Promotions deals with consumer interaction. This is where brands can create or generate brand love and loyalty. Artifact has now given me the springboard to confidently create these unique experiences with their know-how and experience having paid their school fees having multiple years working and dealing with promotions companies.

■ ***What is your view of the MAC Charter and how is Artifact now better positioned to do business under the new system?***

I believe the MAC Charter is possibly the fairest and clearest it has ever been. I believe it's not only about how Artifact intends to do business but the fact that Artifact is embracing change and actively doing something about transparent empowerment.

■ ***How do you plan to grow the company; what are your key focus areas at the moment?***

The advertising and communications space is rapidly changing and quickly, so I intend on staying abreast of all the different ways we consume and receive information. I also intend on not only staying abreast of trends but creating and developing them. This distinctive trait will set us apart for brands and companies. This is currently one of my main focuses as well as ensuring clients receive more value and peace of mind for doing business with us.

■ ***What are you currently reading/watching/listening to for work?***

I am currently reading a book called *The Lean Startup* by Eric Ries. I love listening to podcasts so at the moment I have podcasts from Gary Vaynerchuk, Bruce Whitfield and I listen to podcasts from Africa Business Radio.

■ ***Tell us something about yourself not generally known?***

I am a very stubborn individual; difficult to convince if my mind is made up. I enjoy reading Manga or watching Anime in my free time. I am afraid of heights and am generally family-oriented. I usually don't take no for an answer and can be very persistent.

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