

Robyn Hobson, head of Sales and Marketing at Mobile Guardian

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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As part of our ongoing #BehindtheBrandManager series, we interviewed some of the Marketing Achievement Awards' Rising Star finalists - said to be the best and the brightest under the age of 35 who have consistently demonstrated excellent performance and who have the potential to become outstanding leaders in their profession.



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Hobson studied an MBA from the University of Cape Town and throughout her career has consulted to and worked for

companies on the cusp of their high-growth trajectory, often with very limited marketing capabilities.

Now, as head of Sales and Marketing at Mobile Guardian, a global company focused on improving education through technology, she's responsible for ensuring that the global sales and marketing teams collaborate effectively to achieve the brand's growth targets.

Here, Hobson tells us that working at a scale-up entails everything from helping set up a coffee machine to reviewing email campaigns and developing expansion plans into new territories. And how she and her team are crafting the Mobile Guardian story...

▣ ***Robyn, tell us more about your role and what it entails exactly?***

Sure. Well, while that's the official title, Mobile Guardian is a scale-up and every day feels a little different. One day you're helping set up a coffee machine, and the next you're reviewing email campaigns or developing expansion plans into new territories.

My primary goal is to ensure that the global sales and marketing teams collaborate effectively to achieve Mobile Guardian's growth targets. I started as the marketing manager over three years ago, and it's incredible how much has changed since then.

▣ ***Growing up, what did you want to be?***

Believe it or not, my very first dream job was to become a marine biologist.

▣ ***Tell us about your career: what you studied and why, and how you ended up where you are today?***

Well, the last 11 years sure have been a story. I studied Business Science Marketing at the University of Cape Town and was deeply interested in digital marketing, or e-marketing back then, as well as consumer behaviour and psychology. I was incredibly fascinated by this bright, shiny thing called the Internet, as well as social media platforms. I set up a blog in 2009, and on reflection, this was the move that set me on this path to where I find myself today.

In the right place at the right time, I landed an internship at Stonewall, a leading creative marketing agency and never looked back. It led me to being the fourth hire at a mobile tech startup, launching a digital marketing agency from the lounge, managing the social media team at Woolworths and consulting to brands in South Africa, the United States and the United Kingdom.

At a career crossroads, I applied to do an MBA at the UCT's Graduate School of Business. This experience firmly reignited my passion for both marketing and entrepreneurship. I now find myself at Mobile Guardian, where I thoroughly enjoy the work I do, as well as the people I work with. It's a good place to be.

■ **What do you enjoy most about marketing and working in the tech/education space specifically?**

I am really enjoying growing a B2B brand that is considered a breath of fresh air in the mobile device management industry. It felt like the space was overdue for a shake-up. I love guiding the team and the work we're doing to craft the Mobile Guardian story. The team makes the work a genuine pleasure. We're busy updating the brand and it's something that's truly going to set us apart.

Education Technology is a very hot topic right now and understandably so. It's been quite an experience working for an edtech company during the global, enforced school closures. Marketing into the education sector has been a steep learning curve, and every market brings with it unique nuance and buyer behaviour. It's challenging, but the silver lining is that it never gets boring.

■ **Tell us more about your experience in terms of sales and marketing/working with brands?**

There are a lot of stories. Personally, the most rewarding brands I've worked on have been those where marketing has been able to influence decision-making at the product level.

“ Too often I feel marketers inherit a finished product that they then have to wrap up in a bow and sell. If you're a marketer and get the opportunity to sit at the table and influence the development of the product, take it with both hands. ”

■ **You were recently shortlisted as a finalist for the MAA's Rising Star of the Year Award. Firstly, congrats, and secondly, tell us what this recognition meant to you?**

Thank you, it was an incredible honour to be listed alongside such talented marketers. To be acknowledged by marketing leadership in South Africa is a genuine career highlight. I feel that often we can get lost in the day-to-day and fail to realise how far we have come. The nomination served as a lovely moment to step back and reflect on the journey so far.

■ **What career advice would you give to aspiring young marketing and branding professionals?**

When talking with respected marketing giants, they often seem to be curious observers with a true passion for their craft. Keep yourself curious and immerse yourself in as many different channels as possible. I believe that often we get stuck in the channels we use personally, and this can narrow our perspective. Be observant and notice how brands communicate with consumers, and how consumers react to different communication styles. Lastly, throughout your career, keep your passion and pride for marketing alive. And don't be afraid to step up and take a leap when you get the chance to do so.

■ **Tell us about your latest or most successful campaigns or ads to date, and the rationale behind them?**

Classroom in the Cloud

- **Objective:** Get primary and secondary schools to sign up to Mobile Guardian by showcasing how the software can help them navigate the unforeseen complexities of the swift move to remote learning brought about by the enforced school closures.
- **Method:** Use digital marketing channels to showcase Mobile Guardian as an easy-to-use solution that can support safe and secure remote learning on multiple operating systems.
- **Channels:** SEO, social media and email.
- **Results:** A significant lift in both brand awareness and sales. Aside from this, the campaign was named as a finalist in the Marketing Achievement Awards and the team was thrilled to be listed alongside such established brands like FNB and Discovery.

■ **Anything you'd like to add?**

If you navigated your brand through 2020/21, take a bow. It has been a challenging time to say the least and you deserve a pat on the back.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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