

Sewela Sebola, marketing manager for 5FM and Good Hope FM

By  Karabo Ledwaba

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Sewela Sebola, the marketing manager for 5FM and Good Hope FM shares her journey with us. The experienced marketer recently collaborated with her team on Good Hope FM's rebrand.



Sewela Sebola. Source: Supplied.

📌 *Tell us about what you studied and how you got to where you are today?*

I did my undergraduate in media studies and anthropology from Wits University which was followed by a PGDip in business management. I'm currently pursuing an MCom in strategic brand leadership at the moment. I've been in the media and broadcasting industry for all of my career, starting off in media strategy and the insights department for both radio and TV, and later on becoming a marketing services and trade marketing executive. I then went into sales where I was a commercial brand manager for TV and other various radio stations, before being appointed as the marketing manager for 5FM and Good Hope FM.

I've strived to be very strategic with my career choices so as to fully understand the inner and outer workings of the broadcasting business and its many facets and how each of these milestones feeds into each other and teaches you how to see the business behind the brands holistically.

📌 *What does your current job entail?*

My current job requires that I develop marketing strategies and implementation plans for the brands I serve with a clear focus on how to attain the objectives of each individual brand and its business aspects being able to attract, engage and retain and grow audiences. On a daily basis I have to strategically work out the best way to utilise budgets, manage stakeholders and identify the best route to take in securing partnerships that benefit the brand and help increase the brand equity through creating visibility for the brand, making it more relatable to its respective consumers and ultimately being able to monetise the brand through various marketing activities.

📌 *What interests you in the radio sphere of marketing?*

Radio has always been a medium that allows for more immediacy as well as flexibility in how one connects with the

audience. I love that it has morphed into a platform that not only plays on theatre of the mind through storytelling but how it continues the story through digital and other platforms to engage the listener. With 5FM and Good Hope FM, both brands have fully embraced change by exploiting all the opportunities that multimedia brands come with, being very digitally savvy and active in the visual content spaces as well to offer multiple touch points to its audiences, on air, and on the ground.



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Radio really allows one to explore various consumer experiences, making it a very well-rounded medium for both consumers and brands to really get true value from it. Its dynamism is truly unparalleled and it's the true unsung hero of all the media types. Working at such an intimate level with two iconic brands really allows me to give radio its flowers and show my appreciation for it.

▣ *What are the challenges that you face in your role?*

I think the biggest one is allocating time between the two brands with one being in Johannesburg and the other in Cape Town and being able to attend all the plans we make, especially the events and activation side. Sometimes I miss an event we planned for another station because both are busy brands, but alas, being only one manager means that I will attend some and miss others. Luckily forward planning is a great help and ensures the development phases are airtight and execution will run smoothly. I guess this challenge has also helped me to grow my multi-brand experience so it's quickly turning into one of my strengths.

▣ *What went into the marketing decisions that led to the Good Hope FM rebrand?*

The rebrand was always in the cards even before my arrival, because as much as the audience loved and were accustomed to the old logo, for over 14 years, change was inevitable. The rebrand was to re-establish Good Hope FM as a major radio player in Cape Town and entrenching the unchallenged fact that the station is a true Cape Town original.

Also we embarked on this journey not only for a CI change, but to give the station a bigger, bolder, more pronounced presence and voice in the Cape Town media landscape and be unapologetically original while doing it. The research that went into this became the core focus of the repositioning - to be truly representative of the uniqueness of Cape Town and its people, their ambitions, and their differences in what makes them unique, yet brings them together, fostering a sense of belonging. It is the station that belongs to its people since its launch as the original radio station in Cape Town.

Another poignant emphasis of the repositioning is to highlight all the talent we see coming from the Western Cape region, most of which either had a start at Good Hope FM or has been celebrated throughout the years on the station. Ultimately, this shows how Good Hope FM is constantly unearthing the things and people that are truly unique to the Mother City and bringing it all to the fore.

▣ **What impact do you want to have on the industry?**

My definition of impact relies heavily on what I'm willing to explore and see through. I really would like to leave an impression in how one can leverage integrated marketing strategies and understand an audience to create true value for the consumer by capturing the essence of a brand, and then building on that to improve its brand equity, capitalising on that, and making that profitable.

Consumers are more conscious than ever, and understanding what makes them tick and being true to the brand and the value that the brands bring to their life is what will make these two fantastic brands stand out in a big and bold way.

▣ **What kind of career advice would you give to someone with the same background as you who shares similar career interests?**

My simple advice is to go for it! Radio marketing is a very interesting field where you not only get to explore different people and how to connect with them, but you also get to know yourself and the role you play to assist a brand to reach its objectives. How your creativity comes through will largely be based on you as an individual and your team and how to deliver the best value for your brand.

One thing that's been ingrained into me from my early career days is to never underestimate the importance of research in marketing and time management, because knowing who your audience is and juggling many balls is all a part of it. But don't forget to have fun with it, it will keep you sane.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

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