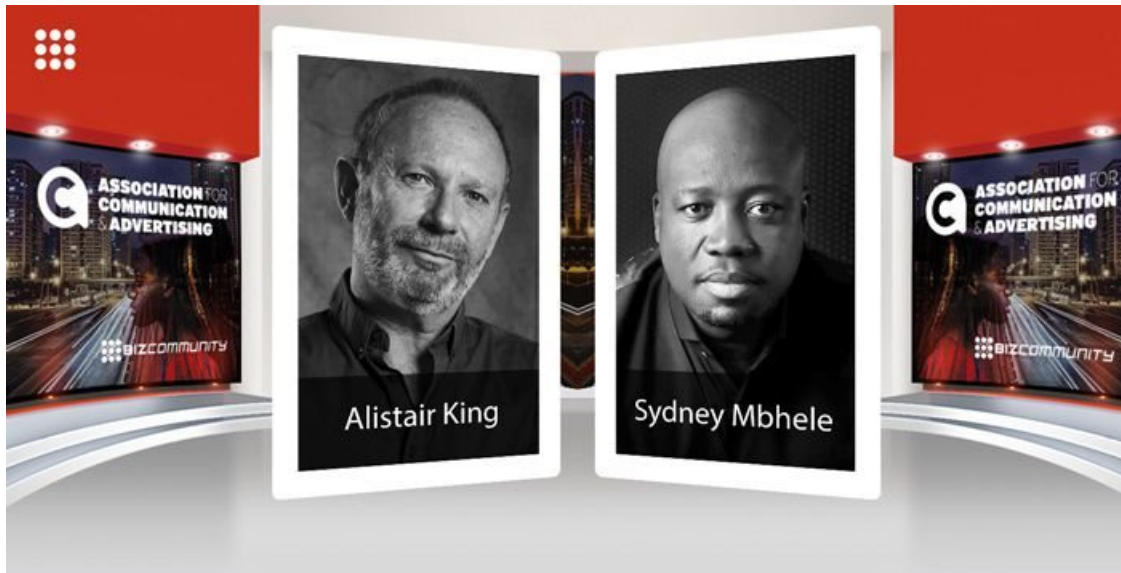


Going for Gold with Alistair King and Sydney Mbhele

Watch and listen to Alistair King, CCO and founder King James Group one-on-one with Sydney Mbhele, chief executive brand, Sanlam Group, on their recent campaign which brought home gold for The Olympian. The campaign was a groundbreaking creative solution that allowed SA gymnast Caitlin Rooskrantz to be the only athlete the world saw go through her routine in 2020 at the exact time she would have performed at the Tokyo Olympic Games.



Hosted by Rutendo Nyamuda, the discussion touches on topics such as the role of the communications industry and confident brands to be the storytellers and economic drivers behind greater inclusivity in the creative and other sectors - this being the third of our [6-part series](#) of discussions around the value of diversity and inclusion in the SA ad industry - made possible by the ACA.

This interview is also available on [YouTube](#), and at [BizTakeouts](#), via downloadable [App](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#) and [IONO.FM](#).

The role of brands in diversity

“We often talk about brands being purposeful,” said Mbhele. “That’s a really big ethos and promise that we make to the world - to be a purposeful business. People often look at companies and brands in the context of transactional relationships, but the truth, particularly in financial services, there’s a huge role that all of us can play in helping people move further in life.”

The story of Rooskrantz was a powerful story to tell, according to Mbhele, and spoke to this role that brands can play in supporting diversity. “Inclusivity is not only in the context of financial concepts, it’s also how you inspire ordinary people.”

“ *When you focus on telling these stories, purpose becomes tangible and not just words that you speak.* ”

“Emotion has always been what separates great advertising from pedestrian advertising,” said King. “That is ultimately what makes advertising valuable - when they land with an emotional weight.”



EXCLUSIVE: Blackboard signs Nikon as sponsor

Jessica Tennant 12 Oct 2021



A noticeable shift

As businesses are starting to be seen as trusted by the people who live and experience the life around them, we can start to see a shift in responsibility - and subsequently, the role of business.

“It’s not just about trying to be purposeful for the sake of, it’s important to have the client insights that you can fulfil through vigorous analysis of what drives them on a day-to-day basis,” said Mbhele. “Brands are like people. They have personality.”

Trust is apparent when businesses realise that people care about them. “It’s important to show up in that way, in the most human way possible,” said Mbhele.

“ It starts becoming about a brand telling its audience, its clients, that they see them - they're trying to connect with them, and not just sell something to them. ”

King said that a pertinent question to ask is, “How can we change our communication to reflect the world that we want?”. A lot of agencies are conscious of the power they hold in asking this question, and applying means of communication that express the importance of living in a world that is free of prejudice.

When does the magic happen?

The best advertising doesn't necessarily feel like you're always going out on a limb, according to King. A lot of the time, you are given something unique to work with, and it becomes a means to truly connect with the people you are speaking to.

“Those are not really scary emotions, it's just the willingness to have that emotion and link your brand to that emotion,” he said.

ALISTAIR KING

Chief Creative Officer King James Group. Alistair is the founding creative partner of 24-year old advertising agency network King James Group. He is one of a very small group of individuals to have been inducted into both the SA Creative Circle Hall of Fame (2017) and the Loeries Hall of Fame (2019). In 2008 Alistair was named Financial Mail Adfocus Agency Leader of the Year. Industry survey MarkLives.com has voted him South Africa's most admired Creative Leader, 2012, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. He lives in Cape Town.

SYDNEY NHLANHLA MBHELE

Sydney Mbhele is a chartered marketer (SA) with a proven track record in building brands and markets. His experience stretches Financial Services (Banking, Insurance and Investments), Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), and Telecoms. He has worked in Marketing, Communications, Sales & Corporate Affairs and led major brands for organisations that include the likes Unilever (local in South Africa & Global roles in London), SABMiller, Nedbank, Liberty, and Cell C. Sydney is currently the Chief Executive: Brand at Sanlam Group (a member of Group Exco), and Chairman & board member of the Marketing Association of South Africa. Sydney is also the co-founder and Chairman of Mentor A Boy Child (a non-profit organisation) focussing on helping young boys become better men for society.

In conversation with Rutendo Nyamuda. Founder Tinzwe Media. [@roo10dough](#) | www.tinzwemedia.com

This industry-wide series of discussions on the topic of diversity and inclusivity in the SA advertising industry, is made possible by the Association for Communication and Advertising. The ACA is committed to the transformation of the industry and to upholding the principles of the ACA Transformation Charter.

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