

International adland recruitment consultancy opens in Jozi

 By Herman Manson: @marklives

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Fabric, an international recruitment consultancy focused on the media and marketing sectors, has opened its doors in Johannesburg under the leadership of Jacqueline Rose. [Fabric](#) also has offices in London and Dubai.



Wanting to return home

According to Rose, the agency's London office (which was established in 1999) has experienced an influx of South Africans working in the marketing, advertising and communications field wanting to return home after gaining work experience in Europe. Economic growth in Europe is in shambles at the moment, due to its debt crisis.

Rose, who spent much of the past 23 years in London, returned to South Africa late last year, after which she was approached by Fabric to open its new office in Johannesburg. Rose had started her career at TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris and was later headhunted by Shell International in London to implement its new global identity rebrand. She also has a decade of experience in recruiting for both agency and client-side businesses in London.

Rose says SA has emerged with a sophisticated communications market and local agencies are seeking staff with international business experience and design knowledge. She says she is seeing lots of opportunity at senior level, while mid-level project managers are also in demand. All-rounder production managers are scarce and in great demand, she adds.

SA agencies, all keen on positioning themselves as being fully integrated, are also looking for people with experience across a wide range of sectors, including retail, digital and experiential, while in the UK this is less of a focus. Here Rose also finds a greater focus on employment legislation and thus bigger HR departments. This means new employees have to get past both the MD and HR before entering employment. BEE is, of course, also an important factor in local recruitment.

Also serves clients in Kenya

Fabric also serves clients in Kenya via the Johannesburg office. In demand are brand managers for global firms such as

the Unilevers of the world. Large agency groups such as [Scangroup](#) are helping establish increasingly sophisticated agency environments in Nairobi and other East African centres, says Rose. The PR sector in Kenya is also much more developed than many South Africans might think.

Fabrics' USP is "simply that we provide access to both international and local talent", explains Rose. "We work with all our clients on a consultative basis - we'd describe ourselves as an international recruitment consultancy. What this means is that we get to know our client's business, their business strategy and objectives, as well as their internal culture."

This focus on long-term relationships with clients results in "clients who return to Fabric when they move roles, clients who become candidates and candidates who become clients", according to Rose.

Cape Town is certainly on Fabric's radar, she says, and it has lots of great talent, but on the hiring front, things are quite quiet at the moment. An office there is around 18-24 months away. At a senior level, the much-talked-about pay gap between Johannesburg and Cape Town hasn't been noticeable on her side.

Where they won't get shouted down

As for the talent, mostly people are just looking for a job, preferably one where they won't get shouted down. Rose, who also consults on HR issues, says companies can make employees work very hard, especially since advertising is such a deadline driven industry. But little tokens of appreciation can go a long way to building up goodwill amongst staff.

In London, she recommended companies give staff the day off on their birthdays (and not deducting it from their annual leave), and some firms offered staff several 'duvet days' - when getting up is more than a staffer can face - or when lying in just proves too tempting (provided, of course, they have no meeting on the day in question).

Rose is also critical about junior and even mid-level staff being excluded from strategy meetings at many agencies. "How will they ever learn or gain experience?" she asks. Even if they only observe proceedings, it would go a great way to building their confidence and skills.

This need to be hands-on and involved means a lot of great talent are switching from the big guns to mid-sized agencies - FoxP2, Joe Public and KingJames are on a lot of people's wish list, according to Rose - where they get to work with talented creative directors and are made to feel part of the team.

For more:

- Website: www.fabricrecruitment.com
- Blog: fabric-recruitment.blogspot.com
- Twitter: [@goodrecruitment](https://twitter.com/goodrecruitment)

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The inaugural Vodacom Social Media Journalist of the Year in 2011, Herman Manson (@marklives) is a business journalist and media commentator who edits industry news site www.marklives.com. His writing has appeared in newspapers and magazines locally and abroad, including Bizcommunity.com. He also co-founded *Brand* magazine.

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