

Zetu Damane takes up chief strategy officer role at McCann

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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Zetu Damane has been appointed chief strategy officer for McCann Joburg. She is a multi-award-winning chartered marketer with 17 years in the industry where she has worked across various sectors including FMCG, financial services, pharmaceuticals, beauty, motor, and more.



Zetu Damane. Source: Supplied.

■ ***Congrats on the new role, how does it feel?***

I am super excited to be working at the world's most effective agency. The data, analytics and insight tools at McCann are amazing - enough to make a data nerd cry tears of joy. McCann has a proprietary real-time social listening platform called Live. So I will be able to track what's hot and happening with the industry, our brands, and the SA zeitgeist in real-time.

■ ***What is the first thing on your agenda?***

Two things. First is to understand the recipe for McCann's global effectiveness and then to replicate that model here. Second is to bring insight and data into the heart of what we do from a strategy and creative perspective. There's such a big gulf between having tools and actually using them. At McCann, our vision is to have our tools in action so they're not something the clients hear about in a pitch and then never see in practice.

■ ***What did it take to get you to this position?***

Like most people who end up in advertising, I sort of got here by accident. I wanted to be a lawyer, but my aunt who is an advocate told me it's nothing like Ally Mcbeal (yes that's how old I am). She said those theatrical stunts we see on American television would not fly in a South African court of law. Then I wanted to be a journalist, the same aunt gave me a

newspaper and said look for a job.

When I couldn't find any; she said 'that will be you after you study'. I'm still a bit sour about this because she gave me a local newspaper – of course there would be no journalist jobs there! My dad then gave me a book on careers – and when I picked advertising – that was it, I couldn't be dissuaded.

▣ ***What have been the challenges faced over your 17-year-long career?***

One of the biggest challenges right now is the general lack of *trendable* data specific to South Africa, especially when it comes to bottom of the pyramid consumers. The death of AMPS was a real blow. Hence my excitement about the tools I'm being exposed to through McCann's network. I also feel we're letting ourselves down as an industry in terms of demonstrating our value in achieving real business results for our clients.

▣ ***What have been the best moments?***

Every time something happens with the word win in the sentence. Whether it's picking up a new piece of business or winning an award, it always gets my pulse racing. Those who know me know I'm super competitive.

▣ ***What inspires you to keep going every day?***

The constant opportunity to innovate the ways in which we connect with consumers. Africa leads when it comes to leapfrogging new technology and being mobile first. I'm excited to create the sort of partnerships with clients that set the precedent for how we connect and communicate. I also want our work as African ad professionals to be used as best practice and feature on sites such as Warc. We need to be more deliberate about the creation and curation of content on how advertising works in Africa and emerging markets.

▣ ***Any advice for people interested in your career?***

If you're curious about everything and can get excited about understanding the pharmaceutical industry as much as the entertainment industry; you might have a future in strategy.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

Karabo Ledwaba is a Marketing and Media Editor at Bizcommunity and award-winning journalist. Before joining the publication she worked at Sowetan as a content producer and reporter. She was also responsible for the leadership page at SIMag, Sowetan's lifestyle magazine. Contact her at karabo@bizcommunity.com

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