

Kena Outdoor celebrates 20 years of media excellence

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The boundary breaking media owner celebrates an impressive 20 years in the media industry and set their sights on an even more exciting 20 years.



Lerumo Maisela (left) and Tshepo Matsepe (right), founders of Kena Outdoor

Founded in Johannesburg in 2003 by industry maverick Tshepo Matsepe, the company formerly known as Kena Media, is a communications gateway that specialises in a host of media activities. The black-owned conglomerate was formally incorporated by Tshepo Matsepe and Lerumo Maisela in 2005 and this would mark the beginning of an inspirational journey of how two men turned an ambitious dream into a remarkable reality.

Kena Outdoor is founded on a spirit of proud ownership that is backed by remarkable service delivery to a notable clientele. We are an entity that prides itself on always taking the bull by the horns and often taking the road less travelled, and this has been vital to the continued success over the two decades.



Our first site, on the Eastern Wall of the Customs House, Cape Town

The unshaken spirit of taking on juggernauts lead to the company's acquisition of a billboard permit in the highly regulated

City of Cape Town in 2004. We lobbied for the change of the restrictive laws that saw many media owners being kept out of the industry particularly in the Western region of the country. The acquisition of this particular permit was a victory for the entity as we were the first post-1994 media owner to achieve this and marked the beginning of a long journey of breaking barriers to entry for budding enterprises.

Two years later in 2006, Kena Outdoor would secure the branding rights to the Athlone Cooling Towers. In what would become typical Kena fashion, we would introduce large format OOH advertising in the country with the work done at these towers. From our early days, we have been a company that pushes the boundaries of what can be done and often take risks others will not take – only for them to emulate us years later.



Our second acquisition, located on the N1 in Midrand

Our continued lobbying against restrictive and often prejudiced bylaws would lead to the introduction of friendlier regulations, further opening the industry to newer enterprises and slowly creating a fairer environment for competition. The success of our efforts would be marked by the acquisition of permits in Mangaung, Bloemfontein in 2006.



One of our notable sites at Bara Taxi Rank at the biggest hospital in Africa, Chris Hani Baragwanath in Soweto

However, our most successful effort at creating a fairer environment for OOH media owners would begin in 2009 when we petitioned the world soccer governing body FIFA to include South African media owners and advertisers in the media strategy. This petition was the first of its kind and it called for FIFA to not exclude local media owners in favour of international conglomerates. Our rapid expansion in Soweto was the result of us successfully petitioning FIFA and subsequently becoming Soweto's largest local media owner and an integral part of the 2010 FIFA World Cup's advertising efforts.



Soweto Towers branded for FNB by Kena Outdoor (then Kena Media) 2010, image by Blaine Harrington III

We continued our path to remaining a leader in the media space as we successfully petitioned against the government's 2011 decision to ban advertisement across all types of media. Our efforts proved to the government that these advertisements were an important sector as they created and maintained employment for millions of South Africans. Furthermore, our success against the ban resulted in an industry wide boom of alcohol advertisements regardless of the media format. We championed for the ban to be lifted not only for OOH media owners but for television and digital media.



Our first site acquisition at Nelson Mandela Square in Sandton, 2013

In 2013, Kena Outdoor secured the branding rights to Sandton's Mandela Square. This pivotal achievement introduced us to a larger clientele due to the heritage site's world class status. Our work at the Square has proven time and time again that Kena is an entity that prides itself in nothing but delivering the best to the best.

2017 marked the beginning of Maisela's reign as CEO and Matsepe took on the role of chairman of group. This move to restructure the group marked the beginning of the group's takeover as both a media and corporate powerhouse.

Our efforts to uplift black professionals are exemplified in our incubation programmes which took place in 2017 and 2018. The motivation behind this was to add value to the media supply chain by empowering young people with an understanding of media buying and how they can become successful media practitioners. To date, many of these youths have become household names in the industry and some continue to work with the group as suppliers or clients.



One of our digital screens, located at Kwa Lichaba in Soweto

Forever in touch with our roots, our first digital screen was launched in Soweto in 2021 and this would mark the beginning of an impressive expansion into Digital Out of Home (DOOH). Our foray into the space has allowed us to create impactful activations and strategies for our clients, further proving that we are an entity that is always ahead of the curve.

In line with the company's long history of supporting the communities we work in, the Kena Foundation was formally established as the group's CSI initiative in 2020. The formalisation of the foundation served to officially incorporate our decades long community service to historic communities such as Orlando in Soweto.



Kena Foundation is Kena Outdoor's flagship CSI program in line with the company's spirit of giving back to the communities that support us

The end of 2022 saw the beginning of a countrywide effort of further expanding the corporation's reach across South Africa through an acquisition drive where we began to absorb smaller entities. Our goal for the near future is to takeover and transform budding entities in the OOH media space and absorb the footprint into Kena's inventory.

Kena Outdoor's celebration of twenty years in the industry marks the celebration of a dream turned into a remarkable reality. A dream that is backed by a track record of hard work and innovation that knows no boundaries. The next twenty years and beyond will see a sustained and successful expansion of the Kena brand both locally and abroad.

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