

Anele Mjacu, category marketing manager for nutrition at Coca-Cola



By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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Anele Mjacu is the category marketing manager for nutrition: plant based beverages in Africa within The Coca-Cola Company. She is passionate about how marketers can make a meaningful impact in consumers lives through products that have a nutritious edge and are easily accessible to everyone.



Anele Maku, category marketing manager for nutrition: plant based beverages in Africa within The Coca-Cola Company. Source: Supplied.

■ ***What did you study and how did you decide on it?***

As the youngest in a family, with two sisters and one brother, I was blessed enough to have a positive influence in my life on how to be grounded, navigate the pressures and endless opportunities at my disposal. The strongest influence and the person I most looked up to, and still do is my eldest sister, an extremely powerful, talented and trail blazer within the marketing profession. She knew from the get-go where my strengths were and said to me “I think you would be great at marketing!”

I have also always been intrigued by people, their behavior, what motivates them, their triggers and how they deal with everyday life. At the core of marketing is being consumer centric, taking key insights and tensions to not only create demand and growth for your product but making it meaningful in consumers lives.

So, when I chose what I wanted to study which was a Bachelor of Social Science in marketing and psychology, I had a clear plan as to how I can be prepared in a profession which I both loved and wanted to be successful in. I started my career as a graduate in 2014 and have never looked back.

📊 ***What do you do daily?***

Central to my job is building connections with the people I work with in marketing and across different departments. This integration is vital to ensure that the product is vetted throughout the whole value chain, is of high quality, drives sustainable growth, execution excellence and lastly delivers on the promise the brand makes to people.

Delivering on these daily activities is having a strong leader who not only empowers you to make decisions but continuously strives to ensure your growth in both the short and long term, which I can attribute to my current leader Zineb Benbitour.

📊 ***What is the most exciting aspect about your job?***

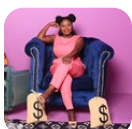
With a passion for having an in-depth understanding and connection with people. What lights me up and continually motivates me is being able to effortlessly marry the product with the consumer.

I work within the nutrition category which, at its core, is about improving the health and nutrition of consumers. Africa is a place alive with possibilities, A place where you can be who you want to be, where it's the size of your heart that matters, a continent flowing with courage and where cheering can be heard from the other side of the world.

It is the richest continent in natural and mineral resources. However, it has an exorbitantly high number of the population who experience hunger every day. It is faced with economic pressures and limited access to nutrition. At the core making an impactful change to consumers everyday lives is what drives me, and I get to do this within my role.

📊 ***What are the biggest challenges in your role?***

The marketing profession is one that is demanding, has a lot of pressure and is consistently evolving. I think working for a globally recognised brand adds an additional dynamic. Key for me is staying true to who I am and staying routed to my calling and my purpose.



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This helps me to remain calm in difficult situations, so I don't get caught up in the challenges I face but overcome it and focus on the end goal.

I believe as young women we aren't fully prepared when entering corporate. So my aim is to achieve support for young women and give them the tools they need to be successful in their careers.

🔴 ***What interested you in Coca-Cola?***

Coca-Cola is one of the biggest global companies which is known for pioneering new movements and continuously adapting with time through the in-depth understanding of consumers. Throughout my career I have been able to be a change maker, not only within product innovation, but communication. I am not being afraid to do things differently to drive disruption and engagement in the market.

🔴 ***What are your career goals?***

My goal is to grow within my profession and not only drive sustainable growth but most importantly work with a team of young women, inspire them and be a significant part of how they can grow within corporate, but also finding their purpose in life.

I have been tremendously blessed to have various women leaders who have done this for me, especially Roxie Naicker who made me realise my true potential and relentlessly following my dreams that exceed my current capacity to achieve them.

🔴 ***Any advice for those who want to work for global brands like Coca-Cola?***

I believe it is important to remain humble, grounded and trust the process when you begin your career. This coupled with the hunger to learn and consistently show initiative in all aspects of your role is key. There is a quote which I remind myself of constantly, which is "people are rewarded in public for what they have practiced for years in private".

From the beginning of my career, I have solidified my character by being the first to show up, walking into any meeting or discussion prepared. My journey from the start has been within brands that I have learnt and now practice shaping into their true potential through and unpacking their purpose.

Earn your place, step up, raise your standard, discover what you are capable of. And of course, have fun while doing it!

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 SiMug, Sowetan's lifestyle magazine. Contact her at karabo@bizcommunity.com

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