

Silke Bucker knows how to make it in a 'man's world'

By [Maroefah Smith](#)

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Having joined South African Breweries (SAB) in her early 20s, Silke Bucker knows a thing or two about making it in a 'man's world'.

As the Castle Lite brand director, she believes that the responsibility that comes from running brands of this size far surpasses just selling beer – consumers need to see what the world can be. Whether that is amplified moments of enjoyment, inclusivity or gender equality.

She lets us in how on the brand aims to make beer more inclusive, why a female perspective is important in 'male-dominated' industries and her favourite Castle Lite Unlocks and Hip-Hop Herstory performers.

■ It's been more than a year since #HoldMyBeer. How has Castle Lite become more inclusive?

Castle Lite is the biggest premium beer on the African continent and we believe that with size like that comes the responsibility to show a positive and inclusive world. Since #HoldMyBeer, all our communication portray men and women equally and in a positive and sociable light.

When we partner with talent in our hip-hop passion point, we partner with the best men and women and treat them fairly and equally as well. We also launched Hip-Hop Herstory last year – an African first all-female hip-hop experience, shining a light on the untold stories of women in the biggest genre in the world.



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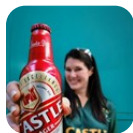
■ What are some of the challenges in making something considered 'masculine' more inclusive in a country like South Africa?

South Africa is one of the only countries in the world where beer is seen to be unwelcome to women – if you travel into our neighbouring countries, even there, women make up a bit part of the sociable beer-drinking occasion.

Because we are Castle Lite and we are known to do to things differently, we have the creative licence to push boundaries to which consumers are a lot more open to. That being said, we don't experience it as challenging at all.

At Castle Lite, our values drive our behaviour and we believe in an equal and inclusive culture – it is our responsibility to

portray what is right to the world.



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■ ***How do you think South African brands can work on being more inclusive?***

I believe that firstly it needs to be something that aligns to your brand purpose – women have been around forever and now jumping on the trend because of increased spending power is not necessarily the right thing to do.

“ It needs to be credible and authentic – don’t make it pink and call it for women, stay true to what your brand is about and deliver on that. It should be enough. ”

■ ***You work on Castle Lite Unlocks and Hip-Hop Herstory. How do you select the performers and who should we anticipate in the future?***

We are so spoiled in Africa with amazing hip-hop talent to fill our lineup that this is the most difficult decision in our brand. Castle Lite is known to do things differently and bring to life experiences no-one else can, so we always aim to partner with artists who have similar values.

Artists who do things differently, who set the trend and who aren’t afraid to be innovative. We are currently working on the Castle Lite Unlocks 2020 headline contract and I believe it is going to be the biggest announcement yet.

■ ***Who’s been your favourite performer so far?***

I really enjoyed Rouge at the 2019 Castle Lite Unlocks, Moozlie on the Sway Cyphers and Nadia Nakai’s new album is great. AKA did some amazing work at AKA On The Square, Riky Rick’s Cotton Fest was a first and something truly remarkable while Nasty C has managed to cross over every single genre with his latest music.

From an international artist perspective, I would rank them in the following way:

1. Post Malone (2019)

2. Drake (2011)
3. Travis Scott (2017)
4. Kanye West (2012)
5. J Cole (2016)

■ ***You've been working at SAB since you were 24. What have been some of the trials you've faced in your career in this 'male-dominated' industry?***

I was never brought up to believe I am different from anyone else and this has helped me greatly in my career. As a younger female in the industry, I had to “man up” quickly and learned at an early age that it is important to have a voice in the room, to play to your strengths and to never apologise.

“ As girls, we are taught about manners and how to act – which in the corporate world is sometimes seen as weak. ”

I have had amazing role models in my career and I am currently working for one of the strongest and smartest corporate women in Africa, Andrea Quayle.

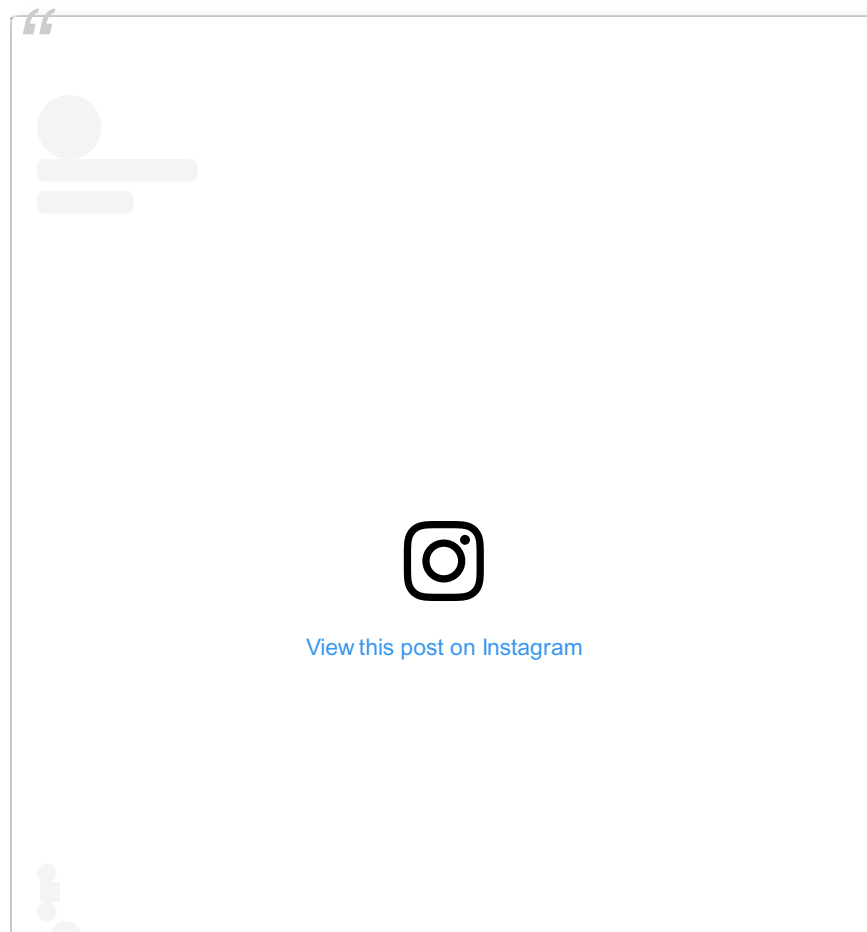
I don't take this for granted and used every opportunity to learn from women like this – how to act and what to say. And the lessons have been consistent – work hard, have a voice and substance to back that voice and lean in, no matter who is in the room.

■ ***What do you think makes a female perspective important in 'male-dominated' industries?***

Well firstly, to change the perception that anything is dominated by any one demographic ;-).

Women tend to be a little more empathetic and tuned into the how – that is where our strengths sit.

Some people perceive this as being soft, but I know that empathy partnered with a will to succeed and intelligence is a lethal combination. The work that gets delivered is just a bit more ‘well-rounded’.





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#love #CastleLite

A post shared by [Silke Bucker \(@silkebucker\)](#) on Jul 31, 2019 at 8:27am PDT



What can we expect from you in the future?

I have been so privileged on my journey to have met some amazing people who grew and nurtured by talent – I know that every glass ceiling I shatter is an easier path for someone else to the top. I will never stop pushing and still have some big surprises up my sleeve – by being unapologetic about who I am and what I want, I believe I am showing a younger generation of women that they can be what they want – and in most our cases, that is everything.

Mother, boss b*tch, wife. Whatever labels apply, we don't have to choose – not anymore.

Keep following Bucker's trailblazing ways on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and stay tuned for the biggest Castle Lite Unlocks announcement yet.

ABOUT MAROEFAH SMITH

Enthusiastic UCT graduate with a passion for fashion, film and words.

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