

Just Exists... to tell genuine African brand stories

 By Jessica Tennant

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Just Exists was formed to showcase local talents and bridge the gap between disenfranchised youth creatives and corporates, making a tangible impact in their potential career paths and creating memorable work in the process...

“By working with young dope black creatives, who, in the current climate have been out of commission, we provide a platform for them to expand on their portfolios and garner further experience which will be advantageous to their careers,” explains founding partner and MD Nomkhosi Mkhaliphi.

“Brands need to do more than just exist. Our aim is to weave brands into the daily lives of the consumers by creating and telling brand stories that pull at their heartstrings and create memory structures for many years to come.”



She alongside Ashley “Shimza” Raphala, Hoosain Van Roos, and Malenah Bapela form the leadership of the agency. They come from various disciplines in the marketing and advertising industries and have experience in strategy, ideation and through-the-line marketing, and with a sizeable number of collaborations with global brands.

“We exist in order to enrich, build and collaborate with brands through strategies that define the now and shape the future, by telling genuine African stories. We do this by partnering with creatives from townships and empowering them to showcase their work – something that, if done, is not done enough. We want to change that,” added Raphala.

Mkhaliphi has over a decade of experience within agencies, working extensively on a variety of sectors and portfolios for global and local brands in telecommunications, FMCG, banking, alcoholic beverages, services and technology. Here, she tells us how the agency came about...

■ **Just Exists is made up of four creatives from various disciplines in the marketing and advertising industries. Tell us how you all met each other and why you decided to come together to form an agency.**

We met through a previous agency that Nomkhosi worked at, she was running the Pernod account and working on brands such as Jameson, Ballantine’s, GH Mumm and Beefeater. Hussain was her client as a lifestyle brand manager for GH

Mumm. She then met Ashley “Shimza” Raphala and Malenah Bapela who manages the Shimza brand when she worked on signing him on as the Ballantine’s brand ambassador.

The agency came about when we were chatting at the launch and felt the industry needed a fresh and unique approach to how brands are being marketed and advertised. With the different expertise and skills that we each bring, we made a decision to create magic together.

■ ***Tell us more about the agency itself.***

Just Exists is the brainchild of the team and stems from an insatiable desire to tell genuine African stories for brands through the young and fresh, African creative community.

■ ***When did you launch?***

The agency was formed late last year but the official launch which was held at Friday’s Restaurant in Blue Hills Midrand was on 18 February 2021.

■ ***How did you come up with the name?***

The name Just Exists stems from our insatiable need to land brand communications to the majority populous of Africa, to let multinationals know that they shouldn’t just exist but immerse their brands into the lives of consumers thus guaranteeing that they live through them.

■ ***The agency’s mission is to showcase local talents and bridge the gap between disenfranchised youth creatives and corporates, making a tangible impact in their potential career paths and creating memorable work in the process. Please elaborate.***

By working with young dope black creatives, who, in the current climate have been out of commission, we provide a platform for them to expand on their portfolios and garner further experience which will be advantageous to their careers.

■ ***Just Exists claims to be “an agency with a difference”. What is its competitive advantage?***

Our approach is strictly based on forward-thinking and keeping abreast of marketing trends. Our use of young local creatives guarantees fresh and relevant thinking for your brand.

■ ***Just Exists is currently managing Friday’s Restaurant, One Man Show, Lebowa & Hollywood Bets CSI. Tell us about some of your work with these brands thus far.***

Just Exists manages the Friday’s Restaurant account. This is more from a website, content creation as well as eventing scope.

One Man Show is ideation, experiential and execution.

Lebowa: we handled the ideation and strategy for the brand.

Hollywood Bets CSI is work we did concurrently with the Shimuzic Foundation. Due to Covid-19, Shimza could not host the one-man show last year as this initiative is aimed at raising funds for school shoes for disadvantaged children. Hollywood Bets approached us and we were able to ideate and execute the initiative that allowed 400 children to receive new school shoes before the school year commenced in February 2021.

For more info, go to [JustExists.com](https://www.justexists.com).

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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