

# Marcel Botha to speak on manufactured stories

 By Jessica Tennant

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Ahead of this year's IAB Summit, taking place 30 May at the Joburg Theatre in Braamfontein, we interviewed speaker Marcel Botha, founder and CEO of 10XBeta to find out what to expect from his talk on 'manufactured stories' and what this year's theme of the 'new now' means to him...

## ■ **What are you most looking forward to regarding speaking at this year's IAB Summit19?**

I have been studying and working abroad for close to 20 years. In 1997 I was offered a scholarship to go to advertising school in Johannesburg based on a campaign I did for Durex. It was a cheeky commentary on the incessant layers of protection that our society clamoured towards as we learned how to navigate what was at that stage a brand new South Africa. 22 years on it remains applicable, but unfortunately critical, in a life imitates art way.

My work and that of 10XBeta has focused on equitable ways to bring transport, healthcare, shelter, sustainability, access to art and joy to all walks of life globally. In many ways, I have always been driven to invest in my community, locally and globally.



Marcel Botha

“ Over the last few years we have actively experimented with large multinational brands to tell stories about what is cool, the future, robots, sustainability and more. I colloquially refer to these as “manufactured stories” and look forward to sharing the insights gleaned from these brand partnerships and activations as they relate to having more impact on the world and society around us, while driving opportunities for incredibly successful, metrics-driven consumer engagement. ”

## ■ **I will share both a series of questions and answers, relating to how we can use brand activations to drive impressions, engagement but also more meaningful long-term stories and product credibility. You're going to be speaking about 'manufactured stories'. What are you planning to share on the topic?**

### ■ **Tell us a bit about 10XBeta and your role at the firm.**

10XBeta is a product development firm in New York City with satellites in San Francisco, Amsterdam, Johannesburg and Cape Town. We divide our time between new ventures, advertising technologies and more serious scalable product and engineering challenges. We attempt to filter for relevance and scale but are no strangers to entertaining fun and the occasional absurd request.

I founded 10XBeta in 2010 and the name is derived from the idea that we are always in Beta, a state of constant innovative forward motion. I am the CEO, surrounded by a talented team of individuals who help me realise the high-quality product outcomes that we get to share at IAB.

## ■ **What do you hope delegates will take away from your talk/your key message?**

I want delegates to think about the long tail of brand stories and product activations. How can we use this really powerful platform to align brands with meaningful impact and long-term social investment in South Africa and

further afield?

It is an incredibly hard challenge and requires navigating many gatekeepers, committed product champions and really creative use of sometimes very limited budgets.

■ ***Comment on the current state of digital transformation in your industry.***

I would argue that for 20 years I lived on this bleeding edge of digital transformation in architecture, product development, manufacturing and more recently cheap electronic prototyping methods. The latter giving rise to the most sought-after species in modern advertising – the creative technologist. He or she is really just a person who has a visceral command of contemporary technology culture, with the ability to apply these technologies in new creative and engaging ways.

■ ***What does 'the new now' mean to you?***

The 'new now' represents to me and 10XBeta a way of thinking, innovating and engaging seamlessly at a local, national and international level. It requires each of us to more critically assess how we are engaging and reinforcing meta-themes of sustainability, climate change, education and youth access.

It is my hope that 10XBeta South Africa can actively engage with these brand attendees over the coming 10 years to create meaningful outcomes for the local community, while actively influencing the quality of our partner engagements and brand stories.



#IABSummit19: The new now

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