

Jacaranda FM appoints seasoned broadcast and digital expert the new programme manager

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Charlotte Kilbane joins Mzansi's favourite radio station with over 25 years of experience.



Charlotte Kilbane, newly appointed programme manager at Jacaranda FM

Jacaranda FM's new programme manager, Charlotte Kilbane joined the beloved radio station on 24 July 2023.

In her most recent role, Kilbane was head of digital content at Primedia Broadcasting and has earned an impressive 25 year career specialising in radio, television, and digital media.

Kilbane joins Jacaranda FM with a special set of skills as a content creator and strategist, journalist, and management professional to drive integration of all channels at the station.

From understanding in-the-field work and news desk demands, to leading multi-functional teams within the broadcast sector, Kilbane brings over two decades of experience to the station.

"I'm looking forward to sharing my extensive experience in managing complex, high-pressure product launches, and large teams at a station I admire enormously. I look at content choices and processes in a

holistic fashion, with a vision to integrate traditional and new media. I feel extremely proud to step into this new role and I'm looking forward to adding value to Jacaranda FM," comments Charlotte Kilbane, programming manager for Jacaranda FM.

Kilbane also has deep focus on personal development within her team. The new programme manager has trained, mentored, coached and nurtured well over a hundred broadcast professionals, and she views the success of the content creators who have passed through her teams as the single biggest achievement of her career.

"I am so excited that Charlotte will be joining our team with her in-depth expertise as we continue to improve the integration of our content across all our platforms. Her strategic strength and varied experience will refine the stations offering to our listeners and make sure that More Music you Love remains at the heart of everything we do at Jacaranda FM," said Deirdre King, managing director of Jacaranda FM.

Kilbane will also be the first woman to be appointed in the programme manager's role, a refreshing change ahead of Women's month this year.

About Charlotte Kilbane

Why Jacaranda FM?

I think one of the biggest green flags for me was that my values align with the business'. It's an important factor for me - more so as I get older.

Then there's the indisputable fact that Jacaranda FM is a market leader with the most amazing, engaged, and loyal audience. I've admired the brand and the spirit of its community for a long time, so it's an exceptionally exciting opportunity

for me.

What's your guilty pleasure/pleasure in life?

I try not to feel guilty about much... seems a bit like wasted energy to me. But I will acknowledge that doom scrolling on Reels and TikTok is an activity that can suck up hours of time.

If you could be anyone in history who would you be and why?

Difficult question. I'm a pacifist, but I've always been drawn to the warrior queens – Boudica of the Iceni, and Nzinga of Ndongo in particular. Both were women who were brave, intelligent, and strategic. They fought for their people, and were so far ahead of their time. I'm not sure I would live up to their example, but I often try to channel their spirit.

How have you seen the radio broadcast industry change over your 25 years of experience?

I have watched, navigated, and adapted to so many seismic changes in the media during the course of my career, it would take hours to go through them all. I guess some of the most profound have been the rise of digital, and social media that have in many ways democratised the process of disseminating information. When I started, the editor was godlike – they presided over what the public got to view, to talk about, to prioritise. Now, with real time feedback in the form of analytics, it's possible to pivot so much faster, to address the needs of your audience and be a lot more targeted in delivering what they want and need in the format that best suits them.

I started as a cadet radio reporter in 1997, we were given massive brick-cell-phones that could only make calls, Marantz recorders and an array of mics. Going out on stories felt like embarking on a migration – more so if you worked in television. These days you can put your whole radio kit in your pocket, and you can deliver multimedia on the same device – it really is phenomenal to think how far we have come in such a short period of time.

Socially, and professionally I found that early in my career I was one of very few women in the various rooms I wound up in – that's changed radically over 25 years. I think the sheer power of women in this industry is clear to see across the board. That is a wonderful thing to reflect upon, and a sign that we are making progress.

Pineapple on pizza – yay/nay?

Oh dear God no. Hard no. (Did I mention no?)

What matters most to today's listeners?

Utility and community.

In a highly contested attention economy, the challenge is to be useful to our listeners and users. Information needs to be contextualised, to help busy people make the best decisions for their lives, and we, as makers of content, need to strive to anticipate our audience's needs and be where they are – be that online, in their car, or doom scrolling on social media.

Community is a huge part of what we do too, especially on the airwaves – radio is with us from the moment we wake up, and we form intimate bonds with the people we listen to. We seek out our favourite station to find out what's going on in our world, to be entertained, to sing along, to forget our lives for a bit, and to feel like part of the solution. It transcends the nuts and bolts of channel management and music choice – it's a true human connection.

What do you believe you can contribute to Jacaranda FM?

I've been very privileged to have a diverse career, across radio, television, and digital media, and that gives me a broad perspective on content as well a sense of the possibilities around content integration in the digital age.

If you could only listen to one song for the rest of your life, what would it be?

This question made my head explode. My musical tastes are broad to say the least. To choose one is impossible. I also tend to listen to albums and singles on repeat until I am sick of them, so if you ask me next week, I'll probably answer differently. One track that never gets old for me is 'Don't Fear the Reaper' by Blue Oyster Cult.

Who is your greatest inspiration/source of inspiration?

South Africans – the people I get to meet and interact with every day. Pretty much every person I meet has a story, a view, a level of humour, resilience, and thought that adds to my view of the world. There's a spirit in this country, a wry humour and a deep level of left-field thinking that sustains my soul and challenges my mind.

Tell us something few people know about you?

My love language is food, and I've been told I'm a pretty decent cook. I am a science fiction fanatic and a closet geek who can't do maths (if I could, I would self-identify as a nerd :)).

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Jacaranda FM



Jacaranda FM broadcasts at 94.2FM from Midrand, Gauteng and is one of the most popular radio stations with a substantial footprint across Mzansi. The station has the only bilingual commercial license in the country; broadcasting regionally in English and Afrikaans across Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the North West Province.

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