

# Sandton City nominated for global award

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Africa's premiere shopping destination to be honoured at awards ceremony in Las Vegas.



Adding to its already impressive repertoire of endorsements and accolades, Sandton City has now been recognised on a global scale. Africa's leading retail and lifestyle destination has been nominated for a prestigious international industry award.

Toyland Factory, the centre's festive season 2021 campaign, conceptualised and executed by Excellerate Brand Management (EBM), Sandton City's strategic property marketing agency, has been nominated in the experiential category, for a 2023 MAXI Award. This distinguished awards programme is run by the International Council of Shopping Centres. The winners will be announced at a ceremony in Las Vegas later this month.

Sandton City's Toyland Factory, which included a festive-themed, family-centric entertainment hub designed to not only deliver an immersive experience, but to also increase foot traffic, drive greater digital engagement, and increase turnover, led to a 217% increase in visitors to the festive activation compared to the pre-lockdown 2019 season.

Hosted for one month, Toyland Factory broke a five-year festive season foot traffic record, resonated with audiences, garnered incredible social media engagement, and increased tenant turnover. The campaign yielded a 13% increase in overall turnover in the centre, a 793% increase in publicity value, and a 22% increase in funds raised for charity over the same period in 2019.



L to R Michael Wilson, group marketing head at EBM, Darren Katz, managing director at EBM and Heloise Mgcina, marketing executive at Liberty Two Degrees.

Wrapped with over 1.5km in custom-designed vinyl, Toyland Factory spanned 700m<sup>2</sup> in the Centre Court, with wall graphics designed by an internationally acclaimed local animation artist. The immersive space featured the centre's top five toy retail experts with a Build-A-Bear Workshop, Checkers Toy store, Hamleys, Lego® and Toy Kingdom, each offering its own interactive experience, which enabled visitors to do their collective toy shopping in one magical space.

An 8m clock tower, sponsored by Vodacom, featured LED screens and provided a countdown to Christmas Day, while a dramatic circular stage hosted live performances daily, including ballet, aerial art and acrobatics. A Christmas jester and a fairy princess welcomed visitors to Toyland Factory, where signature festive activations, including photos with Santa, were set on a stage in front of a colourful photo-framed wall.

Children received postcards to write letters and place in a postbox to Santa, while a 12-metre-tall Disney character-inspired Christmas tree was adorned with more than 700 Disney plushies, that were donated to charity.

The tree housed a walk-through tunnel, with magical fairy lights that served as the perfect backdrop for festive snapshots with family and friends. Three gift-wrapping for charity kiosks, manned by SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) volunteers, offered two gift-wrapping options, using bespoke Toyland Factory wrapping paper. All proceeds were donated to the Sandton SPCA.

To market the experience, a comprehensive 360° advertising campaign was executed across print, radio, digital, out-of-home and in-mall media. Strategically selected media, digital creators and influencers, all aligned with the centre's brand and with a strong authentic following, were hosted at an exclusive VIP pre-launch event and were able to amplify the offering through original and engaging content on their various digital platforms. Extended trading hours ensured maximum accessibility throughout the season.





“Sandton City is known for its signature activations throughout the year, but especially during festive season, as shoppers of all ages, and from beyond our catchment area, look forward to what we conceptualise and curate, said Michael Wilson, group marketing head for EBM.

“Taking this further was a key driver in the conceptualisation for Toyland Factory, and I am thrilled that we were able to exceed those expectations,” he added.

EBM is driven by challenge and change, exploring and creating success around the unexpected. With brand disruption as the process that allows the company to immerse itself in the brand and business of its clients, EBM services South African leaders in retail and owners of the most iconic shopping centres in the country, including owners of Sandton City, Liberty Two Degrees.

A key imperative for EBM is driving greater revenue streams and integration between marketing and NON-GLA. The aim is to improve efficiencies and increase revenue streams for property owners by embracing innovative technologies including digital, e-commerce, mobile, social media, branding, Wi-Fi, and analytics.

Marketing executive for co-property owner Liberty Two Degrees, Heloise McGina shared her excitement at the nomination: "With an already-fledgling economy and a well-documented state of economic inequality, it was important to offer an experiential festive activation that was free and inclusive. I am thrilled that we were able to do exactly that, and beat former retailer and investor results over this period."

For more information and regular updates, go to [www.sandtoncity.com](http://www.sandtoncity.com) or follow the centre on social media [@SandtonCitymall](https://twitter.com/SandtonCitymall).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>