

Razor launches Public Affairs practice

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Globally award-winning public relations and strategic communications agency Razor - a member of the M&C Saatchi Group South Africa - has announced the launch of a Public Affairs practice as it expands its core services to areas that enable a more modern view of reputation management.

In 2020, Razor developed its Most Powerful Conversation (MPC) Model – geared at enabling more strategic communications programmes for clients by focusing on how these organisations and their brands influence the world around them. This model has allowed the communications output to shift from PR that looks just at channels; to one that delivers more strategic and more creative communications that leads conversations for longer.

“Public Affairs enhances our MPC model significantly. It allows us to first-hand take client conversations into the one-to-one and one-to-few stakeholder environments in a way that places companies and brands front and centre of the conversations they want to influence most. Making these ‘powerful’ is about addressing the real stakeholder foundations of a license or social license to operate, and doing it in an open and transparent way,” said Razor partner and managing director, Dustin Chick.

Razor will offer the following focus through its Public Affairs team: Stakeholder strategy engagement (both at category and company levels), regulatory strategy and engagement, legislative positioning, and impact, expanded issues and crisis capability at stakeholder level, political counsel, and advisory services for the C-Suite (including risk management) and ESG policy and advocacy support programmes.

Razor has appointed veteran public affairs professional Oscar Tshifure to lead the new practice. Oscar is a seasoned political and public relations specialist with over 14 years experience. He joins Razor from HOSI PR and Government Relations Consultancy, a bespoke agency that specialises in providing clients with political intelligence, lobbying, campaign management, crisis and reputation management, stakeholder mapping, advisory and protocol services, government representation and engagement expertise.



He holds directorships with the South African Reading Foundation (Read A Book SA) – Africa’s biggest online book club, The Sifiso Falala Foundation - a non-profit organisation set up to address specific societal, humanitarian and quality of life related challenges, The SA Sovereign Africa Rating – Africa’s first credit ratings agency that provides a sovereign rating - and the Pan Africa Media Research Organisation – who provides actionable knowledge based on the behaviours of African people, particularly surrounding the media, lifestyles, and product usage.

Tshifure is also a member of the Academic Advisory Committee for the Department of Integrated Communication at the Tshwane University of Technology and is a guest lecturer at the Department of Marketing at the University of Johannesburg.

“One thing we know for is that the environment around us is in constant flux. Equally we know that this has immediate impact on any business. Mostly we know that the impact of this, is that our stakeholders are having conversations about us, often without us. We need to directly solve this problem in a way that does not divorce stakeholder engagement from communications,” said Oscar.

“That’s exactly the space we find ourselves in. Powerful conversations mean that the right people must hear our voices at the right time. Integrating all this into a single-minded conversation is where the measurable impact will come from,” he said.

“It’s just that,” said M&C Saatchi Group founding partner and group chief executive officer, Jacques Burger. “Doing things differently and challenging the status quo has been what has driven the remarkable success of Razor as an agency. More critically, it’s about how these services now enhance the value we bring to all the clients across our group as the grapple with the ever-complex social and economic dynamics of doing business in South Africa,” he said.

“Razor continues to lead cutting edge reinvention of the communications discipline. The addition of a dedicated public affairs practice to its offering is a very natural evolution of how this impacts our work. Combining this with its proven creative heart and strategic smarts will unlock next level communications programmes and I am excited to see what comes,” said Chick.

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