

# Joe Public United Jhb growth strategy earns it FM AdFocus Agency 2021 title

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The AdFocus Awards may be the last awards of the year, but they are certainly not the least, as the winners proved, especially Joe Public United Johannesburg (Joe Public), who was named the FM AdFocus Agency 2021 at the event held in Johannesburg last night.



Source: ©Danette Breitenbach. All the FMAdFocus Awards 2021 winners

The agency is also the only agency to win in more than one category. It took home the AdFocus Large Agency of the Year as well as the AdFocus Transformation Award and AdFocus Partnership Award, with its client Chicken Licken.

## A journey of growth

“As a purpose-driven agency this award means a lot to us because we are on a journey of growth,” says Mpume Ngobese, Joe Public’s co-managing director.

“We believe that by growing our people we can grow our clients, and, in turn, this grows our brand and our clients’ brands. Ultimately this leads to growing the country,” she says.

She adds that being recognised by the FM AdFocus Awards is gratifying as the jury comprises the best leaders in the industry and the entry process is rigorous.

“The format of the Awards offers a balanced view of what an agency should offer – that of a business, but also as a creatively led business.”

## Not the biggest, but the best

Last year’s finalist in the public relations (PR) category, Razor, continued its incredible year, as it took the top spot in the AdFocus PR Agency of the Year, over last year’s winner, Eclipse Communications, and finalist Atmosphere Communications.

Dustin Chick, managing partner, says it feels “surreal”.

He says their success is due to the way they approach what they do. “We collaborate with like-minded people in a way that we prefer to work. Translated this means partnering with clients and building relationships.”

This has cost them business. “We have turned down significant work in terms of revenue because it was not a fit with our approach for one or the other reason,” he explains.

But he says the aim was never to be the biggest. “We have never wanted to be the biggest agency; it is about being the best,” he says.

## Hard work pays off

Grey took home AdFocus Medium Agency of the Year. Fran Luckin, Grey Africa’s chief creative officer collected the award. “This award is recognition of the hard work the team has put in. We are a united team, and this award is for everyone in the office.”



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## Making a difference that matters

Recognised as the AdFocus Lifetime Achiever 2021, Thebe Ikalafeng, founder and chairperson of Brand Africa, dedicated his award to the many people who had an impact on his life.

He describes leaving his grandmother’s house to attend Wits and then dropping out and how this led him to the US.

“After studying in the US, I worked at Colgate in New York. I had zero ambition, but to be good at what I do,” he says.

Returning to this country in 1994, he says it was an interesting time. “We needed examples and evidence that we can be excellent at what we do,” he says.

It was after he left corporate that he began to question himself. “Is our work purposeful and what is our purpose? I wanted to make a difference that would matter, and to be authentic in what I do,” he says.

So began a journey that would take him across Africa, inspiring him to become the global African thought leader and authoritative voice in branding in Africa he is today.

## **2022 chairperson**

Outgoing AdFocus Awards chairperson, Tumi Rabanye, says the awards are an achievement for the industry. “The winning agencies are the gamechangers and they are driving the AdFocus brands three decades later,” she says.

Faheem Chaudhry, partner, managing director, M&C Saatchi Abel, will take up the reins from Rabanye, as the 2022 AdFocus Awards chairperson.

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