

Meet new creative digital sports marketing agency: Retroactive

Today marks the launch of Retroactive, a new creative digital sports marketing agency, co-founded by former Springbok Bryan Habana and Mike Sharman, co-founder of Retroviral Digital Communications.



Mike Sharman, Bryan Habana and Ben Karpinski.

The agency will manage fully integrated digital marketing campaigns for customised sport sponsorships and events, combined with its strategic, creative, digital and analytical capabilities that will drive measurable business growth for clients.

“Sport truly transcends all boundaries, in South Africa, and around the world, yet we feel it is the most underutilised brand engagement opportunity available,” says Sharman. “Historically, brands have tended to sponsor a particular sport because the CEO or CMO happens to enjoy or participate in it. Doing so has meant that they’ve missed the opportunity to use sports sponsorship to address or achieve a strategic business or communications objective.”

“ Sponsorship for sponsorship’s sake seldom achieves the full potential that a strong sports marketing campaign can deliver, and we have seen that a strong campaign that connects the right athlete and sport with the right audience can achieve exceptional results. We’re inspired to achieve great results for our clients, and we’re excited about the potential in this industry. ”

According to [Momentum Worldwide](#), sports fans feel increasingly ambivalent towards brands in sports events. Over a third of respondents said that sport is the most important thing in their life. However, approximately half of fans agree that sponsors don’t have sports’ best interest at heart, and over 80% believe that sponsors never consider the fans. This is where the opportunity lies for Retroactive.

The agency will help brands connect with the hearts and minds of sporting fans, and will identify ways to create genuine value and resonance for them.

“ These are the brands that will be ahead of the game in understanding and embracing changing attitudes towards

athletes and the changing dynamics of what it means to be a fan. ”

“I’ve been fortunate enough to experience sport from both the player and brand perspective, based on my commercial ventures that I have been involved in during my professional rugby career,” says Habana.

“Retroactive has been inspired by innovative thinking in digital sports marketing that won’t only challenge the rules but aims to [break them](#). We’re excited to blend our collective experience in sports and digital marketing to achieve exceptional, measurable results for our clients and the players who need to be guided in terms of the commercialisation of their personal brands,” he adds.

Habana, while internationally renowned for his sporting achievements, has found a passion for digital entrepreneurship over the past few years and recently completed a business unit manager course through the Toulouse Business School, during his time with French rugby club Toulon. He based his final thesis on a social media application that addresses the issue of transitioning from professional sport into the business world.



Q&A: Life-hacks on travelling with Bryan Habana

20 Aug 2015



He has also invested in a procurement solutions company in South Africa called Procura, that aims to add value to its clients' procurement cycle in the form more efficient and affordable procurement and logistic systems. Sharman's success in digital marketing is multiple award-winning and well-documented. Their combined professional experience and personal passion for sport will prove a formidable combination.

Supporting Habana and Sharman in the day-to-day running of the agency is sports authority Ben Karpinski. Better known in sporting circles as [The Bounce](#), Karpinski will fulfil the role of creative director, drawing upon his know-how on the business of sport commercialisation and consumer insights to provide a distinct pulse to the agency.

“In 2009 I decided I wanted to do more with my marketing background and make my professional life all about sport. I didn’t know how to go about this at the time, but social media suddenly became a phenomenon that brought fans together, and with that a life of content creation in my desired field was born,” says Karpinski.

Retroactive will fulfil several roles for its clients, including:

- Creative digital marketing
- Greater return on investment from sponsorships and campaigns
- Conceptualising the right fit between brand and sport
- Collaborating with sports personalities to aid them in better commercialising their social platforms
- Re-commercialising live sporting experiences that engage with fans



Shaka Sisulu acquires 51% stake in Retroviral Digital Communications

13 Jun 2018



In June this year, Retroviral announced that Shaka Sisulu acquired a 51% stake in the agency where he now assumes the role of chairman. He will perform the same function at Retroactive, where he'll once again bring his deep experience and extensive network to the agency and its clients.

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