

Haseena Cassim is all about zeal

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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Haseena Cassim, the managing director of YFM, is a passionate woman who believes in making your own opportunities.



Haseena Cassim, managing director of YFM

After nine years at YFM, Cassim has some significant experience in working with people and understanding the needs of the radio industry.

Here, she tells us more about YFM, her views on the industry, and where her passion is strongest...

 ***Tell us a bit more about your role as managing director at YFM.***

Aside from the typical operational management of the station, this position requires me to establish a vision and accompanying strategy, as well as have the ability to adapt to the needs of the audience and environment.

There are many moving parts to leading a brand like YFM, and understanding the value and impact that the brand has on

people's lives can almost become unnerving at times. YFM has never and never will be just a radio station. It is a culture!

■ ***Tell us a bit more about YFM.***

YFM is an inexplicably addictive brand that has a rich history of being the first-ever traditional media platform that represented the voice of young black people.

It has created stars, set trends and created and documented South African, Gauteng, and Jozi youth culture. If we look around the industry today, there isn't a place that YFM has not touched. Its energy is magnetic and its journey is reflective of life.

The most recent #BeTheNext campaign is a testament to YFM's commitment to harnessing new talent. We undertook this on-air talent search with strong support from campus radio stations across the country, and allowed wildcard entrants to open the industry, despite not being able to run our flagship Y Academy programme due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

■ ***What do you love most about your work?***

The people, the energy and the understanding that YFM, as a brand, changes lives.

■ ***How does YFM use its platform to showcase and inspire female talent?***

The 2021 line-up sees the first-ever solo female-driven Drive Time show in the history of YFM.

Khutso Theledi definitely holds it down! Operationally, the station also has women in 60% of senior leadership roles. As a female leader understanding the industry dynamics, I strive to ensure that female talent has equal opportunity to rise and shine their light.

■ ***Tell us a little bit more about campaigns/projects you have been a part of that made you proud.***

This year, we launched a daily night-time talk radio segment to provide a platform for young people to talk about and be educated about issues they face. This has given the audience a space to feel heard and understood and is performing very strongly.

In May, we kicked off the #BeTheNext radio talent search campaign. From this, we will award one person – to be selected by our audience – a contract to present on the station.

We can make serious content accessible, and also continue to push boundaries. Recently, we introduced jazz to our audience (in partnership with the National Arts Festival) in a completely different way.

■ ***What can the radio industry do better to involve women in audio entertainment?***

There are many initiatives out there currently but I do believe that having a single forum with a clear objective of just sharing knowledge would help, sort of like a talent tank.

■ ***If you could send one message to all women trying to enter the industry, what would it be?***

The same as it would be for anybody: "Do the hard work, stay focused, cut out the noise and realise that you have to be adaptable and open to evolution."

■ ***What is the best advice you have ever received?***

"Your attitude defines your success or failure." I didn't understand this completely until I realised that if you focus on blessings and being happy, you will find it even in the worst of adversities. This choice asset will be your lighthouse in the worst of storms.

■ ***What are your favourite things to do in your free time?***

I love the outdoors, there is something so liberating about being out in nature. Whether it's out on a hike or having my morning run. Eating good food is also definitely part of my top two favourite things.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

Freelancer specialising in games and entertainment | My first loves are writing, music and video games

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