

# Dr Carla Enslin - Vega School

 By [Shan Raddiffe](#)

11 May 2021

As someone who not only works in brand strategy and business development but teaches it too, the Vega School's Dr Carla Enslin holds a wealth of theoretical knowledge to match her practical experience. In this look #BehindtheBrandManager, Enslin gives us some insight into the creation of Vega's programme development, how social media has altered the brand management curriculum and what we can expect from the institution in the near future.



Dr Carla Enslin

## Eat, sleep, breathe, brand

Enslin wears many hats in her work as head of Postgraduate Studies and Research at The IIE's Vega School, while also managing Strategy and New Business Development at the institute.

With her PhD in Marketing Management from the University of Pretoria, Enslin's interest and experience in brand building includes the design and implementation of brand identity systems, brand alignment and contact strategies. She lectures widely in Africa and abroad and conducts corporate training, consulting and coaching, is a course supervisor and trainer for the Master of Arts and the Doctorate in Brand Leadership at Vega, a Research Associate at the University of Stellenbosch Business School and Teaching Fellow at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business.

### ■ *As one of the founding members of Vega, how has your experience shaped the institution's curriculum?*

**Enslin:** Virtually all our academic staff are industry practitioners too. We combine this powerful resource with academic and research rigour to develop and evolve future-directed curricula for all our programmes. The key factor is to plan and anticipate for industry needs a decade in advance – and then manage the long time frames for development and subsequent government review and approval processes. The IIE Vega programme development team employs industry networks and are active researchers, deeply invested in their different fields of study. I have attempted in my own industry projects and research to contribute a holistic and systemic orientation to strategy training at Vega.

### ■ *As an educator, what is the first or most important lesson you always teach your students?*

**Enslin:** To recognise and respect the strategic and creative value of delaying hasty judgment in order to arrive at deeper human insights – this requires maturing your ability to flow between states of inside-out (the organisation's perspective and goals) and outside-in (real-world conditions) sensemaking. We want our students to become mindful of building meaningful brand ecosystems that engage complex stakeholder networks.

■ ***What are some of the biggest misconceptions new students have about brand management?***

**Enslin:** The mistaken view that brand management comes into play only once you have a business model, a registered name and a product/service to offer. That is putting the cart before the horse.

The belief that brand, marketing and communication strategies are one and the same. These are very different horses for different courses!

The limited idea that brands are commercial constructs (only). This denies the social and human construct of brands.

■ ***How has social media changed the face of the brand management curriculum?***

**Enslin:** It has woken us up to the need for a holistic and systemic orientation to strategy training. Curricula cannot and should not be shaped simply to keep up with social media developments for the sake of it. Its content should be firmly embedded in the thoughtful and executional principles that enable nimble planning and concept development across platforms, channels and contact points. Nimble planners can engage with any space or place to break through clutter and develop relevant and unique contact strategies.

■ ***What is your favourite/'can't live without' tool (be it a technique, site, app, programme) in your teaching arsenal?***

**Enslin:** The teaching techniques to equip students with the skill, confidence and respect to dig down deep - to arrive at meaning and to identify what genuinely matters. And to disrupt those stale buzzwords and concepts!

■ ***Which channels do you find are the most successful for Vega's brand communication?***

**Enslin:** Our students, first and foremost. They become our brand ambassadors wherever they work in the world at large. We also rely on sponsored and self-generated content on social media to support us to engage more fully with all our stakeholder groups.

■ ***If it weren't for the institution, which brand would you want to work for and why?***

**Enslin:** I can imagine it would be a privilege to work for any brand that understands why it matters and that genuinely adds value to people's lives – I am fortunate to work for such a brand and with like-minded clients and researchers.

■ ***What can we expect from Vega in the near future?***

**Enslin:** We are a driven teaching institution that will keep delivering graduates who wish to make a real difference in their respective fields. We will offer more and more programmes of value in the near and medium terms as we strive to better our academic output and research. We will continue to grow our social impact, as evidenced with the launch of our Doctorate in Brand Leadership (2021) and our MCom in Strategic Brand Leadership (2022). It is our aim to continue serving and evolving our reasons for existence – the world needs more creative solution seekers, designers and brand planners with the desire to make a difference.

## ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

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