

ASA seeks permanent CEO, offers BEE points for industry support

The Advertising Standards Authority is seeking applications for a permanent CEO and is offering BEE scorecard points against the new 'Responsible Social Marketing' element in exchange for financial support.



Sergey Nivens © 123RF.com

The self-regulatory body, mandated to uphold ethical, honest and responsible marketing practices in South Africa, will be interviewing prospective candidates for the position of permanent CEO during September 2017.

The ongoing Business Rescue plan, adopted by creditors on 25 April 2017, hopes to return the ASA to solvency, limit overheads, reduce litigation risk and implement a sustainable funding model. To this end, a new board was elected in May 2017, with Gail Schimmel taking up the position of interim CEO soon thereafter.

Prospective candidates are invited to submit their CVs to the Business Rescue practitioner's representative, Tiaan Herbst via email at tiaan@eripio.co.za. The latest date for submission of the application is 15 September 2017. Interviews with applicants will be held during September 2017 and an announcement on the outcome of the process will be made by the ASA shortly thereafter.

Gain BEE points

Agencies and businesses that are measured on the Marketing, Advertising and Communications (MAC) BEE Sector Charter can score BEE points by making financial contributions to the ASA.

The Interactive Advertising Bureau South Africa (IAB SA) and the ASA, working with BEE consultancy Siyakha, have now confirmed that agencies may claim up to three scorecard points against the new 'Responsible Social Marketing' (RSM) element by providing financial support to the industry self-regulatory body mandated to uphold ethical, honest and responsible marketing practices in South Africa.

The current MAC Charter target for RSM expenditure is 1% of net profit after tax (NPAT), although this will increase to 2.5% of NPAT from 31 March 2018.

Defining Responsible Social Marketing

The MAC Charter defines 'social marketing, as the use of any marketing communications platform for the purpose of encouraging society to embrace habits and practices that contribute to its collective wellbeing and welfare'. This can be achieved by cultivating new habits and practices, encouraging adoption of and reinforcing socially good behaviour, discouraging antisocial or socially destructive behaviour and attending RSM initiatives.

Siyakha CEO, Dionne Kerr believes that the inclusion of the RSM element was intended to specifically influence the role that business has to play on transformation through challenging and influencing the norms of a society that still shows strong evidence of its discriminatory past.

"It is pertinent that people with lower levels of education or access to information will make buying decisions that have significant health, lifestyle, societal or financial consequences. Therefore, alongside the commitments imposed on industry to make services and products available to previously excluded sectors of society, the MAC sector carries a parallel responsibility to ensure that access to products and services do not serve as a detriment or risk to those individuals."

The Charter identifies driving under the influence of alcohol as an example of one such destructive behaviour, and explains that expenditure on initiatives intended to combat it would be considered an RSM contribution. The ASA administers and enforces the Industry Association for Responsible Alcohol Use (ARA)'s advertising code in Appendix A of the ASA's Code of Practice, and in so doing plays a critical role in supporting the ARA and promoting socially responsible advertising relating to alcohol consumption.

Industry, ASA support

"We are thrilled that we could find a solution that not only helps demystify the new MAC Sector Code and identify a new, easy way for agencies to score BEE points but also supports the ASA and promotes fair and honest marketing practices in areas where they are critically needed," says Andrew Allison, head of regulatory affairs for the IAB SA. "This is an example of how BEE can work to protect and improve the lives of South Africans, whilst also advancing the marketing and communications sector."

According to ASA Interim CEO Gail Schimmel, "The MAC Charter recognises the important role that the ASA plays in responsible marketing and protecting consumers. It is very satisfying to see the Charter used in a manner that supports the ASA at a time that it needs it most."

For further information or to contribute to the ASA, email gail@asasa.org.za.