

Boomtown looks to the future as it celebrates 25 years

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1 February marks 25 years since Neil Hart founded one of South Africa's leading independent agencies, but Boomtown is celebrating by looking to the future.



Photo credit: Karl Schoemaker

While the agency is taking a brief look back at its history, via a timeline, and sharing quotes and photos from the archives, the majority of the agency's 25th anniversary will be squarely focused on the next 25 years.

Boomtown Managing Director, Andrew MacKenzie remarks on the milestone saying: "Boomtown is uniquely positioned as one of the South Africa's oldest agencies, we have seen how the consumer has evolved, experienced tech change how we communicate and we have helped brands enter the South African market and cross borders to enter new territories. But the future's exciting and we want to celebrate 25 years with a future-focussed approach. We've had an amazing quarter century. But what's next?"

Our team are the industry's future leaders, so who better else to ask about the next 25 years? "We invited our employees to make predictions about the future of the industry," adds MacKenzie. "Our people are our most important asset and we're invested in them, so we were interested in their opinion."

Products compete against each other via algorithms to gain traction into the market, and AI reduces the amount of clutter in the market. But stories haven't lost their allure and when choices are made by individuals for products of desire it's the story that makes or breaks brands.

- Anthony Heim
Creative

In 2044 computers are consumers, in the form of robots, home concierge systems and brain-implemented chips. The latter helps consumers concentrate on more creative pursuits instead of deciding which washing powder to purchase. And,

most of the decision-making is influenced by the information technology systems that surround us.

- Hilton Mashonga
Creative director

2044 is a paperless world, print companies have reinvented themselves. And the working environment has changed, freelancers are the workforce, a team who o quickly adapt to change, and bulk up talent on demand.

- Simon Browne
Client services

People are smart but computers are smarter and the world is systematic with computer generated versions of us doing everything. Our every move is influenced by an algorithm, our best friend, and our daily tasks are automated.

- Meagan Viljoen
Creative

There's no digital agencies or advertising agencies, the skills and services required will have evolved to such an extent that a new type of business has emerged. It's a business that's an amalgamation and extension of things that we were only at the tipping point of in 2019.

We don't learn from the 'greats of our industry' for the way forward, we turn to the Gen Z's and Gen Alphas. The pace at which the world is changing is too rapid to keep looking too far back... instead innovative thinking, agility and most importantly, a growth mindset keeps us relevant.

- Lara-Anne Derbyshire
Strategy

As we have seen in the previous 25 years and the changes that technology has had on consumers, the economy and how we interact and engage with one another. "We're planning our future right now, we're always planning for tomorrow," MacKenzie added. "The entire approach, structure and transformation strategy is all about ensuring our survival. And, the best way to predict the future is to create it ourselves."

25 years of possibility

Boomtown was founded in 1994 in the rural Eastern Cape through the sale of two cows to purchase its first computer. The agency and its team have never forgotten its humble beginnings, it keeps us grounded. As a proudly independent agency, we utilise our unique combination of cultural relevance, creativity and commerce to connect with consumers' hearts and help build iconic South African brands.

Possibility for Boomtown is about 25 years of growth from one small, brave decision to having a significant impact across the continent. It's about continually asking What's next? What's next for you, your brand, your market, your consumer?

Possibility is about adapting to change. About being agile enough to be constantly innovating as markets move and our country transforms.

Boomtown has realised the possibilities for many brands from:

- Growing SA's most iconic coffee brand to achieving its highest market share in history.
- Year-on-year double digit growth of an iconic SA beer brand through a bi-modal strategy.
- Making the 183-year legacy of a global cement company relevant in Southern Africa.

- Contextualising a perceived men's footwear brand for an emerging woman's market
- Recruiting doctors to Africa through a world-first creative solution.

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Boomtown



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