

# Herdbuoys takes fledgling agency under its wing

In the cut-throat environment that is today's advertising world, compounded by tough economic conditions in which clients are hard to come by and competition is fierce, it would seem like career suicide for three young twenty-something's fresh out of college to start up their own agency with absolutely no work experience.

But that's exactly what Palesa Madumo, Faith Mokale and Gugu Masina did – under the mentoring eye of HerdBuoys McCann-Erickson.

Short Left (a local taxi term often used as an indicator of one's point of disembarkation) – as the new agency is known – began in December 2002 in the homes of its three founding members who had no office equipment, no finance and more importantly, no clients. What they did have, however, was a fresh new advertising idea based upon their understanding of the youth market. The company started with small projects that included designing corporate identities and brochures for smaller businesses, but the work was hardly enough to sustain the team, let alone afford them the budgets to be able to pitch on new business in order to provide clients with a working example of their new advertising concept.

Comments, Mokale, "We chose to embark upon the road less traveled and it was certainly very bumpy. People were less than optimistic about our chances to succeed because we were young and inexperienced. But we were determined to make it work despite the numerous obstacles we faced – such as having our status meetings on Saturdays and spending money that we didn't have on pitches that we didn't have a hope of winning!"

Determined not to give up on their ambition, the group approached HerdBuoys M.D. Happy Ntshingila and vice-Chairman, Dimape Serenyane for 'big brother' advice. Ntshingila and Serenyane were so impressed by the youngsters' ideas and enthusiasm that they offered to host the team in the agency, providing them with free office space in which to work, the use of all HerdBuoys' office equipment, mentorship from some very experienced HerdBuoys staff and, most importantly, the opportunity to earn a living.

Comments Ntshingila, "These three young girls are incredibly brave to take the decision to go on their own and I admire their guts and determination. They have an excellent understanding of the youth market and some very exciting and unique ideas for advertising to that market. We're only too happy to be able to provide them with the environment in which to realise that potential."

The team works as an independent company on projects passed onto them via HerdBuoys as well as those secured in their own capacity. Says Ntshingila, "It's of great benefit for us to have this smaller agency under our roof as it affords us the opportunity to assist our clients with those smaller projects that would not have been financially viable for our agency, but are exactly what Short Left having been looking to work on. In addition, we can benefit from their young, fresh approach towards doing the same old things we've been doing for years!"

Ends Modumo, "We're really grateful to have been taken in by HerdBuoys as it has given us some much-needed confidence in our abilities and, of course, invaluable experience on real accounts with actual clients!"

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