

"Your power lies precisely in your deeply authentic self" - Nwabisa Makunga

 By Jessica Tennant

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Nwabisa Makunga has been promoted to the editor of Tiso Blackstar's Eastern Cape titles, *The Herald* and its sister publication the *Weekend Post* as of this month, having been the deputy editor of both publications for the last two years.

Here, Makunga tells us that what excites her most is the prospect of quality journalism being recognised as a business worth investing in...

■ ***Congratulations on your promotion. What does your new role entail and what are you looking forward to?***

In a nutshell, my job is to lead a team of journalists to produce engaging content published over our multiple media platforms and consumed by readers who want to make sense of what is happening around them, mainly in Mandela Bay and the Eastern Cape.

I'm looking forward to seeing us work in a new way, becoming more innovative storytellers and giving our readers more value in these publications.

■ ***What excites you most about these titles?***

They are both strong media brands in the Eastern Cape. That alone gives us a lot to leverage. Our job then is to have them reach out to you in the most convenient and timeous way for you and with compelling and relevant content. These brands must be a platform where our readers can engage each other constructively over issues most important to them.



Nwabisa Makunga



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■ ***What do you love most about your career and specialised field?***

I am storyteller by nature.

“ The opportunity to listen to people, to tell their stories of hardship and triumph, to document their journey and that of our nation, to speak truth to power and to promote accountability and democracy – as hard as it is at times, it is still the best job in the world to me. ”

■ ***What did it take to get to where you are today?***

When I was an intern reporter, someone once said to me: ‘Keep your head down, do not get entangled in toxicity, do what you need to do and do it well’. I would like to believe that that is how I got here.

■ ***Comment on the current state of publishing.***

I am excited by the prospect of quality journalism being recognised as a business worth investing in.

“ The relationship between the editorial and commercial arms of the media is a co-dependent one. Without quality journalism, you cannot attract readers. Without readers, you have no advertisers. ”

Our job as media managers is to navigate the dynamics that come with these responsibilities in a manner that ensures that neither of them are compromised, but instead they are strengthened.

■ **What's at the top of your to-do list in your new position?**

To build a strong team where each of us embraces the role we must play to produce excellent content published on multiple platforms.

■ **What are you currently reading, watching and/or listening to for work?**

I just finished reading *The Lost Boys of Bird Island* by Mark Minnie and Chris Steyn. (You can't live in PE or work for *The Herald* and not read that!) I'm also reading *My Father Died for This* by Lukhanyo and Abigail Calata, as well as *Ramaphosa's Turn* by Ralph Mathekga. By virtue of what I do, I am always glued to news channels in the office and at home much to the annoyance of my poor family!

■ **Tell us something about yourself not generally known.**

I am an extreme introvert. I really struggle to make random conversations.

■ **This Women's Month, what is your word of encouragement to aspiring women in business?**

Your power lies precisely in your deeply authentic self.

More about Nwabisa Makunga: Born in Uitenhage, Makunga studied journalism at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and holds a post-graduate qualification in media management from Wits University. She first joined *The Herald* as an intern in 2004 and was later appointed to the company's Garden Route bureau in Knysna. Following a stint at the bureau, she relocated to Johannesburg as part of the then Pearson/Johncom postgraduate journalism programme. She quickly worked her way through the ranks as news editor of *The Herald* and later news editor at *Business Day* in Johannesburg.

In 2011, Makunga was appointed as politics and business editor at *The Herald*, a position she held for about six years before she was promoted to deputy editor. In her weekly column, *And Another Thing*, Makunga tackles current affairs and topical political discussions, highly regarded as conversation starters in The Bay.

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