

Meagan Fester, Champ's new MD



By [Jessica Tennant](#)

23 Mar 2021

Meagan Fester, a well-established sponsorship specialist with experience working across blue-chip brands both locally and internationally, is the Duke Group's newly appointed MD of its new sponsorship marketing agency, Champ...

Here, she tells us that the impact of Covid on live sports and specifically sports sponsorships has been significant and in a very short space of time. "Rights-holders and sponsors found themselves stuck in the 'Covid rabbit hole' not being able to activate their sponsorships. Sponsors are not getting any 'traditional' returns and sports bodies, federations or rights-holders depend upon the income from sponsorships. Although we see the industry slowly opening up again, there has been an irreversible change."



Meagan Fester

But in that, she sees opportunities and new ways of reviving brands' connection to consumers passion points. "Despite the current global uncertainty, this is such an exciting time for both brands and consumers. At Champ, we're focused on the connection point between brands and consumers. We see this as the key differentiator moving forward and have already done a lot of work in understanding how best to integrate the services of the group to clients benefit."



BREAKING: Introducing Champ, Duke's new sponsorship marketing agency

11 Mar 2021



■ When did you join the Duke Group?

We made the decision to establish Champ, within the Duke Group towards the end of last year.

■ How do you feel about joining and heading up the Group's new sponsorship marketing agency?

It's a very exciting time for the industry. There has been so much change driven by issues like Covid and technology and I feel very fortunate to be given the opportunity to head up what we hope will be a unique sponsorship offering in South Africa. Champ has been established to specifically take advantage of specialist expertise that sits within the Duke Group. The Group has a depth of talented people, which creates a great culture and energy. It is unlike anything I have previously experienced.

■ What is your vision for the agency?

The future of this business lies in its ability to find "strategic creative solutions" that meet our clients' business challenges through exploiting the real connection points that exist between brands and consumers. Agility, forward thinking and relevance become very important fundamentals of how we respond to these business challenges. My goal is to ensure that everything we do is underpinned by authenticity, relevance and a shared value.

■ What are you most looking forward to / what's at the top of your to-do list?

Unlocking new opportunities, producing great work with measurable results and developing a winning formula that continues to drive business growth for our clients.

If we have learnt anything in the past 12 months it's that, in order to survive from a business perspective, we have to adapt to our rapidly changing world. We saw fans changing the way they participate and engage with the activities they are most passionate about, be it sports, entertainment or purpose-led initiatives. This has provided endless opportunities for brands to reinvent how they engage and communicate with consumers.

■ What excites you most about the agency?

Simply put, integration. Being part of a group with the full backing of specialist agencies in your corner is a key differentiator for us and we have already done a lot of work understanding how best to integrate the Group's offerings to ultimately benefit our clients.

■ What do you love most about your career and industry and sponsorship marketing in particular?

What I value most about my career and industry is that no two days are the same. The industry is filled with new experiences, connections, purpose and impact. I have been fortunate enough to travel to incredible places around the world, form relationships with amazing people and, most importantly, make a difference through work I've done.

■ Tell us a bit about your background/experience and how this has equipped you for the role.

I fell in love with sponsorship 10 years ago and have been fortunate to have worked with some of the best in the sponsorship industry. I've been exposed to all the various facets of what makes a great sponsorship agency. My experience working across blue chip brands in SA and internationally allowed me to successfully manage sponsorship portfolios and deliver exceptional returns for brands. My approach has always been to never stop learning, always challenge yourself and most importantly to never compromise what you believe in.

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

To start building the house of Champ. We have already made great strides in a very short space of time, including landing a few key clients, which we plan to announce very soon.

■ ***What are you currently reading/watching/listening to?***

I am currently reading *Post Corona: From Crisis to Opportunity* by Scott Galloway – the man is a pure genius!

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

I am a bit of a red wine connoisseur. My favourite is a Raymond Reserve Selection Cabernet Sauvignon – a wine I'd describe as beautifully suave and nostalgic.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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