

# Dustin Chick to head up M&C Saatchi Abel's new PR agency

 By Jessica Tennant

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In case you missed it, M&C Saatchi Group South Africa has launched a new strategic PR agency called Razor, to expand its service offering into the PR and influence space. The agency has appointed Dustin Chick from Ogilvy South Africa, where he spent almost 10 years as head of strategy: influence and public relations.

"It felt like the right time to take on a new challenge, both personally and professionally," said Chick. "With M&C Saatchi Abel Group being named Large Agency of the Year at the 2019 AdFocus Awards and looking to expand its service offering into PR and communications with the launch of Razor – heading up the business seemed like a natural next step, and an immensely exciting opportunity to reinvent public relations in South Africa."

Chick was recently recognised by the *Holmes Report* as one of the top 25 influencers in public relations across Europe, the Middle East and Africa. "It's humbling to be recognised at such a level, even more so when you are surrounded by a group of people that push boundaries for the work we do as a PR industry as a whole."

Here, he tells us more about his new role as managing partner, what excites him most about joining a brand new agency and how he plans to modernise the public relations offering.

## ■ ***Congrats on your appointment. How do you feel about it?***

Thank you. I feel excited, but at the same time incredibly focused on the opportunity to build and craft an amazing public relations agency. I am extremely motivated by the incredible group of people that surround me from across our group.

## ■ ***What is your new job title and what does your role entail?***

My new title is managing partner, and it's just that – a partnership of incredibly talented and committed people. My initial focus is establishing the Razor business, defining our proposition and building understanding of it internally in our group. From there it's a go-to-market and big focus on talent.

## ■ ***What excites you most about joining a brand new agency?***

The most obvious point is that it's new. This brings with it the opportunity to craft something unique and to create a modern public relations offering for companies, their leaders, the brands and their products. This lets us create a public relations solution that is inherently measurable and focused on creating the right types of conversations for our clients, not just in the media coverage we can generate for them. A new agency can deliberately craft a PR offering that is forward-looking and very much on top of global communications trends.

## ■ ***Tell us more about Razor and its offering.***

Razor is the PR agency in the M&C Saatchi Group in South Africa. We service clients from both Cape Town and Johannesburg.



Dustin Chick heads up Razor, M&C Saatchi Group South Africa's new PR agency.

“ As a strategically-led PR agency, Razor is focused around creating the most powerful conversations for clients (their organisations, their leaders, their brands and their products and services). What's different is that these are not just the conversations we generate in media, but rather how we extend the impact of this work across three defined pillars: reputation (external), culture (internal) and being influential (advocacy, not finding influencers). ”

This uses a combination of strategic storytelling and content, the creative genius in our group and the deliberate blend of 1:1 engagement, traditional media engagement and the scale we create using digital and social channels. There is one deal-breaker... everything we do is measured in terms of the impact these powerful conversations have on real business metrics.

■ **Tell us a bit about your experience and why you feel you're well equipped to take on this new challenge.**

Interesting question. Communications is in my blood. I was classically trained as a journalist (having worked at places like 702, *Eyewitness News* and *Business Day*), but having crossed over to what some of my media friends still call “the dark side”, I have always identified as a natural communicator.

My experience is a unique hybrid of “corporate” and “consumer” communications having been blessed to work with some of the biggest brands and organisations locally and internationally.

There has been some stand out moments, including being part of the team that worked on the 2010 Fifa World Cup, where we developed and ran the hugely successful Football Friday campaign, to strategic communications programmes in places like the World Economic Forum in Davos and state visits to places like the UK. More recently, I have been privileged to be part of the team that worked on brands like Audi, Anglo American and Avis.

■ **What do you love most about your career and strategy in particular?**

I love that I love what I do. I think it's a blessing to get a kick out of your job. I love that every day is different. I love that I can use what I do as a skill to make a difference and create impact. I love seeing solid thinking turn into remarkable creative work and then see this turn into communications that have impact and presence.

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

I tend to listen to audiobooks in my car, and my Audible subscription works hard for me. I do this because it's a chance to switch off from all the business of every day. Currently, I am listening to a fiction novel called *The Chemist* by Stephenie Meyer.

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

People who are close to me will know this, but I guess professionally it's less known. I have a twin sister and we are nothing alike. She's a chemical engineer. We do, however, share a wicked sense of humour.

“ We're kicking off the new decade with good news. Welcome [@dustinchick](#), who joins M&C Saatchi Group SA as Managing Partner of Razor, the group's new PR agency. Find out more about Dustin and why he feels like a kid in a sweet shop. On [@holmesreport](#): <https://t.co/poTgKOKU3C> [pic.twitter.com/m0SeeB6gvu](https://t.co/poTgKOKU3C)— M&C Saatchi Abel (@mcsaatchiabel) January 9, 2020 ”

Visit Chick's [MyBiz profile on Bizcommunity](#) and/or follow him [@dustinchick on Twitter](#) and on [LinkedIn](#).

## ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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