

Justine Lee, marketing manager at BevCo

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

27 Oct 2021

The Beverage Company (BevCo) has a proud history in its journey to becoming a champion in the local beverage sector. Formed out of a merger between Little Green Beverages and Softbev in 2018, this marriage brought together a collection of powerful local and international brands that have long held value among South Africans for over 50 years.



Justine Lee, marketing manager for The Beverage Company's Energy drinks portfolio

Justine Lee is the marketing manager for The Beverage Company's Energy drinks portfolio and here she provides a sense of who she is, why she loves the industry and profession, and what she believes contributes to the success of her brand.

Tell us more about your role and what it entails exactly

I am the marketing manager for The Beverage Company's Energy drinks portfolio.

When it comes to energy drinks, I spend 98% of my time working on Reboost - an incredibly exciting energy drink brand which has shown tremendous growth over the last 18 months despite such tough trading conditions.

No day is the same in my role, and this is possibly why I love my job so much - boredom is never a factor!

I view being a marketing manager as effectively owning your own business. Every decision and investment made should be with the sustainable growth of the brand and company at heart. I spend a lot of my time and marketing budget on developing and rolling out brand campaigns that continuously ensure we have a healthy and exciting innovation pipeline and clear understanding by the business and our customers that innovation is a key growth pillar within our brand strategy.

Having a tight control on budgets, leveraging customer and consumer insights, keeping a firm eye on our competitors, dealing with our various agency partners, as well as driving the correct product mix are all critical elements of my role.

🔸 **Growing up, what did you want to be?**

I wanted to be a lawyer! I grew up watching the likes of *L.A. Law* with my family and remember thinking to myself just how much I would love to be the one putting the “bad guys” away. I loved how smart and powerful the characters were - it thrilled me.

🔸 **Tell us about your career: what you studied and why, and how you ended up where you are today?**

Funny enough, I actually studied Travel and Tourism with Marketing Operations, so I’m a far cry from where I thought I wanted to be.

I was offered a shot in marketing back in 2004 when I started as the brand manager for Barbie (the licensed products - not the doll). The CEO took me under her wing and taught me so much. I quickly realised that this was the career I could grow and thrive in. I just loved every aspect of what the job entailed and I immediately felt at home.

Beyond that, I guess you could say the rest is history. With a career that has gone on for a strong 17 years, I’ve had the privilege of working on and with some great brands, including: Barbie, Hugo Boss, Puma, Vitaforce, Nespray, and now Reboost.

“ *The best part of my journey is that I’m still loving every day of this dynamic and exciting career choice.* ”

🔸 **What are some of your most recent brand campaigns and the rationales behind them?**

Every year during our peak season, we run a ‘PEAK on-pack’ promotion, and in December 2020 we gave away three Polo Vivo Trendlines - a car a month for three months - as well as R150,000 in airtime and data. This campaign did incredibly well, and was further supported with in-store activations, massive in-store displays, and an awesome digital media competition.

“ *It’s time to move up the ladder with a Power Move. Simply buy a Reboost promo can and WIN 3 cars in 3 months, and your share of R150 000 in instant prizes.*

T&Cs Apply: <https://t.co/bJl14layug> pic.twitter.com/eqv5j1ow5P— Reboost Energy (@ReboostEnergy) [November 2, 2020](#) ”

We keep a solid focus on running these on-pack promotions, bigger and better each time, as an important way to give back to our consumers - especially during these tough times. It’s key for us to keep building genuine brand love and that consumers are rewarded for their loyalty.

Reboost has just recently decided to embark on a new brand strategy, and in February 2021 we launched our outdoor media campaign called “The Peoples Power”.

It was a national campaign targeting commuter media hubs across the country which was then amplified by above the line advertising with an aggressive in-store sampling activation. We aimed to put “Liquid on lips”, driving sales with value-added

promotions (Buy and Win).

“ Fall in love with the game and get it done. Reboost is full of B Vitamins to help you ubangene. [#PowerUpYourLife](#)
@tinyfilms_ pic.twitter.com/QoY8hsnulh— Reboost Energy (@ReboostEnergy) [February 22, 2021](#) ”

The campaign idea was born when we decided we wanted to effectively drive home our brand purpose – “to give any and every South African the little extra something to get through their day with power and purpose”. We wanted to acknowledge the hard work of the average South African person, reminding them that we’re in it together, and that they have a wingman in Reboost.

■ **Tell us about your most successful marketing campaign.**

There have been a few, however most recently I would definitely say that “The Peoples Power” is my most successful campaign. It was really well received by both our trade partners and our consumers. I believe that what made it so impactful was that we ensured the campaign was in no way ‘one dimensional’.

“ We had bold and effective billboards and outdoor media targeting commuters, bright and eye-catching displays in-store, brand ambassadors on the streets and in-store driving our sampling and trial agenda, an engaging social media campaign and a highly motivated sales force who aggressively pushed sales. ”

We aimed to ensure Reboost was top of mind and constantly within our target markets consideration set. The campaign definitely delivered on all objectives and was a critical component to our strong brand performance in our last fiscal.

■ **In your opinion, what do you think are the most successful channels for getting your brand message out there?**

I don’t believe there is any one channel we can rely on as marketers. The best strategy is an all-encompassing one, utilising various touchpoints to speak to your audience allows for the brand message to be communicated more effectively. Digital media has become an extremely important channel as you have the ability to be a finger touch away, readily accessible. This is increasingly becoming a must for all strategies – it should never be left out.

■ **Any career highlights you’d like to share.**

I would say when I won the Dragons Den Award at Nestle for the ‘Best Brand Strategy’ in the company, that was a hugely satisfying and rewarding moment for me. It was rather gruelling, with several rounds to get through and then finally judged in front of a panel of our cross functional EXCO members. I loved the experience! It forced those who took part to think at a very commercial level, and it stretched me, but I grew through the experience and still use those learnings gained to this very day.

■ **When it comes to branding, what can brands no longer ignore?**

The consumer need. This needs to be at the heart of everything we say and do. We are now in a dialogue with our consumers, they are engaging and interacting with us every day, don’t ignore what they are saying.

If you are able to deliver on the brand promise while meeting your consumer’s needs, you will continue to offer an amazing brand experience, build brand love and with that consumer loyalty.

■ **If you were mentoring a future you, what career advice would you give to aspiring young marketing and branding professionals?**

Be dynamic! This is an ever-changing industry and you have to be prepared to be agile and adaptable.

Believe in yourself! Sometimes you will not always get it right, but see it as failing forward, learn the lesson and grow for it.

Approach the role as a business manager, not just a brand manager. Try have a good commercial understanding of the business, it will give you the most amazing insights to ensure every decision has the total businesses best interests at heart.

Take calculated risks, allow yourself to be bold and courageous, it's what will separate you and your brand from the rest.

Always keep your finger on the pulse, know what your consumers are saying, what your customers need and what your competitors are up to.

Have Fun, if you have fun, you will love what you do and when you love what you do, it will be evident in your output and results.

Work hard, don't procrastinate and be a good team player.

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