

Strength and grit: Navisha Bechan-Sewkuran celebrates 10 years at Mondelez International

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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Corporate and government affairs lead for sub-Saharan Africa at Mondelez International Navisha Bechan-Sewkuran celebrates 10 years in the company and 22 years as a communications specialist.



Navisha Bechan-Sewkuran. Source: Supplied.

Bechan-Sewkuran is responsible for internal and external communications, public and government affairs, as well as corporate social investment across the business. She is a member of the SSA business unit leadership team, and the AMEA corporate and government affairs leadership team.

Increasing responsibilities

During her decade, she has filled a variety of roles in the business, taking on increasing responsibilities and getting involved in many regional and global projects.

“I have had the most incredible experience over the past 10 years. My roles have been very dynamic, and I have been fortunate to be able to work with extraordinary colleagues in South Africa, Africa and globally,” says Bechan-Sewkuran.

She adds that she has loved working for a company that has many legacy brands she enjoyed as a child such as Chappies.



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She comments: "I work for a business with the most wonderful product categories and legacy brands. Many of us can talk about how we grew up reading the "Did You Know?" on the Chappies wrapper or sharing a Cadbury Dairy Milk chocolate with family and friends."

"For me, my fondest memories of the business are the legendary television commercials I grew up with – from Cadbury LunchBar's Makatini, to the baby and daddy Cadbury Chomp hippos, and who can forget Cadbury Dairy Milk's Glass and a Half? These memories make working for Mondelēz International all the more special."



Through her work she has had the opportunity to work on community projects that she takes pride in.

"My highlight over the past 10 years has been the ability to see the impact we are making on our communities, both in South Africa through our community program called Health in Action, and through our global programs such as Cocoa Life. Through our Health in Action Programme, we have managed to positively impact the health of over 500,000 children in at-risk communities by focusing on educating them in nutrition, giving them access to fresh foods, and ensuring that they lead active lifestyles," says Bechan-Sewkuran.

But she has also faced challenges during her tenure including the Covid-19 pandemic.

She adds: "As a business, one of our values relates to 'agility over perfection'. This value allows me to navigate the multiple external challenges we face on a regular basis. From changing regulations in markets across sub-Saharan Africa; to a global health crisis, being able to adapt and change course allows for solutions to be found to the many external challenges we face."

Change and adaption

With more than 22 years of experience in the PR and communications space, Bechan-Sewkuran has witnessed a lot of change.

“In the corporate space, there’s been cyclic shifts between organisations going from needing specialists to generalists within corporate affairs. Early in my career, jobs were segmented, and I saw roles focused on internal communication and external communication. Then I saw the requirement for a generalist – one person who was able to cover all aspects of corporate communications,” she says.

She adds that communication specialists now gain an edge when they are well-versed in government affairs.

“As regulatory environments evolve, so too, does the need for communication professionals to be able to interact and influence in that space. Similarly, as professionals, we are also needing to ensure that we are well versed in ESG (environmental, social and governance) and be able to not only report and share our business’ stories within this space, but also to be able to advise and direct business decisions in this regard too,” says Bechan-Sewkuran.

She says young people who want to follow her footsteps need to know that teamwork is important.

“No task that you need to do is too big or too small for you – we all work in relatively small teams and we need to support each other in order to win as a collective. Remain humble in all that you do, whomever you interact with; and above all, use your skills for the greater good,” concludes Bechan-Sewkuran.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

Karabo Ledwaba is a Marketing and Media Editor at Bizcommunity and award-winning journalist. Before joining the publication she worked at Sowetan as a content producer and reporter. She was also responsible for the leadership page at SiMags, Sowetan's lifestyle magazine. Contact her at karabo@bizcommunity.com

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