

ARB celebrates 5 years of successful operation and growth

 By [Gail Schimmel](#)

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At the recent Advertising Regulatory Board (ARB) AGM held on 7 March 2024, I talked about the growth of the ARB over its five successful years of operation. The ARB was started a month after its predecessor – the Advertising Standards Authority – closed its doors and started its tortuous and as yet incomplete liquidation proceedings.



Source: www.unsplash.com

The first thing that I wanted to remind ARB stakeholders about is the issue of why it was so important to save self-regulation of advertising.

For any marketer, any advertiser, any agency to have any chance that the claims that they make will be believed, the consumer has to trust the advertising space. For them to trust the advertising space, they have to know that there are rules that govern that space, and a reliable entity that administers those rules.

I always use the example of the government's assurances that load shedding will soon end. Do you believe those claims?

No, because you do not trust that government is ever held to account for making false claims. You do not trust that space. And we cannot allow the same to happen to the advertising space.



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Having covered the need for the ARB, I then discussed* (*bragged about) the achievements of the ARB over the last 5 years:

- A funding model that works and has created a healthy reserve fund
- International recognition and awards
- Legal victories in various shapes and sizes
- Involvement in various lobbying efforts with industry
- Growth of membership
- Growth of the Code to address new issues
- The introduction of a formal training course on ARB issues

The ongoing resolution of complaints, with decisions that you might not agree with always, but that are clearly and quickly drafted, at no cost to consumers.

The work of the ARB is enabled by a comparatively small number of funders who carry the burden on behalf of the industry. It is our vision that a time will come when so many marketers put their hands up to fund self-regulation of advertising that the contribution of each entity will be nominal.

It is my hope that the industry is proud of what the ARB has achieved – because what the ARB has achieved is what the industry itself has achieved. From those who fund, to those who give of their time freely to sit on our Board and appeal committees, to those who comply with the decisions even when they make them really very angry indeed. The survival of self-regulation is premised on an industry that, at the heart of it, want to do the right thing; and it is South Africa alone in Africa who has managed to follow this international gold standard.

The guiding principle of the ARB is this: To protect consumers and our industry though championing responsible advertising. We extend our thanks to the marketing community of South Africa for supporting us in this journey. May it continue for many years to come.

ABOUT GAIL SCHIMMEL

Gail Schimmel is the CEO of the Advertising Regulatory Board. She has a BA (Hon) LLB LLM, and is an admitted attorney. In the past, she has worked as a lecturer, attorney and consultant. She's also a bestselling novelist and co-hosts a podcast featuring writers.

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