

Darren Mckinon, shareholder and commercial director at Epic Outdoor

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This week we're placing the spotlight on Darren Mckinon, shareholder and commercial director at Epic Outdoor.



Pictured: Darren Mckinon, shareholder and commercial director at Epic Outdoor. Image supplied.

McKinnon has held positions at companies such as EssenceMediacom and JCDecaux, where he spent seven years as head of sales.

He plans to leverage this experience in his new role as commercial director at Epic Outdoor, where he will oversee revenue, a critical aspect of the company's growth.

▣ ***How would you describe what you do to someone who is not familiar with the industry?***

I provide brands with a powerful platform, through large format billboards, digital screens and bespoke airport and innovative solutions, to advertise their businesses to potential customers to grow.

▣ ***Three words people often associate you with?***

1. Charismatic
2. Committed
3. Fun

I've also heard cheesy quite a bit, but who doesn't appreciate a good dad joke?

▣ ***Who or what inspires you?***

I genuinely enjoy meeting new people, and often, there is a story that resonates with me.

That said, I do enjoy the underdog taking a win against a giant in any sporting event.

Especially in solo sports such as tennis, MMA etc, as this shows true character, dedication and self-belief that the individual has, even when the odds are firmly not in their favour.

But the “what” – inspirational books such as *Extreme Ownership* that provide easy and practical ways to apply learnings to myself.

I also enjoy podcasts with a clear point of view and people who have an opinion they stand by.

■ **What do you consider the three most important factors to ensure a successful campaign?**

Speaking purely from an out-of-home perspective, these are without a doubt the following:

1. Great creative – According to Kantar, 50% of the success of any campaign is due to the creative – for Out-of-Home, less is more.
2. Size counts – If you are investing in your brand through an OOH campaign, make sure it stands out and leaves a mark. Large format (static and digital OOH) is the largest driver of reach within OOH as a platform
3. Touchpoint approach – Be clear on the role that OOH plays within your media mix - it either drives or supports other media channels to achieve your objective. Consumers don't think in media silos, so a holistic approach, using multiple touchpoints, is crucial to any brand's success.

■ **Do you have an OOH advertisement that has stuck with you over the years? If yes, what was it?**

Wow – there have been a lot over 20 plus years!

Coca-Cola creating a rainbow over their impact site in Newtown, JHB, using misters attached to the top of the structure stands out.



As does Ant-Man, using the “world’s smallest” billboards.



It's all about the creative use of the space.

But the one for me that used innovation in a very real and practical way was a campaign run by [“Aid to Children” using lenticular optics.](#)

When viewing the static OOH poster from an adult's perspective, the creative appears to be a normal ad, but when viewed from the angle of a child, a hidden message appears, providing the child with a lifeline number to contact, protecting them from potential aggressors that only they could see.





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

I like to bounce around a lot, so I'm always listening to two or three different things at any given point - and not always work or industry-related.

Currently, I'm listening to *The Fasting Expert* by The Diary of a CEO – Dr Mindy Pelz. Who knows, maybe I'll avoid getting a “dad-bod” after this.

I'm also listening to *Beyond the Billboard* with Kirsty Carlson and Livia Brown – they've had some really great speakers on their show and the content is around all things out-of-home.

But if I just want to relax, I'll head back to my youth days for some good old punk rock.

▄▄ **What are your long-term goals for your position as commercial director?**

I want to build on the past eight-year epic journey to drive sustainable growth for the future and to ensure this next chapter as a business is centred around people, data and connections that continue to offer epic and impactful solutions to our clients.

By leveraging our culture and our entrepreneurial spirit, I want to continue attracting the best talent and working with multiple leading brands, whilst remaining true to our core – providing *epic* solutions through *epic* moments.

▄▄ **Do you have any advice for those just getting started in the industry?**

Media is something I found myself in by hook or by crook and it worked out to be the perfect fit for me. But if I were starting in the industry now, this is the advice I would give myself:

1. Prioritise building relationships with both internal and external stakeholders – relationships are what matter most - your knowledge and expertise will grow over time. In doing this, you will quickly realise what part of the advertising industry you enjoy the most and where your skill sets and interests are best suited. Media agencies offer the most value in terms of learning the fundamentals of media and how data, media channels and audiences fit together. I would start there.
2. Ask as many questions as possible. Are there silly questions? Absolutely! But ask anyway – you're better off knowing the answers.
3. Find a way to have fun. The advertising industry is a busy and demanding career to have, but don't lose sight of what we really do. We connect people to brands and at our core, it's about relationships and connections. Make time for people and find the magic in what you do.

ABOUT AA-ISHA HASSIEM

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