

Shahan Ramkissoo, Eclipse Communications chief strategy officer

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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South African news anchor Shahan Ramkissoo has been appointed as Eclipse Communications' new chief strategy officer.



Image supplied: Shahan Ramkissoo is Eclipse Communications' new chief strategy officer

After an 18 year career as a journalist and working as a renowned hard-hitting news anchor for eNCA, Ramkissoo is bringing his journalism experience to the world of PR.

We caught up with him to find out more about his new appointment and how his experience is valuable in the PR field...

Congratulations on your new appointment! How are you feeling about it?

I am absolutely ecstatic about the opportunity I've been given at Eclipse Communications. Naturally, there are some nerves because this is a different industry, but that's the reason I decided to make the change, I needed a new challenge, professionally and personally. I've been smiling from ear to ear since joining the team because my future is definitely on an upward trajectory and bright.

Could you tell us more about your new role?

I will play a pivotal role in the direction of the agency, leading strategy for clients, working closely with the founding partners on group-wide initiatives - and will be key in the development of an in-house media training division. I'm also going to offer new and different perspectives to an already outstanding team of creatives.



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How do you think your experience as a news anchor will translate into your new role?

A journalist's mindset is key to the role of communications, particularly public relations. I used to decide what is newsworthy or not based on the information sent to me by PR agencies. I'm now able to strategise with the team on how to better package media and content so we expose the news hook in the top line.

South Africa needs more positive stories and there are so many companies contributing to our economy, uplifting our people and ultimately making a difference - the journalist in me says "it's time to tell more of those stories!"

▣ **What are you hoping to achieve with Eclipse Communications?**

The aim is to give Eclipse Communications a further edge. It's already an agency that's torn the proverbial box apart, but I now want to trample it by offering our clients, services, experiences and results that no other agency can compete with.

I'm working closely with Eclipse Communications CEO, Cheryl Reddy and chairman of the Eclipse Group, Steve Powell who are powerhouses in this industry. Together, we're going to transform the industry.

▣ **Anything, in particular, you're reading, listening to or watching for inspiration right now?**

Leading For Engagement: 7 Sins and 7 Secrets by Tracey Swanepoel. This book is about strategising and being brave. Two things I want to do to be successful in my role as chief strategy officer. I'm all about upping my skills, after all, the only way to grow is to educate myself.



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▣ **What are some career highlights for you?**

I remember watching *eNews Prime Time* as a 14-year-old boy. At the time I dreamed about being a news anchor because I was inspired by people like Debora Patta. I studied journalism, pushed, failed, failed again, kept trying and eventually got into *eNews* in 2007. Once there, I realised I had to do much more to become a great reporter or stand out. And after much mentoring, I was finally recognised and given the opportunity to cover bigger stories. Years later, I fulfilled that dream and anchored the *eNews Prime Time* bulletin.

It was surreal and something I'll never forget. Once that goal was achieved I set my sights on eNCA's flagship show. Needless to say, more than a decade later, I co-anchored *South Africa Tonight* with Sally Burdett.

Finally, I must say another highlight has been telling the South African story. The reality is that people often rely on the media to expose their harsh realities before our government acts. We also have a responsibility to hold people accountable when they loot while the poor suffer and our economy declines - being able to do that at eNCA was definitely a highlight.

■ What career advice would you give to aspiring journalists/PR consultants?

Keep pushing but be brilliant along the way. It's important to go above and beyond every single day of your career or you will go unnoticed.

I've had people chase me out of newsrooms, take me off the air because I "didn't sound good" etc, but that didn't stop me from trying harder to become better at my job. So yes, people can be horrible and tell you NO, but it's key to listen to why they're saying no, and if they have constructive criticism, improve on your skills and go back to try again.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

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