



## IN ANSWER TO AGRICULTURE'S NEED TO COMMUNICATE

*Koko & Tree, agriculture sector-specific PR and communications agency (the first of its kind in Africa) launches to best serve the growing and increasingly sophisticated agriculture industry at large.*

August 2020: Agriculture is evolving, and fast. This is unlikely to come as a surprise. What may, however, is how woefully under-serviced this giant (and literal lifeblood) of an industry is from a PR and communications perspective.

The need for communications professionals in this sphere is growing. Professionals that understand not only what makes a good strategy and story (also imperative) to reach customers, but for those who understand its broad web of influencers, stakeholders, owners, and legislative world. For people who have a passion for agriculture and intrinsic value for how it is changing. It is big business, even when you are family owned and run.

“Oftentimes, just mention of lifting one’s head above the parapet in the agricultural industry feels counter-intuitive. Farmers, scientists, technology specialists, and mostly everyone else involved in its complex supply chain are used to keeping their heads down. For good reason. Agriculture, from farm to fork, is generally poorly understood. The good news is that consumers, customers, investors, and governments are awake to the vital role this sector plays. They want to know more,” says Anelle Whyte, founder, Koko & Tree.

More than ever consumers want to know where their food comes from and the environmental impact this has. They are savvy, rightly so. Oftentimes there is a vacuum of knowledge around this as organisations and individuals who are not credible voices seed inaccurate information. Because of this, it is incumbent on the experts, such as farmers and agricultural businesses, to be proactive in leading this conversation.

It goes then without saying that creating a relevant and relatable communications strategy, message crafting, and tactical plans to bring this to life is at the forefront of leading agriculture and agri-tech businesses' minds. The top food trend this year is consumer interest in the stories behind their food products\*. This notable influence on household purchasing decisions has resulted in companies progressively paying attention to storytelling in brand strategies.

“Green Farms Nut Company (GFNC) has been a global leader in macadamia processing for 30 years. It is only more recently, since engaging communications expertise, that our customers around the world know this. Through working with Koko & Tree, we have come to hold a depth of understanding of how a strategic communications approach can develop a brand and engender resonance,” comments Allen Duncan, CEO, GFNC.

Direction from a macro perspective speaks to the growing relevance of a sustainable and environmental lobby, government regulation, and healthy plant-based eating. This, together with technology-led disciplines like bio and agri tech precision farming, underpinned even more so by the COVID-19 pandemic, means farmers and their friends through the value chain can no longer keep their heads down. One needs to look no further than the level of interest from equity and investment groups to understand the significance of agriculture.

“Passion for the sector is a must, and so is an intelligent overlay to translate complex (and sometimes controversial) concepts, and the role each industry player has, in feeding a (quickly) growing global population. It is becoming localised and moving to customer advocacy. Koko & Tree understands this, and how to do it, intrinsically,” continues Whyte.

The agency, based in South Africa, has South African and international agriculture clients ranging from family-owned farming businesses to cutting-edge agri-tech companies. It appreciates that although the ethos of each organisation may be unique, they all contribute to the noteworthy ambition to bring food safety and security to people. Koko & Tree exists to engender this, build a reputation, and create accurate perception.

“We are a niche and a specialist company. The business has extensive expertise from multi-national corporates to small family-owned businesses. It has through its PR and communications talent helped establish and grow agriculture brands big and small. We understand the opportunity, whether it be convincing a farmer or customer, engaging a scientist, or assuring an investor,” concludes Whyte.

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

Contact Annelle Whyte: mobile +27 711 638 719 email [annelle@kokoandtree.co.za](mailto:annelle@kokoandtree.co.za)

About Koko & Tree: [www.kokoandtree.co.za](http://www.kokoandtree.co.za)

A niche communications agency that specialises in telling the stories of companies active in the agricultural sector. We communicate our clients’ vision to external stakeholders ranging from local and international clients, the media, neighbouring communities, and the public sector.

We do this through building authentic and meaningful relationships, as well as storytelling and message crafting that speaks to the very essence of what our clients are doing to boost food security, job creation, wholesome nutrition, and community upliftment.

\*Top Food Trends, Innova Market Insights: [Storytelling: winning with words](#)