



THEBE IKALAFENG

"Thebe Ikalafeng is Africa," TedxAccra

*"The foremost branding and reputation authority in Africa,"
New African Magazine "100 Most Influential Africans"*

"The chief architect of Africa's brand identity," Blaque Magazine

*"100 Most Influential Creative People of African Descent,"
United Nations 'International Year of the Creative Economy for
Sustainable Development.'*

*"A trailblazing Africa-focused dynamo purposefully committed on
seeing African brands compete on a global stage,"*

Financial Mail AdFocus Lifetime Achievement Award, 2021

FOUNDER AND CEO – BRAND LEADERSHIP GROUP

FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN – BRAND AFRICA

FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL – AFRICA BRAND LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

BSc. MBA. LL.M (Intellectual Property Law)

Chartered Marketer (SA)

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Thebe Ikalafeng is the pre-eminent global African thought leader and authoritative voice in branding in Africa. In a distinguished career which started over 25 years ago at Colgate Palmolive in New York, USA and a lauded tenure as chief marketing officer for NIKE for Africa, he won over 75 awards in branding and marketing communication globally. He is the founder of the award-winning Brand Leadership Group, a pan-African branding advisory firm; Brand Africa, an inter-generational movement to inspire a brand-led agenda to drive Africa's image, reputation and competitiveness; Brand Africa 100: Africa's Best Brands, the widely referenced and only pan-African survey and ranking of brands in Africa; and Africa Brand Leadership Academy (ABLA) to build the capacity for Africa-focused brand leadership. As the first indigenous African chairman of the prestigious Loeries and Financial Mail AdFocus advertising awards, he championed and led the creative industry's transformation and Africa-focused agenda. Named one of the '100 Most Influential Africans' by *New African Magazine* in 2013 and 2015, and one of the *100 Most Influential Creative People of African Descent in support of the United Nations 'International Year of the Creative Economy for Sustainable Development'* in 2021, he has been to every country in Africa; worked in over 25 countries, and is widely acknowledged as the foremost advocate for a brand-led African renaissance to transform the continent's wealth and global stature. He was honoured with a *Financial Mail AdFocus Lifetime Achievement Award* in 2021 for his contributions to marketing, branding and the industry.

He has written extensively, addressed diverse audiences in over 40 countries across all major African and western capitals globally, and has been interviewed and quoted widely by inter alia, BBC, CNN, CNBC Africa, FT and leading African and non-African media on all matters regarding brands and intellectual property law in Africa

A fellow of the Institute of Directors, he has held numerous directorships in the public and private sector, including 10 years at South African Tourism where he was deputy Chairman for a 3 years term, 7 years at JSE listed Cartrack Group, 15 years at Mercantile Bank, 10 years at WWF, and full 3 years terms at Brand South Africa, Foodcorp Group and Nike South Africa. He has judged awards on design, branding and leadership globally, and served in leadership positions in all significant industry bodies, including as the inaugural vice-chairman of the Brand Council of Southern Africa and as the first African chairman of the Loeries, the premier advertising awards in Africa.

Born in Kimberley, South Africa, he has **been to over 110 countries, every country in Africa** and every continent in the world which has enriched his appreciation of the rich diversity of the continent and state of brands across Africa and the world. He has **summitted Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest free standing mountain in the world** and Mount Elbrus in Russia, the highest mountain in Europe; **sky-dived in Swakopmund Namibia**, the only place in the world where the sand dunes meet the ocean; **jumped the 216m tall Bloukrans Bridge**, the highest bungee in the world, and took **a plunge into the coldest waters on the planet in Antarctica**.

Ikalafeng holds **BSc (Marketing)** and **MBA (Strategy and Marketing)** degrees from Marquette University in the USA and a **LL.M (Intellectual Property Law)** degree from the University of Turin in Italy in collaboration with World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Switzerland, and completed executive education at Wits Business School and Harvard Business School in the US, and is a **Chartered Marketer (SA)**.

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