

# Adrian Miller, ECD at Riverbed

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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Having consulted for Riverbed since the beginning of the year, the agency recently made Adrian Miller's appointment official. As ECD, Miller will be responsible for the overall creative strategy and direction for the agency.

"We've spent the better part of this year working on strategy and bringing in the best creative talent. Our team has clarity in what we're doing and we all understand why," said CEO Monalisa Sibongile Zwambila. "This year creative excellence will be our principal purpose, and all efforts will be strategically aligned to thrust us ahead to join the ranks of the top creative agencies."

Commenting on his appointment, Miller says, "Riverbed provides the possibility to do great work. This, plus the shared desire and vision to grow the agency against the back of great creative, is what excited me most about this opportunity."

"While many creative agencies market themselves as an integrated agency, in reality, many simply outsource these services and white label it. In contrast, Riverbed houses all through-the-line disciplines in-house, creating a unique opportunity to build astounding brand experiences across platforms. It's impressive to see how the teams work together on client briefs to build great brand stories and ultimately, effective campaigns."

Here, Miller goes on to explain why he chose to take on Riverbed, a black female-owned agency, full-time...



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## ■ **How do you feel about the appointment?**

The opportunity to effect change and help take an agency to the next level is always an exciting one. So I'm rather eager to get stuck in and start that journey.

## ■ **What does the role entail?**

The job is multifaceted. In short, an ECD leads the creative output, shapes the agency culture, takes responsibility for hiring and bringing on teams, heads up pitches and helps people make the best work they can. In my opinion, the hardest job an ECD has is protecting the creative product. This, of course, involves having to say no a lot.

## ■ **Why the move to Riverbed; what excites you most about this agency and where it's going?**

Riverbed is independent, it's black female-owned and it has a solid client base. Given the current climate in South Africa, these are particularly strong attributes. More importantly, keeping good ideas intact requires an agency that is truly integrated, doesn't operate in silos, has strong partnerships at the top and a shared vision across the entire agency.

“ When I sat down with Monalisa to chat about the vision for Riverbed, I found someone who wanted ideas to sit front and centre. Mona wanted to build a creatively-driven agency, not just a creative department. ”

I immediately found that compelling.

■ **What do you love most about your career, being a creative and advertising in particular?**

At the risk of sounding trite, using creativity to change people's behaviour or attitude is the part I love most about the job. I also happen to like the dress code, or the lack thereof.

■ **What's at the top of your to-do list?**

In the past, I've managed to build agencies and take them to the top creatively in Asia Pacific. Helping Riverbed achieve the same heights in SA is the primary goal. The only way to get there is one campaign at a time. I think we've started that journey with the new 'Aware' work. Bringing 'Aware' to life has been top of the to-do list over the last couple of months, as well as making a few key strategic hires.



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■ **What are you currently reading/watching/listening to for work?**

I'm reading Neil deGrasse Tyson's *Astrophysics for People in a Hurry*. I manage two pages a night. It has nothing to do with advertising, which helps immensely.

■ **Tell us something about yourself not generally known.**

I'm an avid crossfitter. This particular obsession has led to three surgeries – two shoulder and one hernia.

## More about Adrian Miller

Adrian is a multiple award winner with big brand experience across three continents and is one of the most awarded creatives in South Africa, with over 100 awards, including 15 Cannes Lions for some of the world's largest brands. Miller has judged at Cannes, Clio, D&AD, Adfest, Spikes (Asian Cannes) and served as chairman of the South African Loerie Awards and in addition, has served on the worldwide board for both Lowe and JWT.

## ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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