

Jarred Cinman and Diane Wilson take up VML top leadership positions

It has been announced that work partners of 27 years and co-CEOs of VMLY&R for the past five years, Jarred Cinman and Diane Wilson, have been named as CEO of VML South Africa and VML's chief operations officer respectively.



L to R VML has named Diane Wilson chief operations officer, Jarred Cinman its CEO and the WPP country manager for South Africa, Tebogo Skwambane as executive chairperson. Images supplied. Image by @Lesley Svenson, Bizcommunity.

In October last year, WPP announced a major evolution in its offering to clients with the global merger of Wunderman Thompson and VMLY&R.

Operational from 1 January 2024, the combined entity, known as VML, will be the industry's largest creative company and has entered the South African market with offices in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town.

VML South Africa's clients include leading brands such as Vodacom, Standard Bank, BMW, Nestlé, Unilever, Hollard, Nando's, and SA Tourism, among many others.



Wunderman Thompson and VMLY&R unite to create the world's largest creative company

18 Oct 2023



VML leadership team

Cinman will report to Ewen Sturgeon, CEO of VML EMEA, who has expressed delight that Cinman and Wilson will be leading the VML brand in South Africa.

“Their client-centric focus, inclusive leadership style and forward-thinking approach to innovation and technology will ensure we create a thriving business and that our clients are offered the very best across Brand Experience, Customer Experience and Commerce.”

On his appointment and the next steps for the business, Cinman comments, “It’s a great honour to be able to lead such an ambitious, skilled and technologically savvy new agency.

“Along with Di and the rest of the leadership team, we have an ambition to be the best agency on the continent – period.

“That means rising to the top of the creative rankings, delivering the most effective work, and making culturally resonant and purposeful communication, commerce and experiences.

“I really believe that the new VML has everything clients want and need from a creative partner.”



Fran Luckin moves to chief creative officer of VML

6 Dec 2023



Investing into people

“The secret to successful integration is bringing together the right calibre of leaders and focusing on the right things,” says Cinman.

“We have, between the two legacy businesses, many of the best people in the industry on our team. And our focus is on our culture, our clients and the work. This is a chance to level up for both organisations and there is a palpable sense of possibility in the corridors,” he adds.

Wilson says their first big investment is in people and that they are thrilled to be welcoming Fran Luckin as our new CCO in a few weeks, as announced at the end of last year.

“Creativity is a product of talent and experience, and Fran has the perfect combination of these qualities. With her leading our creative teams, I’m looking forward to seeing VML shine brightly in the creative advertising space.”

Tebogo Skwambane, who also holds the position of WPP country manager for South Africa, and will continue in that role, has been announced as executive chairperson.

“Skwambane brings a wealth of knowledge in organisational design, integration and commercial acumen,” says Wilson

She adds that Skwambane’s background in consulting will be key to helping them build the new organisation and operating model. “She will play an active and vital role as we define our path ahead.”

Avron Berkman will become the chief finance officer for the business.



VMLY&R South Africa launches gamechanger, VMLY&R Commerce

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A leader at the forefront of digital

A leader in South Africa's agency landscape for three decades, and someone who has been at the forefront of digital evolution in the industry, Cinman started and led South Africa's first digital agency in the 1990s.

Wilson joined shortly thereafter. Together the pair co-founded and led Cambrient and then Native, which ultimately became VMLY&R South Africa.

Under Wilson and Cinman's leadership, VMLY&R South Africa won heavy-hitting accounts, such as Vodacom, and numerous awards, both locally and internationally – including two silver Effie Awards, Seven Smarties Awards (six of them gold), and Agency of the Year at the New Generation Awards in 2023, as well as three Effie Awards, plus four Cannes Lions Awards in 2022.

Miles Murphy, CEO of Wunderman Thompson South Africa, has decided to use the opportunity of the merger with VMLY&R to move on to the next stage of his professional career.

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