

# South Africa's Retroviral the world's most creative agency

South Africa's Retroviral is the world's most creative agency in Provoke Media's alternative measure of agency creativity where staff size is used to weight agency scores.

Top 15 Agencies Weighted 2023				
2023 Rank	2022 Rank	Agency	HQ	Weighted Score
1	1	Retroviral	South Africa	1111
2	-	Uniomedia	Hungary	769
3	-	Abeceda komunikacije	Croatia	667
4	-	Matrix PR	UAE	600
5	6	Clue PR	Poland	542
6	-	Lynn	UK	474
7	-	CampaignLab	Australia	467
8	-	Kurio	Finland	441
9	4	Trigger Oslo	Norway	380
10	-	Komunikācijas agentura	Latvia	286
11	-	History Will Be Kind	Australia	261
11	-	Latam Intersect PR	Brazil	261
13	10	Image Merchants	Nigeria	240
14	-	The Romans	UK	235
15	-	Hope&Glory	UK	224

Source: © Provoke Media [Provoke Media](#)

This is thanks in large part to its *Be You. Period* campaign for Lil-Lets, which ranked as the fifth most awarded PR campaign of the year.

Retroviral leads a clean sweep by EMEA agencies of the top six positions, ahead of two Eastern European firms — Hungary's Uniomedia and Croatia's Abeceda in second and third, respectively.

In the regional rankings, it is also the top EMEA agency.

In the Top 15 Agencies Weighted, PRovoke Media has again used a points per head calculation to identify which are, 'pound for pound', the most creative PR agencies in the world.

In fourth place, Dubai's Matrix makes its first ever appearance on this ranking, ahead of Clue PR from Poland and Lynn from Wales.

While EMEA firms dominate the weighted ranking, accounting for 12 of the top 15, there is still considerable geographic diversity in play.

In addition to the top six, there are also firms from Australia (Campaign Lab and History Will Be Kind), UK (The Romans and Hope & Glory), Finland (Kurio), Nigeria (Image Merchants), Latvia (Komunikācijas agentūra), and Brazil (Latam Intersect). Like last year, a US firm does not make the weighted table.



SA's Retroviral named in PRovoke Media's 2023 Global PR Agencies of the Year

Danette Breitenbach 11 Oct 2023



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## Global Creative Index

This is part of the 12th edition of the Global Creative Index that analyses entries and winners from more than 25 PR, digital and marketing awards programmes from around the world over a 12-month period, up to and including the 2023 Global SABRE Awards.

The formula takes into account the expansion of 'public relations' work across multiple categories at advertising-oriented shows such as the Cannes Lions.

Edelman took top spot in the 2023 edition of the Global Creative Index, the first time in seven years that the world's biggest firm has ranked first in PRovoke Media's annual benchmark of creativity in the public relations world.

Edelman's performance was led by the *HP Streetcode* initiative to address Indonesia's digital divide, which also took top spot on the 2023 Campaigns table. Numerous Unilever campaigns from across the globe also boosted Edelman's score, notably Dove's *#LetHerGrow* and *#Keep the Grey* initiatives, along with Vaseline's *See My Skin* effort.

Weber Shandwick took second place, after ranking first for five of the past six years, bolstered by significant campaigns for AB InBev, Ancestry, Expedia, Mars Wrigley and Unesco.

The IPG firm narrowly outscored Ogilvy, which ranked third after placing second in 2022.

MSL jumps from 19th to fourth, ahead of Ketchum, which retained fifth spot. In sixth place, Golin moves up from seventh, while Hill & Knowlton, Zeno and LLYC all enter the top 10 in 2023.

## Top 10 Overall

Top 10 Agencies Overall 2023					
2023 Rank	2022 Rank	Agency	HQ	Network	Points
1	3	Edelman	USA	DJE Holdings	124.5
2	1	Weber Shandwick	USA	Interpublic	88
3	2	Ogilvy	USA	WPP	79.5
4	19	MSL	France	Publicis	57
5	5	Ketchum	USA	Omnicom	46.5
6	7	Golin	USA	Interpublic	41.5
7	11	Hill & Knowlton	USA	WPP	35.5
8	65	Zeno Group	USA	DJE Holdings	30.5
9	6	Dentsu	Japan	Dentsu Inc	30
10	12	LLYC	Spain	Independent	29

Source: Provoke Media [Provoke Media](#)

Once again, the top of the overall agency table is dominated by global PR networks, thanks to their volume of awards.

## Top 20 Campaigns 2023

*HP Streetcode*, which tackled Indonesia's digital divide through street art, emerged as the most-awarded PR programme of the past 12 months according to PProvoke Media's 2023 Global Creative Index.

The campaign from HP and Edelman also ranked first among Global Sabre winners.

The Index analysed entries and winners from more than 25 PR award programmes from around the world, over a 12-month period, using the 2022 Global SABRE Awards as a cut-off point.

Scores were weighted according to a PProvoke Media formula that placed particular emphasis on Best in Show winners, while also taking into account the expansion of 'public relations' work across multiple categories at advertising-oriented shows such as the Cannes Lions.

Top 20 Campaigns 2023				
Rank	Points	Campaign title	Agency	Client
1	22	HP Streetcode	Edelman	HP
2	17	The Last Photo	Hope&Glory, adam&eveDDB	CALM
3	14	Dove #LetHerGrow	Edelman	Unilever
3	14	Midnight Moozart	Dentsu Inc.	National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Association
5	13	Be You. Period	Retroviral	Lil-Lets
5	13	Corona Plastic Fishing Tournament	Allison+Partners, We Believers	Corona
5	13	Heals On Wheels	KPR, Trumakus	Hyundai Motor Group
5	13	Outhorse Your Email	M&C Saatchi Talk	Visit Iceland
5	13	ReclaimYourName.dic	Citizen Relations	Elimin8Hate
5	13	See My Skin	Edelman	Unilever
11	12	The Missing Chapter	MSL, Leo Burnett	P&G Whisper
11	12	Vodacom Africa.Connected	WE Communications	Vodacom
13	11	AIDS Avatar	Golin Taipei	Taiwan AIDS Society & Taiwan AIDS Nurse Association
13	11	Championing equity for collegiate women athletes	Carmichael Lynch Relate	H&R Block
13	11	Dove #StopTheNameCalling	Ogilvy, Mindshare	Unilever
13	11	Gingerbread Dive Bars	ICF Next	Miller High Life
13	11	The Cost of Inequality	Edelman	Foudation Des Femmes
13	11	The Sunken Bar	BCW	Carlsberg Sweden
13	11	Thyseed: Postpartum Escape Room	BlueFocus	Thyseed
20	10	A Year of Transformation	n/a	Mobile Premier League
20	10	Addressing 'Cost of life' not just living	Provocate	Suicide Prevention Australia

Source: © Provoke Media [Provoke Media](#)

*HP Streetcode* ranked ahead of Calm's *The Last Photo* suicide prevention effort with Hope & Glory and Adam&Eve DDB, while Dove's *#LetHerGrow* came in third, supporting Thai schoolgirls in their quest to end the practice of forced haircuts.

The results, which rank the top 20 PR campaigns as determined by award shows, suggest that reports of the demise of purpose are somewhat exaggerated. Instead, the best-performing campaigns are demonstrating a tangible impact on such

issues as the digital divide, gender inequality, mental health and wellness, the cost of living and DEI.

## Top 15 companies

Unilever retains top spot in the Global Creative Index's ranking of companies, according to the performance of the company's campaigns in the various award shows that are tracked around the world.

FMCG rival P&G, which slipped to sixth last year, jumps to second, ahead of Pepsico (up 12 places), AB InBev (+4) and new entrant HP.

Top 15 Companies 2023			
2023 Rank	2022 Rank	Company	Points
1		1 Unilever	65
2		6 Procter & Gamble	44
3		15 Pepsico	43
4		8 AB InBev	38
5		HP	25
6		Lenovo	24
7		1 Mastercard	19
8		Mars Wrigley	17
9		Korber	15
10		12 Samsung	14
10		DHL	14
10		MillerCoors	14
10		Adidas	14
10		Hyundai	14
10		Pfizer	14

Source: © Provoke Media [Provoke Media](#)

Unilever's haul was led by award-winning efforts such as Dove's *#LetHerGrow*, along with the same brand's *#KeepTheGrey* initiative, and campaigns for Vaseline, Lifebuoy and Wall's.

The Global Creative Index analyses entries and winners from more than 25 PR award programmes from around the world, over a 12-month period, using the 2022 Global SABRE Awards as a cut-off point. Scores were weighted according to a PRovoke Media formula that placed particular emphasis on Best in Show winners.

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