

Publicis Africa appoints pioneer Odette van der Haar as MD

Publicis Africa has announced that industry heavyweight Odette van der Haar will be joining the agency as MD, strengthening the management team and building on the group's recent growth and successes.



The Next Brand Ambassador judges (L-R), Odette van der Haar, Nandi Madida and Sylvester Chauke. Image supplied.

Van der Haar, a visionary leader with established and effective entrepreneurial skills, was the perfect fit for Publicis Africa. The company was looking for an innovator that had the ability to have a positive impact on clients' businesses while taking the agency to the next level. She has proven business acumen, with advertising flowing through her veins.

"We were extremely selective in appointing an MD who shared our vision for transforming the craft and industry and have found the ideal leader for this in Odette. With a proven track record of driving the industry forward, we are excited at the excellence that Odette will bring to the team and our clients," said Naeem Seedat, CEO of Communications at Publicis Africa.

Van der Haar has extensive industry experience and knowledge, most recently holding the position of CEO at JWT Johannesburg. Prior to joining JWT, Odette was the CEO of the Association for Communication and Advertising (ACA). She spearheaded the rebirth and growth of the highly coveted APEX awards.

She has an admired reputation for championing transformation, professionalism and gender equality within the industry.

Becoming a judge on the SABC 3 reality television show, *The Next Brand Ambassador*, is testament to her stature in the industry. She was honoured by her peers with a *Legends of APEX* award in 2019, which she received for her contribution in elevating and highlighting the importance of effective marketing and communications campaigns.

"I am excited to announce my role at Publicis during women's month. I hope that the announcement of my appointment will inspire young women everywhere to go out and achieve their goals, no matter how difficult the path to success may seem.

"I consider it a privilege to lead within an agency with such a forward-thinking model in an era where clients demand more from their investment with agencies," said Van Der Haar.

Publicis clients currently include global brands such as L'Oreal, Nestle, Mercedes-Benz and Kellogg's, among others. Van der Haar's appointment is effective from 1 September 2019.

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