

South Africa on new Virgin group chief marketing officer's radar

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA: Virgin Group has announced it has appointed Ian Rowden as its new global chief marketing officer (CMO). This is the first senior hire by incoming co-CEOs David Baxby and Josh Bayliss and places the brand and this role at the heart of the group's strategy.



Rowden has a mandate to drive Virgin brand's international expansion, including in South Africa, and to enhance and expand the global brand team.

Baxby and Bayliss said: "Expanding the strength and reach of the Virgin brand is at the core of our strategy and we look forward to working with Ian to execute this plan. He has a unique mix of marketing and entrepreneurial experience to help grow our existing companies and develop new markets and industries."

Fiona Ross, Virgin Group head of brand, South Africa says, "Ian's appointment will positively impact how Virgin operates here and we are keen to increase the brand's growing local footprint."

Virgin first came to South Africa in 1996 when it launched Virgin Atlantic. Today it operates six core companies - Virgin Active, Virgin Mobile, Virgin Money, Virgin Atlantic, Virgin Life Care and Virgin Limited Edition. Virgin Unite, the non-profit foundation of the Virgin Group, has presence here, with one of the key initiatives being The Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship. The Branson Centre provides practical business skills, mentorship and access to Virgin's network to start-up entrepreneurs with the aim to help drive local job creation and economic growth.

Rowden was previously with Saatchi & Saatchi Asia Pacific where he has been chairman and CEO for the last three years responsible for the key growth markets of India and China.