

Riverbed welcomes Itumeleng 'Tumi' Sethebe as ECD



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Award-winning agency Riverbed has welcomed creative industry heavyweight Itumeleng Sethebe as the agency's new executive creative director. With over a 20-year career under his belt, Sethebe has worked on some of the world's most loved global and South African brands, at agencies that include TBWA Hunt Lascaris, Metropolitan Republic and Ogilvy. He has been executive creative director at both Havas, and most recently McCann1886.



"I am excited to join Riverbed as its core ethos of producing brave, effective work deeply resonates with me. I have always strived to inspire compelling creative work by challenging the thinking of the teams I work with," says Itumeleng 'Tumi' Sethebe, as the agency's newly appointed executive creative director.

■ ***How and when did this come about?***

My predecessor, Bridget Johnson was immigrating, and her role became as ECD of the Riverbed became vacant and so that is when the process to replace her started and after a number of engagements with the agency CEO and founder, Mona Zwambila. We felt that this was a great opportunity for us to engage and create a very competitive black owned agency.

■ ***What excites you most about taking on this new role?***

I have been a fan of the Riverbed for a number of years from a distance based purely on the basis of their incredible purpose led work that has had a real impact on both clients and consumers, alike. What excites me then is the opportunity to further build on this brand of work while growing the business to be the very best in the industry.

■ ***How did you end up working in the creative industry?***

When I was in high school my art teacher told me to quit art and from that day onwards, I wanted to prove her wrong and so I began my drive to be in the creative industry.

■ ***What do you love most about your career, the industry and what you do?***

Advertising has afforded me the opportunity to give a voice to the voiceless and I love that about what I do.

■ ***What approach will you be taking as the new executive creative director?***

I have a people first type of approach and I believe that my biggest role is to create an environment for everyone that I work with to make the best work of their lives.

■ ***What is your most memorable project that you've worked on?***

That's such a tough question, but the Hugh Masekela tribute that went on to win a Cannes award is special to me simply because it was a very sincere send off for the great man.

■ ***What has been your biggest career highlight?***

That would have to be when I was chosen to be one of six South Africans to be part of the grand jury of the New York Festivals International Advertising Awards In 2018, it was a very intense but rewarding experience.

■ ***What is your biggest motivation in life?***

That today I can be better than I was yesterday.

■ ***What career advice would you give to anyone entering the creative industry?***

"Computers are useless, they can only give you answers." Pablo Picasso

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