

Unati Moalusi appointed as chief people officer at VML SA

Unati Moalusi has been appointed as the chief people officer (CPO) at VML South Africa, transitioning from her current role as CPO at Wunderman Thompson. In her new position, she will spearhead the People portfolio within the recently merged business.



Unati Moalusi has a passion for counselling. Source: Supplied.

Not a traditional HR practitioner, Moalusi holds a master's degree in counselling psychology with an additional specialisation in industrial and organisational psychology and is also a qualified Consciousness Coach. She practised as a counselling psychologist before entering the world of HR and still views herself more as a psychologist and coach.

Prioritising Authenticity

Moalusi describes herself as someone who “leads with humanity” and says, “the best version of ourselves is when we show up authentically. In so doing, we give others permission to do the same.”

She applied this philosophy during her seven-year tenure at Hollard, where she rose through the ranks to senior HR business partner and, more recently, as CPO at Wunderman Thompson. While there, she was a finalist in the international Business Culture Awards in the ‘Leading with Purpose for Business Culture’ category. The awards recognise and celebrate forward-thinking organisations that enable their employees to succeed and shape employee engagement for greater business performance.



Jarred Cinman and Diane Wilson take up VML top leadership positions

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“Unati has spent the past five years building culture and programmes within Wunderman Thompson, many of which have redefined the organisation,” says Jarred Cinman, CEO of VML.

“She brings this experience, plus her training as a psychologist to the role, offering a unique combination of know-how and mindset. The job to be done is nothing less than building the best environment and workplace for all our people. As these two businesses combine to become the largest creative agency in the country, the challenges are formidable, but the

opportunities are greater. We have no doubt that Unati is the right person for the job and will continue the amazing work she has begun at WT into the new VML.”

Nurturing Creativity

The agency environment can be challenging for HR practitioners to navigate. They need to foster a culture in which creatives can thrive under pressure in an industry known for being highly competitive. Moalusi has found her home on this proverbial tight rope. “I’m colourful by nature – I think and work in colour, and I believe that agency gives you that freedom” she says. “My feminine energy is free; my creative energy is free; I can be who I am.”

As Moalusi begins the delicate task of presiding over the integration of two established businesses and creating a new cultural identity, her goal is clear. “I want to make a positive impact in the lives of the people I work with and continue to create a culture that is enabling, exciting and gives everyone a sense of belonging,” she says.

Her objectives align perfectly with the newly appointed VML leadership team’s vision for the business. “In an industry notorious for burnout and short tenures, it is our ambition to create a workplace that is caring, excellent and in which learning and growth are priorities,” says VML COO Diane Wilson. “We have the chance to do the best work of our careers if we design a business with people at its heart. We could not be more thrilled to have a people partner who brings the levels of passion and care that Unati does.”

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