

VMLY&R South Africa launches gamechanger, VMLY&R Commerce

By  Danette Breitenbach

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On Monday VMLY&R South Africa launched VMLY&R Commerce in South Africa, a secondary brand within VMLY&R South Africa, that reimagines how brands deliver modern commerce to drive growth while offering customers real value.



Source: © Lion and Lion [Lion and Lion](#) VMLY&R South Africa has launched VMLY&R Commerce in South Africa, a secondary brand within VMLY&R South Africa, that reimagines how brands deliver modern commerce to drive growth while offering customers real value

VMLY&R Commerce, which launched in 2021, is WPP's end-to-end creative commerce company.

The Year of the commerce revolution

This is the year of the commerce revolution says Beth Anne Kaminko, global chief executive officer of VMLY&R Commerce and New York CEO VMLY&R, who also launched this category (Creative Commerce) at Cannes.

She describes creative commerce as “not transactional, tactical and executional but emotional, highly creativity and imaginative”.

“We are seeing things up-ended with the speed of change and adoption growing so that commerce is anything, anytime

and anywhere in people's lives."

The result is that consumers are blocking a lot of advertising. "Not only are they not watching the channels developed traditionally, but they are sceptical of brands that put out too many messages that feel disingenuous or don't feel authentic and are not creating any value for them," explains Kaminko.

But she adds this does not mean they are not buying brands or that brands are less important. "To create true meaning in someone's life you intersect their lives with communication and creativity that they value, and this is creative commerce."



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Jarred Cinman, co-CEO of VMLY&R South Africa believes marketers are struggling to make the shifts that are needed to really operate in a contemporary world.

"We have noticed that very few clients and even fewer agencies are even having this conversation. But they are aware that this kind of change is happening," he says.

He adds that while retailer media is an exploding category, and going to be worth tens of billions of dollars, and retailers are also getting it, putting in the units and making it possible, media buyers are still planning media the way they have done.

"They still thinking about traditional channels, and here I include traditional digital channels."



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The biggest game in town

Cinman says the agency have been watching VMLY&R Commerce's global launch and the kind of work happening with great excitement.

"In a market and continent like ours, commerce has always been part of our experience. Think about when you walk through an African city - what you experience is commerce. And that means that there is just such an opportunity here."

In this case, the opportunity is for the agency to give its clients completely new ways to interact with their customers. "I think that it is a revolution that is perfect for this country and continent, and we are excited about the business and what we can offer to consumers," says Cinman.

He calls it the "biggest game in town" and one that pulls together all the creative, media and technological opportunities that come with commerce.

"We see VMYL&R Commerce as the chance to expand our capabilities into the world of commerce given that a big part of where we are starting on this commerce journey is in the digital commerce customer experience technology space, and this is because this is an area that has traditionally been a strong business for us. For example, we built the Nando's e-commerce environment as well as a number of other big scale commerce initiatives," says Cinman.

Kaminko calls creative commerce the future of marketing. “It is bringing commerce closer in. Not that it was not part of marketing but for whatever reason, because of the way that companies got organised, trade happened but it got separated in silos.

“Now these two are coming back together and creativity is going to be the key bridger of how we deliver that addition value and that experience and engagement.”



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Changing the customer experience

VMLY&R will be headed up by VMLY&R’s chief experience officer Imran Patel.

“The driver behind this sub-brand is client profitability as small and large companies look at CX to make an impact on their top and bottom line.”

He adds that while 25% of brand marketing makes an impact, 75% of the final impact on the customer is the experience a brand creates.

“Though VMLY&R Commerce wants to enable these experiences by designing creative commerce experiences that change the way a brand deals with its customer and how customers experience a brand end to end,” he says.

VMLY&R Commerce will amplify the agency’s existing digital commerce offerings; CX, UX, software development and ecommerce capabilities, as well as an expanded service offering that includes data-led strategy, user research, retail media and digital transformation consulting.

This will allow the agency to curate the customer’s entire digital purchase journey, guiding them from awareness and discovery through the purchase experience and ultimately to advocacy.

By combining data and technology to build a unified view of the consumer journey, the agency is designing creative commerce experiences that fulfil the client’s needs and the consumer’s wishes.

VMLY&R Commerce South Africa launches with two new clients already won – CIPLA and Renault, both of which were awarded in competitive pitches late in 2022.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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