

VML's Parusha Partab: Challenging the commonplace notion of strategy

Parusha Partab has been appointed the first chief strategy officer of the newly formed VML South Africa.



Parusha Partab, VML SA's first chief strategy officer, is challenging the commonplace notion of strategy (Image supplied)

Last year WPP announced the merger of Wunderman Thompson and VMLY&R (globally) to form VML, operational from 1 January 2024.

Previous group strategy director at Wunderman Thompson Partab's work will lay the foundation for the South African business's approach to strategy in the future.

Expressing her enthusiasm as well as excitement and gratitude for this new challenge, she says, "Our new business represents a huge depth and vast range of capabilities, making it a powerful offering in the industry."

Jarred Cinman and Diane Wilson take up VML top leadership positions

10 Jan 2024





Strategists focused on AI

VML South Africa has approximately 40+ strategists across the group with a specialised B2B task force focusing on B2B and ABM marketing and deep expertise in brand and communication strategy, social and content media strategy as well as digital and tech.

“Strategy sits at the intersection of insight and foresight. Consequently, we have dedicated strategists focused on developing and integrating our AI tools to enable efficiencies for our clients through AI,” she explains.



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Danette Breitenbach 8 Mar 2024



Diverse representation not enough

On building a powerful team, she says she is looking forward to using her position of influence to open the way for others to follow.

“It’s not enough to just have diverse representation; we must constantly cultivate inclusivity in conjunction.”

She says she approaches every aspect of her role through this lens.

“Through this, I strive to re-evaluate how I am framing diversity to include diversity of age, gender, skills, expertise, appetite, and background.

“My intention is to cultivate a culture of collaboration and sharing, where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives,” she states.

Challenging the commonplace notion of strategy

She adds that she wants to challenge the commonplace notion of strategy as mere output or requiring a singular, entrenched strategist.

“Instead, we aim to bring the best expertise together to create brave spaces for our creativity and clients to thrive in.”



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Advertising: The fusion of creativity and commerce

Partab describes advertising as, “the fusion of creativity and commerce, where artistic expression serves economic progress”.

She says she was drawn to strategy as soon as she entered the industry.

“From day one, I was attracted to the strategy side of the business because it offers a unique opportunity to work with clients from various industries and tackle their unique business challenges.”

Named Strategic Planner of the Year at the Global Women in Marketing Awards in 2023 and one of *Mail & Guardian’s* Top 200 Young South Africans in 2023. Partab is currently the head of IAB SA’s (DEI) Council.

“Partab is one of the most imaginative and skilled strategy leaders I have had the opportunity to work with,” says Jarred Cinman, CEO of VML South Africa.

“She brings a refreshing and quite revolutionary mindset to the business and will now be leading the best strategy team in the industry. We are thrilled to have her take on this new role.”

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