

WPP Liquid hires heavyweight Felix Kessel as creative lead

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On behalf of WPP Liquid, the team at Grey Africa is excited to announce the appointment of Felix Kessel as the new creative lead at WPP's agency for Distell, Team Liquid.



Felix is the former CEO and CCO of Leo Burnett South Africa and co-founder and CCO of award-winning, breakthrough agency, OwenKessel, before its acquisition by the Publicis Groupe. He comes with an outstanding track record of award-winning creative work over two decades, combined with entrepreneurial excellence in building an integrated agency from the ground up and driving its creative and strategic outputs all the way to an acquisition and merger into a global giant.

Considering the portfolio of WPP Team Liquid, created as a bespoke solution for Distell's Tier One brands, it doesn't hurt that roughly twenty of Felix's years have been spent doing alcohol marketing for some of South Africa's best-loved brands. From Castle Lite, where his team was responsible for some of the earliest content-based campaigns in the early 2000s, to delivering award-winning, turn-around work for ailing brands like Amstel Lager circa 2010, arresting decline and returning it to growth as a result of some of South Africa's favourite beer advertising (Boxer, Chef, Amstel Golden Hour), cited by the Unilever Institute as some of the most relevant work targeting the South African main market.

It's no surprise then when you get the answer to asking why take on this particular challenge? Says Felix: "This opportunity, to guide some of South Africa's most wonderful and powerful brands and tell quintessential, positive South African stories is, of course, a great responsibility but also one that I relish getting stuck into. Guiding my team through the transforming landscape of communication while keeping our market engrossed with relevant, insight-based creative work – all with the aim of creating work that not only stands out, but shapes our combined culture positively – is something that drives me personally."

Not surprising when you look at the work produced by some of the other brands he's been responsible for, including McDonald's, Ciroc, Dimension Data, MTN, and all the way back to Vodacom's Yebo Gogo campaign in the late nineties.

Says Paul Jackson, CEO of Grey and Liquid: "As the WPP Team Liquid model develops and scales, it is fantastic to be

able to attract some of the best talent in the market. Felix brings an integrated approach to the unit that is not just about creative output, but also the way in which we structure to get to the best work. He is a thought leader in the industry, commenting regularly in the media and with his entrepreneurial roots, we know he will resonate with the business imperatives – not only of our business but, more importantly, with his clients.”

Felix will officially take the reins in January 2020, partnering with WPP Team Liquid MD, Mike Middleton, who shared with us his excitement: “We are so excited having someone of Felix’s calibre on board and look forward to him continuing to drive creative excellence on the Distell brands.”

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