

Muzi Mthombeni joins Wonder as head of strategy

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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Muzi Mthombeni has been appointed head of strategy at Wonder, a purpose-led marketing consultancy. The creative joins hands with Gareth McPherson and Helen Ludwig in their Cape Town office after working in various roles at agencies such as Saatchi and Saatchi, Leo Burnett, and Idea Hive.



Muzi Mthombeni. Source: Supplied.

Congrats on the new position, how does it feel?

I'm excited for this new position. Wonder is perfectly aligned to where I'd like to take my career and the type of work I see myself doing in the near future.

■ ***What is first on your agenda?***

I want the work we do to speak for itself and what is key to that is making sure my focus is on clients from the get-go. So first on the agenda is solving our client's current problems in a way that clearly differentiates Wonder in the market.

■ ***Why did you choose to move to Wonder?***

I'm pursuing my greater purpose and a huge part of that is the need to align the work I do with the person I want to be. This means moving away from marketing for marketing's sake to doing work that has purpose behind it. Wonder offered me an opportunity to bridge that gap.

■ ***What have been the highlights of your career so far?***

The highlights have come from collaborating with global agencies to work on global campaigns for brands such as Visa and Heineken as the region's lead strategist, winning the pitch for and launching Spotify in Africa, as well as being elected to and sitting on the Next Generation Board for Publicis Groupe Africa.

However, personally, my career highlight has been seeing the two individuals who I worked with as interns and junior strategists succeed in their work, and attribute some of that to the learnings from my time with them.

■ ***What would you say have been the challenges?***

The pace at which people are changing their tastes, preferences and behaviours has accelerated. This together with accelerated innovation remains a challenge. There is little time to master an element because you are never sure whether it will be rendered obsolete. So the challenge remains to constantly learn while gaining a level of mastery.

■ ***What is it about the creative/marketing/advertising industry that you love and what would you change?***

I love the freedom to be curious and creative. There's no set scientific formula or right mathematical or legal answer so you have room to explore and find the many ways to solve a problem.

What I would change is the apprehension we've developed against trying things. There's been a huge push to rely solely on data that is draining the magic of doing work that's intuitive which is what led to some of the most impactful work in my opinion. There are lessons to be learned from data but that should not be the decider of what we do as creative individuals.

■ ***You have had several interesting roles over the years, how do you know when it's time for a new challenge?***

It's time to make a change when the work doesn't excite you anymore. If you're not excited, then neither will the people who receive your work. Happy creatives create good work so if you're not happy and excited it's time to go.

■ ***What impact do you hope to have in your industry?***

I'm honestly not sure. I know I want to do impactful work that actually matters but whether or not that has some industry impact is not for me to decide. Let my work matter to whom I'm doing it for and that's impact enough for me.

■ ***Any advice for young people who want to enter the industry?***

Always remember that we're not surgeons, and no one is going to die - so relax and have fun. The work we do needs to be fun otherwise you're not doing it correctly.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

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