

Colett Naidu takes on new division at Wunderman Thompson SA

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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Wunderman Thompson SA recently promoted Colett Naidu as division managing director to its executive team.

Naidu has been part of the agency team since May 2017. The agency has since created a new role for a new division that will focus primarily on Telkom Group and Absa Retail Business Banking, of which Naidu is now responsible for.

Throughout her 13 years in the advertising business, Naidu has gained experience across renowned brands, including Edgars, Unilever, Clover, Tiger Brands, Omega Labs and Boehringer Ingelheim, Absa and Standard Bank Digital.



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"I'm super excited about this opportunity," added Naidu. "I intend to nurture my team's strengths, as well as support and help drive the diversity and inclusion objectives. I firmly believe that mentorship is more valuable than management, so I'll continue to mentor and empower our young talent. Further, my ambition is to ensure that we consistently offer efficiency, integration, great work, talent and value to our clients while strengthening our partnerships even further."



■ ***You've been part of the Wunderman Thompson agency team since May 2017. How do you feel about the promotion and taking on the role of Division Managing Director for a completely new division?***

Wunderman Thompson has always felt like home to me. Working in an agency that has such scale but hasn't lost its heart in the process is fulfilling. I am thrilled to be given the opportunity to be part of the leadership team and excited to be taking on this role that I have no doubt will be rewarding yet challenging, in a good way.

■ ***What does this role entail?***

The role entails overseeing the Telkom Group and the Absa Retail and Business Banking accounts. My biggest focus will be ensuring that both accounts are operating as efficiently as possible. We identify and retain great talent by giving them the best platform to thrive and deliver great work. We consistently have an innovative and transformative solution-driven approach.

■ ***The new division will focus primarily on Telkom Group and Absa Retail and Business Banking. What are you most looking forward to regarding working with these clients/on these brands?***

Other than the fact that these are two great South African brands? That alone fuels me and gives me a great sense of pride.

These clients are ambitious, customer-centric, willing to take big steps and are open to different and new ways of doing things. The opportunities are endless.

■ ***What excites you most about the agency and of course the new division?***

I have watched Wunderman Thompson SA evolve and grow over the years. The mixture of talent and skill across various divisions is phenomenal. There's a high-performance culture yet there's an old-school agency element of fun that sticks, even virtually. The new division gives us a great opportunity to offer integrated solutions (from advertising to tech and from digital to user experience) to our clients that should ultimately exceed the value expectation. It also opens the door to creating hybrids of individuals as there's a definite shift from purely specialist focused account management, operational, strategic and creative talent. This division gives everyone the platform to grow and upskill across various areas.

■ ***Comment on the current state of the industry, how the industry has responded to or is responding to Covid, and how you plan to navigate the new division through this.***

Undoubtedly all marketers and agencies have faced immense challenges in light of the pandemic. Some have been reactive, some who were gravely impacted due to restrictions, and some who were able to take it as an opportunity to accelerate growth and the evolution of their offering. Relooking touchpoints and customer experience is becoming an even greater focus. Embracing the change, shifts and staying relevant and agile will see us over to the other side.

It's admirable how the industry has adapted to this new way of working, ensuring that the wheels keep turning and that the magic still happens. The impact of Covid has changed how we work, however, it is my ambition to ensure that we stay connected to our clients and each other. I believe that we are equipped to navigate through any other challenges that may still arise due to Covid, and born out of it will be stronger and even more connected client agency teams, albeit in a very new normal.

■ ***What do you love most about your career and industry?***

I love the people! I have met the most talented, ambitious, fun-loving and unique individuals in this industry, and that's definitely been the favourite part of my journey.

I started in advertising fresh out of college, and my passion for what I do has never waned; it's what makes me tick. I still get goosebumps every time I see a great piece of work! The learning never stops, and change is by far the only constant.

■ ***Tell us a bit about your background/experience and how this has equipped you for the role.***

I have been in the industry for just over 13 years. I've worked at several agencies, big and small on many great brands. I've gained TTL experience over this time, constantly upskilling myself. I have had the advantage of working with and learning from some of the industry's most talented and influential people. I saw every phase of my career as an opportunity to add value, learn and collaborate, and that's exactly what I plan to do in this role too.

■ ***What's at the top of your to-do list?***

On my actual to-do list right now – planning and prepping for my upcoming week as home-schooling my six-year-old has also been added to my daily weekday mix.

Professionally - to ensure that we maintain happy and inspired performing teams.

Further strengthening our partnerships with our clients, offering structure but allowing for agility that will enable us to navigate through whatever lies ahead.

■ **What are you currently reading/watching/listening to?**

With music, basically, anything goes, but I have been meditating more since the start of the pandemic, so my playlists have taken a bit of a spiritual turn. I am currently switching between a soppy romantic novel (the title I will not mention) and Jay Shetty's *Think like a monk*. I don't watch much TV in general, but when I do I am a sucker for whatever's binge-worthy on Netflix. Right now it's *Firefly Lane*.

■ **Tell us something about yourself not generally known.**

I would probably be a Yogi, or a figure skater had advertising not stolen my heart first.

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