

## Groovey new partners for Lobedu

Lobedu Communications Group (LCG) has been sold to Koni Media Holding, a South African media holding company. In terms of the deal, Lobedu Investments (Pty) Ltd, owned by Fred Robertson, Zeona Motshabi and Tholi Ngwenya, will sell its entire 51% interest in LCG in an all-cash deal.

In South Africa, LCG operates through Leo Burnett, Starcom, Manning Selvage and Lee and Red Nail as one of the top 10 communications groups and is a member of global communications group Publicis Groupe, headquartered in Paris, France. Publicis will retain its 49 % interest in LCG.

Koni is an investment company founded by former Entrepreneur of the Year Groovin Nchabeleng and former chief of state protocol Billy Modise. Koni owns 100% of South African BEE advertising agency Blueprint Strategic Marketing, of which Nchabeleng is currently MD.

The new local advertising business will operate as Leo Burnett Holdings (LBH-South Africa) with Nchabeleng at the helm as group CEO. Nchabeleng will relinquish his MD position at Blueprint, which will become a stand-alone agency in LBH-South Africa.

As Leo Burnett Holding (South Africa) group CEO, Nchabeleng will oversee the overall management of four business entities within the group, namely; Leo Burnett (advertising), RedNail (through-the-line agency with below-the-line heritage), MS&L (public relations and communications) and Starcom (Media strategy and implementation buying).

Comments Nchabeleng, "This deal presents a platform for Leo Burnett South Africa to offer our clients the best of local knowledge and skill coupled with access to international insight, talent and clients.

"I am extremely excited about the future of the company and am dedicated to making Leo Burnett Holdings a market leader in the industry. We believe we can grow the business even further and provide outstanding breakthrough service for our clients. We will continue to add to the exceptional staff of the company."

Motshabi, the executive chairman of LCG since 2005 and former MD of Lobedu Leo Burnett 2002 - 2005, will work with Nchabeleng, the LBH management team and the clients of the firm in a transition period.

"Our focus has been to improve the quality of our offering and products in each of the four brands" says Motshabi. "We are very proud of how we have also transformed the company and have created a culture where employees feel they are a valuable part of the team."

According to Nchabeleng, the deal demonstrates the level of maturity BEE has reached in this sector. "This is a ground-

breaking transaction in the industry. We have not taken empowerment back, but forward as the level of BEE ownership remains intact," he says.

The new management structure of LBH is as follows:

- Billy Modise, non-executive chairman
- Groovin Nchabeleng - group CEO
- Paul Carsley - COO
- Chris Wildish - MD: Leo Burnett
- Gordon Patterson - MD: Starcom
- Shoni Makhari - MD: MS& L

The MD of RedNail is still to be announced.

Reinher Behrens, CEO of Lobedu Communications Group for the last four years and who oversaw the introduction and integration of the BEE partners Lobedu Investments, will also be part of the transition as LBH welcomes its new partners. Behrens will pursue other interests once the new structure and management are fully entrenched.

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