

Qingqile 'WingWing' Mdlulwa, Wunderman Thompson SA' new Group CCO

Qingqile Mdlulwa's appointment as group chief creative officer to Wunderman Thompson South Africa serves as the marker of intent for the agency to firmly position creativity as a key driver of the business moving into a new decade.

 By [Jessica Tennant](#) 15 Dec 2020



Qingqile 'WingWing' Mdlulwa

Affectionately known as 'WingWing', Mdlulwa has garnered much respect from the industry throughout his career. Over the past 25 years, he's gained experience at FCB (Lindsay-Smithers FCB), Twist/AfricaExtraBold, Network BBDO, Leo Burnett and Ireland/Davenport.

During this time, he's become synonymous with producing quintessential South African campaigns for brands such as Vodacom, Standard Bank, Mercedes Benz, Nedbank, Toyota, Tiger Brands, Cell C, Chick Licken, FNB, Avis, Europcar, Isuzu, SABC, Tracker and Ster-Kinekor.

Mdlulwa has served on all the major South African advertising industry bodies. The most noteworthy was a chair of the Loerie Awards for three years, and member of the Creative Circle Exco for a few years. He also served on the outdoor jury at the 2006 Cannes Lions Awards, and in 2014, was appointed Radio Jury Foreman of the 2014 D&AD Awards.

Describing himself as a servant of creativity, Mdlulwa looks forward to joining the agency to make a positive impact. "I look forward to supporting and nurturing the young talent in Wunderman Thompson SA while delivering on our ambitious creative agenda, and remain committed to issues of transformation and inclusivity in the industry."

🔴 *Congrats on your new role at Wunderman Thompson SA. How do you feel about it?*

It's a great honour to be entrusted with this mammoth yet exciting task.

🔴 *How and when did this come about/take effect?*

Just over a month ago, I heard they were looking for a new group CCO, and they heard I was interested in the job. From then on, everything went pretty smoothly and relatively quickly because we 'clicked' pretty early in our talks. I start in January 2021.

🔴 ***What does the role entail?***

It's about ensuring that the agency is in a place where we are consistently producing creative work of an exceptional standard. That means making sure we have the right people in the right positions, and that those people have all the tools they need, are sufficiently mentored and inspired to do the best work they can. The role requires the creative tone to be set, and nurturing Wunderman Thompson SA further as a great environment for creatives to work. The role also involves a bit of talent-spotting, a lot of mentoring and a lot of listening.

🔴 ***What excites you most about the agency and your role in particular?***

It's the sheer potential of the place. There isn't another agency quite like this one in SA, so you could say I'm curious and excited about what we can build it up to be.

🔴 ***Comment on the current state of the industry, how the industry has responded to Covid and is dealing with issues of transformation and inclusivity, and how you plan to navigate the agency through this, creatively speaking.***

It's been quite a challenging year for most people. Companies have shut down and jobs have been lost. I've also seen generosity, resilience and resourcefulness. The less I say about transformation and inclusivity, the better. The time for talking passed a long time ago, we know what's right and we should be doing it. It's no rocket science.

🔴 ***What do you love most about your career and the advertising industry?***

Freedom. When done right, I think it's one of the best careers in the world. We need to reinfuse some soul into the industry and start having fun again.



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🔴 ***Tell us a bit about your experience and how this has equipped you for your new position.***

You could say I was part of the first generation of black kids who got into advertising post-democracy. I started my career in January 1996, in an almost lily-white agency, and an even whiter creative department. A pretty scary place for a kid from Soweto (ha, I didn't say dusty streets), but I found some great mentors and teachers at that agency. Talented people who clearly had better things to do, but were generous with their time and their knowledge, and helped me become the creative I am. I guess I'm also about helping talented creative people become even better at what they do.

🔴 ***What are you most looking forward to?***

The people.

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

There's so much to do, mmh... Remembering everybody's names.

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

I'm currently listening to the LL Cool J album 'Mama Said Knock You Out', and reading *Magenge, We Need to Talk* by my good friend, Melusi Tshabalala.



BEHIND THE SELFIE

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📌 **Tell us something about yourself not generally known?**

I accidentally knocked over a glass of water while talking to Ice Cube, the rapper and movie star, at a restaurant, soaking him with ice water. Probably the last time he was nice to a fan.

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