

Dhatchani Christian returns to South Africa as MD of Delta Victor Bravo

With more than 20 years of strategy, marketing and consumer research experience and having worked with a wide spectrum of leading global, multi-national and local brands, Dhatchani Christian has been appointed as managing director at Delta Victor Bravo.

 By Evan-Lee Courie ^{9 Feb 2021}



Dhatchani Christian

Her fundamental understanding of business, gained through formal study combined with the breadth of her agency and client side experience, has given Dhatchani Christian distinctive ability to formulate insightful and practical solutions that create significant value for clients.

Congrats on your appointment. How do you feel about it?

Thank you. It's great to be back in South Africa, and I'm really excited to be joining the team of eclectic and individually brilliant people we have at Delta Victor Bravo. I look forward to the challenges and triumphs we face together as a team, and the impact we'll no doubt make for our clients as we find new ways to help them grow.

How and when did this come about?

I had worked with David Blyth (founder of Delta Victor Bravo) previously at Yellowwood. We have a great working relationship and have been in contact throughout my time in the UK. My return to SA towards the end of last year coincided with his plans for how he'd like to grow the business and his team going forward.

What excites you most about joining Delta Victor Bravo?

Firstly, it's the team that I am joining and that we've all had the benefit of working together previously. We're small and agile business with lots of energy. We know each other's strengths and there's a level of trust there that's allowed us to hit the ground running. It's a powerful dynamic.

“ Also, I'm proud to be part of the ethos of the company, which is about helping businesses find newpaths to growth through sustainable business transformation - helping them lead with higher purpose and innovate to serve people and society in more meaningful ways. ”

It's something that connects all of us within the Delta Victor Bravo team and drives us forward; that the work we do has impact beyond our clients' top line growth.

▣ **Your career spans over 20 years. What are your biggest highlights?**

I've had the benefit of quite a varied career within marketing, which has rounded my perspective and allowed me to approach a problem from many different angles. I'm grateful for my time in consumer research, and the ability to always bring the customer into the room that that instilled in me, and also for the need to think about practical solutions and bottom line impacts that working on client side has brought.

But it's my time in strategy consulting that stands out as a highlight, as it allows me to pull it all together, and draw from all aspects of my experience to tackle the problems we're brought onboard to help solve. Flexing that muscle in different geographies has been exciting and gratifying. But if I think about the highlights it would come down to individual projects; the ones where we've been in the trenches with clients, working together as one team, where we come out on the other end having shifted something substantially within their business for the better and all proud of the work we've done.

▣ **What do you love most about your career, the industry and what you do?**

I'd have to say the constant mental stimulation, and the opportunity to be continuously challenged and learn is what I love most.

“ The nature of strategy consulting is that we're always exposed to new industries, new contexts, new problems to tackle. ”

It can be a frenetic pace and energy, but one that I love. There's also the satisfaction of working with clients over the long term, forming trusted relationships where we become partners and advisors to their businesses. And finally because of the nature of the work we do, I enjoy that we're so connected and in touch with how consumers and society are changing and evolving. It makes for an exciting day at the office.

▣ **You recently returned from a four-year stint in the UK. What fresh new approach will you bring to Delta Victor Bravo?**

Honestly, my experience in the UK has taught me that the quality of thinking and approach to strategy solutions that I've been exposed to in South Africa has been world-class. That's certainly the case for the great people that we have working at Delta Victor Bravo, so I wouldn't say that I'd want to change anything in terms of how we approach strategy. I will say that I noticed a more conscious approach in the UK to balancing the pressure of work with the rest of life. That's something that I'd like to learn from and set an example for here.

▣ **What noticeable differences are there when comparing the UK market to South Africa?**

I suppose the most obvious difference is that because there are many global businesses headquartered in the UK and Europe, you'd find that the forefront of thinking in terms of innovation in many industries emerged in these markets early on, e-commerce and fintech being good examples.

“ I find that businesses in South Africa are more connected to the concerns that have deep societal impact. ”

Perhaps because there is more onus on the private sector here to play a role in helping address these issues, I find our innovation and how business adapts to society is more conscientious and purposeful, and in some ways more personal as a result.

▣ **Innovation and creativity is key, especially in the time of Covid-19. What can organisations no longer ignore when it comes to strategy?**

I think we can agree that Covid-19 has turned nearly every aspect of life on its head. Physical patterns of behaviour have changed, and because of this everything from how people live and work, to how organisations interact with their customers, how customers choose and purchase products and services, how supply chains deliver these products has had to adapt.

“ Good strategy has always needed to be connected to what drives the customers and societies that those businesses serve. But in current times it's no longer possible to continue with business as usual while ignoring the fundamental impacts that a Covid environment is likely to have on customer behaviour, spending patterns and points of engagement over the long term. ”

At a time when businesses might be more concerned with cost-cutting, adapting internal processes and driving productivity, its actual growth through innovation and thinking differently about their business models, ways to market and how better to serve their customer bases that needs to take priority.

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