

New appointment announcement: Neal Farrell, MD of Publicis Machine Cape Town

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What has your journey with Publicis Machine entailed until now?

In 2012, I took the leap from the safety of my position as a salaried employee, to co-found content marketing start-up Narrative. I had been in owned media publishing for two decades and every-where you looked, content marketing was a hot agenda item. As someone who has always leaned towards starting up new ventures, I knew that it would be wise to do this where the market trend was up. Some five years later, Narrative is a successful specialist agency within the Publicis Machine stable.

What has your role been leading up to your appointment as Managing Director?

After winning our first big retainer, Sanlam Reality, we quickly moved into recruitment phase. We had just one client: a blue-chip client that came with a big retainer and the pressure was on to deliver. So, we recruited the best people we knew, to ensure that we delighted from day one. Later on, I took on some additional executive responsibility within the group to lead our research specialist division, Answered Insights.

How are you enjoying your new role?

Love it! There is so much opportunity and so much excitement. I actually found myself, chomping at the bit during a recent two-week break, wanting to get back and get involved. It's exactly the challenge I needed just when I needed it and I am truly humbled by the positive response so far.



Neal Farrell

What is your vision for taking Publicis Machine in to the future?

1. Leadership:

firstly, to lead, not manage, and in doing so to ensure that we build an empowered, confident and “never afraid” team of interconnected people. I like to think of creating a movement with momentum, where our team drives the business forward, not management. When you get leadership right, you create unstoppable momentum.

• Creative excellence:

ultimately clients and the industry will judge us on our end product and its ability to drive ROI. To achieve this, we continually need to challenge ourselves and our clients, to ensure we give ourselves the best opportunity to deliver outstanding creative solutions, always.

• Client delight:

excellence is how we service our customers and as partners. There is no ‘college’ of client service, so ensuring that we have the very best client-service team requires daily, weekly and monthly affection. And I believe we have one of the very best teams.

• New business:

to drive new business development by ensuring that we have a clear understand-ing of our points of difference

compared to our competitors, what our positioning is, how we stand out from the sameness that marketers see when they look at our industry and ultimately, a plan to market ourselves to direct clients and procurement agencies and departments.

- **Commercial savviness:**

Taking care of the money is not just the responsibility of finance or client service, it's everyone's responsibility on all levels. This is something I actively encourage.

- **Diverse talent:**

all organisations have the responsibility to reflect the make-up of the population. Our goal is to deliver unique and relevant solutions to our clients, and this can only be achieved through diverse thinking and different points of view. The collective must be made up of diverse people from different backgrounds that can collectively contribute to drive the agency forward. I'll continue to drive our talent agenda to recruit diverse thinkers from all backgrounds.

- **Technology:**

just look at how the bigger digital consultancies are moving in on our turf. Combining technology and creativity with needle shifting solutions must be at the centre of our problem-solving conversations and in turn, market solutions.

- **Integration:**

At Publicis Machine we are a group of specialists (content, technology, PR, risk and rewards and research). Each group functions well in isolation, and here we have an opportunity to integrate offerings into a single solution. It's definitely one of our competitive edges and it's also a super opportunity for growth and becoming more relevant partners to our clients.

The agency's six-year existence has been nothing short of a great success story and we will future proof the agency and continue on the next growth trajectory, by staying true to this simple eight-point plan. With this, I believe we have a highly workable format to take Publicis Machine, Cape Town to the next level of success.

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