

Wunderman SA welcomes Astrid Ascar to the family

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Wunderman SA has appointed digital marketing specialist, media personality and business strategist, Astrid Ascar, as the global digital agency's chief strategic officer.



With close on 30 years' experience, Astrid's career has been entirely devoted to the media industry spanning radio, television, print, mobile and digital channels. With a key focus on strategic thinking, product and business development, content creation and communications, her hands-on experience and extensive skill-set extends to all aspects of the media and digital marketing sphere, befitting of her new position.

Astrid tells us: "Joining the Wunderman SA family is an incredible opportunity. I truly believe that globally, agencies are under pressure to revisit their ways of thinking and servicing clients, and their business models. Clients have matured. They have a far better idea of what they're looking for and have been exposed to different ways of thinking over the years, so the pressure is on to help them embrace digital transformation and build customer experiences that build loyalty and drive retention."

Having spent the last nine years of her career working closely alongside clients as an independent media, marketing and content consultant offering strategic advice and training to corporates, SMEs and agencies across the continent, Astrid believes she is equipped to bring a business impact mindset to how clients are serviced: "There's a need to expand the perception of what we're capable of doing. That's what I hope to bring to Wunderman SA."

Haydn Townsend, Wunderman SA Group CEO, is proud to welcome Astrid on board and believes her vast digital and media experience enables her to share great insight and expertise: "Astrid has an incredible understanding of the ever-changing media and digital marketing landscape, and has a brilliant ability to devise strategies to assist with adapting to such changes."

Boasting a remarkable business acumen and media skill-set Astrid began her career as a radio journalist before transitioning to television as a presenter and producer. It was here she made her mark, breaking away from traditional television business models to co-launch South Africa's first ever business-dedicated television channel, Summit TV, in the late 90s (now known as BDTV), and a few years later The Home Channel.

Other companies that have contributed to her significant career experience include Naspers, MultiChoice, M-Net, CNBC Africa, DStv, Highveld and the SABC.

In addition to her love for strategy, she is particularly passionate about training and education, and is committed to contributing to the Wunderman Academy, Wunderman SA's training facility for employees and clients. "A lot of my consultancy work included training and running workshops, not just about marketing, crisis communications or media, but also key messaging, media interviews and presentation skills," she explains.

Sitting at a Group level in her new role, Astrid is dedicated to positioning Wunderman SA as a full-service digital partner for clients, one that understands their business challenges and ROI pressures, and appreciates what they need to do to ensure growth and sustainability in the business landscape of the future. A firm believer that everything the digital agency does must have a strategic underpinning rooted in research and data, she upholds the Wunderman mantra, "Creatively Driven, Data Inspired".

"Our work as marketers is no longer just about producing fantastic creative or ads; we have to work closely alongside clients to understand all kinds of marketing tactics and all types of data. Just reporting that data isn't good enough - we now need to know how to analyse it so that we can share true business insights with our clients.

"There's a holy grail everyone is working towards and wants to achieve, but it's impossible to do that without a strategic focus on data, what it reveals and how it relates back to our clients' various business operations," she concludes.

An honour's graduate from Witwatersrand University, Astrid also holds an MBA from Henley Management College in the UK.

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