

Havas South Africa appoints chief creative officer

Issued by [Havas Johannesburg](#)

23 Jan 2019

Havas is proud to announce the appointment of John Davenport as its new chief creative officer. He will be based in Johannesburg, leading creative across all disciplines within the Havas Village in South Africa.



Davenport joins Havas as the agency group continues to elevate its offering through continued collaboration with sister companies within its parent holdings group, Vivendi. In South Africa, these sister companies include leading music stable, Universal Music Group and leading gaming developer, Gameloft. This being the age of content, leveraging these strategic relationships better enables Havas to continue facilitating meaningful connections between brands and people through creative, media and technology.

For business success in this socio-economic climate, meaningful connections are a non-negotiable, considering people would not care if 74% of the brands they use just disappeared. To create meaning with people, content continues to take centerstage as the tool for those connections. 84% of consumers prefer content that tells stories, entertains, solves and creates; yet, 60% of content curated by brands fails to deliver on behaviour-influencing engagement. Brands that succeed to forge those meaningful connections with people see success – up to a nine-fold increase in share of wallet, outperforming the stock market by 206% and a 137% increase in KPI achievement. These are some of the findings from the Havas proprietary research and insight tool, Meaningful Brands®.

Speaking on Davenport's appointment, Havas South Africa CEO, Lynn Madeley said, "When a friend called me late last year and told me that John Davenport was interested in joining Havas, I was thrilled. We are an agency that is doing some really smart stuff in terms of content and deep connections with consumers and we needed someone to join us in getting some work over the line. Enter John. Not only is he highly awarded but he also understands that an agency is a business and he knows how to navigate the business of creativity. It's a great match for us."

Davenport is a copywriter by trade and has been entrenched in South Africa's creative economy since 1996. He has worked with Ogilvy, Hunt Lascaris and co-founded Ireland/ Davenport which went on to win numerous industry awards

locally and globally.

He has led creative on numerous blue-chip businesses including South African Breweries, BMW, Isuzu, Standard Bank, Investec, AVIS, Vodacom, MTN, South African Tourism, to mention a few.

“I’m terrifically excited to be joining Havas because I think that the agency group has a unique offering for clients. Unlike most agencies, Havas’ being part of a wider non-advertising group, Vivendi, allows for wider collaboration from which deep connections between people and brands can be sustained,” said Davenport of his appointment.

“Through these deep connections, ‘meaningful connections’ as they are called at Havas, we can offer clients a unique perspective and approach to curating content that influences human behaviour. As our industry changes, I think that we are always looking for ways to have more meaningful engagements with our clients rather than shallow insignificant connections with millions of them,” he concluded.

Davenport’s role, over and above that of chief creative officer, will see him lead the creative programme of the Havas Academy, the agency group’s training and development arm aimed at empowering black women entering the marketing and communications sector.

He has judged at most award shows, including Cannes, and has won a number of awards locally, and on the global stage has snatched more than 20 Cannes Lions.

During his spare time, he blogs for Huffington Post, The Independent and Mail & Guardian, and is active in local politics, works on social media campaigns for several charities, is ineptly trying to finish a Master’s Degree and fiddles around with art and sculpture projects.

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