

Havas Worldwide Johannesburg launches PR division

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Havas Worldwide Johannesburg recently appointed Chris Verrijdt, previously MD of Dark Horse Communications, as the head of its new PR division.



Chris Verrijdt

"Globally, Havas is known as one of the most integrated agencies and in South Africa we have built very successful through-the-line and digital specialist agencies as well as a sports and activation business. Earlier this year we added media to the mix and so the next natural progression for us was to get a PR business off the ground," says CEO Lynn Madeley.

Madeley goes on to say that PR is more important than ever and must be a fundamental part of a truly integrated agency. "With PR in the mix, the depth of our solution is more holistic, ensuring our approach is authentically channel-agnostic."

The difference with Havas PR, says Madeley is that it is run like a newsroom. "This is where content meets context," she says. "It's our job to get the right message to the right people at the right time, ensuring content is relevant, accurate and interesting. Another important key factor is to dovetail traditional and digital making them work seamlessly together. This ensures all communication coming out of our offices is fast and constantly commenting."

Verrijdt adds that with the speed at which communication now travels, it is critical for an agency to be "constantly ready", hence the newsroom approach. "We need to be armed with the deepest, most current and relevant information, so as the landscape changes we constantly adapt for our clients."

Verrijdt adds that he is very excited to have become part of Havas, "They have some real smarts in their business and I am looking forward to a challenging and exciting time ahead."

In addition to running PR campaigns and managing the social media channels across the Havas Village, Verrijdt has brought with him Caxton Magazines, South African Breweries' Craft Beer, Sports and Environmental Media Awards as well as Taste of Joburg to name but a few to kick off the new Havas PR offering.

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