

David Uribe, TBWA's data director for Africa, Middle East

By [Jessica Tennant](#), issued by [TBWA](#)

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TBWA\Worldwide recently appointed David Uribe, co-founder of SmartBeemo, as regional data director for Africa and the Middle East.

Here, he tells us that the inclusion of data in advertising is changing the game and that it took “lots of studying, trying, failing and repeating” to get to where he is today...



David Uribe

Comment on your new appointment.

TBWA was the agency I always looked up to when I was going to ad school many years ago (because of its work with Apple). It's also a big challenge since we're living another big transition in advertising due to the inclusion of data in the whole creative and strategic process.

What does the role entail?

I'll be leading the adoption and implementation of data practices both internally and externally (clients). This adoption includes training, designing processes, developing technology and integrating everything we do into metrics and optimisations systems plus developing new business capabilities and competencies.

What excites you most about the agency and where it's going; and working from SA?

What excites me the most is that the vision is pretty clear and my skills fit perfectly into that vision. South Africa is one of the most exciting offices because of its size, client roster, leadership and talent.

What do you love most about your career, and your interests in

education and data in particular?

I love to be able to drive change and adoption. 10 years ago, when I started in advertising, the whole digital/social revolution was happening and I was lucky enough to fall at the core of it; I lived it, understood it and was able to educate and implement around it. Same story today with data, so I'm looking forward to the next 10 years and what happens then.

What did it take to get to where you are today?

Lots of studying, trying, failing and repeating. I also think that in order to accelerate our careers we need to do several things at the same time. And truly SmartBeemo boosted mine because I had to do everything, from being a CEO of a three-people company and at the same time be the community manager and accountant. It takes discomfort, multi-experimentation, discipline and a hard, thick skin indeed.

Comment on the power of data in 2018, in advertising, and what its future looks like to you.

“Data has given our industry the missing link to complete a perfect trifecta with creative and strategy. Data is the pre-, during- and post-evidence. It allows us to validate insights, measure ideas and solidify strategies. I truly believe data is the thermometer of our industry today and it will allow us to become real business partners with our clients because we'll be measuring success or failure in the same way, finally apples to apples!”

The future looks exciting, I believe we're close to achieving levels of personalisation that we would have never

accomplished with hyper-targeting, lots of real-time visualisation and predictive analysis.

■ **What's at the top of your to-do list?**

Train what I do to our teams. People like me (specialised in something else nobody understands) can become a problem to organisations like this one because we can't be everywhere at all times, so my main mission here is to train our teams to have solid digital/data practices.

■ **What are you currently reading/watching/listening to for work?**

Creating a Data-Driven Organization: Practical Advice from the Trenches by Carl Anderson.

■ **Tell us something about yourself not generally known.**

Colombian, sports aficionado (I play tennis, soccer and practice martial arts), been playing the guitar for 15 years and have never seen *Titanic* or *Game of Thrones*.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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