

# TBWA\Group celebrates signing on 'force to be reckoned with', Refilwe Maluleke

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Yellowwood managing director joins the mother body as chief strategy officer, while retaining her position at the strategic marketing agency.



*Refilwe Maluleke*

Refilwe Maluleke has been promoted to the role of chief strategy officer at TBWA\South Africa. Maluleke takes up the role with immediate effect, while retaining her position as managing director at leading strategic marketing consultancy Yellowwood.

Maluleke joined Yellowwood in 2016, after having spent the formative stages of her career at Unilever and South African Breweries.

She is a classically trained marketer with vast experience across sub-Saharan Africa, a proven track record of delivery across multiple brands, and strong relationships with some of the best marketers and agencies in South Africa. She has a high-performance mindset, driven by a passion for people and brands.

Maluleke completed her MBA at the CASS Business School in London (now known as the Bayes Business School) and assumed the role of managing director at Yellowwood in 2018. As managing director, Maluleke has led the renaissance of an agency emerging from a legacy business to a future-facing organisation ready to confront change and help clients navigate it as astutely.

She has worked tirelessly to embed the potency of Yellowwood across the TBWA\ collective, while building out new capabilities

and attracting some of the industry's best talent. Yellowwood's growth this year and its role in countless winning projects is evidence of this success. Being awarded as the most innovative brand consultancy on the continent by *MEA Markets* magazine is further endorsement of the work she has done.

In Maluleke's new role, she will be responsible for driving strategic excellence across the entire group. She will partner with the group's regional and worldwide teams in ensuring that the full breadth of TBWA proprietary tooling is embedded across the collective in SA and across the continent. She will do this while ensuring that she uses the practical intelligence and support to ensure that Yellowwood remains at the sharp end of delivering impactful strategies for independent and group clients.

Maluleke's appointment is an important step on TBWA\South Africa's journey to create greater organisational cohesion while protecting the strength and identity of each operating company.

The organisation of both specialists and generalists embraces diversity in every sense, says TBWA\Group CEO Luca Gallarelli: "Refilwe has proven herself to be the epitome of an 'and' person: She is a client and an agency person; a

strategist and a leader; a member of team Yellowwood and a leader in the TBWA Collective.

"She is, in a word, a force. And I am delighted that she is our force."

Reflecting on her appointment, Maluleke had the following to say: "The scarcity of strategy talent presents an opportunity for the Group CSO to be supported by the best strategy outfit available, with a vested interest in continually building strategic capability. A position few CSOs can enjoy in these times.

"My intention ultimately is that combining the role of CSO with Yellowwood benefit clients, giving greater capacity to resource for strategic depth in the creative world, working harder to align it to what the business and brand ambitions."

Gallarelli adds: "She is someone with deep specialisation and broad experience allowing her to navigate the fullest complexity confronting our clients today. I am delighted at the prospect of partnering with Refilwe in her expanded role as we seek to broaden her impact across our entire collective and client base."

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