

M&C Saatchi Abel Johannesburg bolsters creative firepower with new ECD James Cloete

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Multiple award-winning creative agency M&C Saatchi Abel has welcomed industry heavy hitter James Cloete into its ranks as executive creative director with a strategic handle on the Standard Bank account.



Neo Mashigo and James Cloete

Together with Group Chief Creative Officer Neo Mashigo, Johannesburg Managing Partner Faheem Chaudhry and Johannesburg Head of Strategy Makosha Maja-Rasethaba, he will form part of the M&C Saatchi Abel Johannesburg leadership team.

Cloete says M&C Saatchi Abel is experiencing very strong growth which he says is the result of the agency investing in the top talent in the industry. “It is very empowering to know that you are surrounded by excellence with everything you do, and so I’m very excited about the next phase of my career at M&C Saatchi Abel.”

Because of the scale of the business, the agency is strategically marrying talent with specific clients. Cloete adds firepower to the Johannesburg team, supporting Johannesburg-based Partner and Creative Director Adam Weber, who will be able to hone in creatively on specific clients.

Mashigo says that Cloete, awarded both locally and internationally, is the perfect match for M&C Saatchi Abel.

“James has the experience and skill to work on large-scale clients such as Standard Bank. Having worked with him before, I have always loved his sharp mind, his work, his energy and his ability to perform under pressure. He’s a perfect fit.”

“He is innovative and creative in how he approaches problems and comes up with solutions. We look forward to a very successful relationship resulting in relevant and inspiring work,” says Mashigo.

Cloete has worked across multiple brands including Coca-Cola, MTN, SABC, ABSA, Old Mutual, Cell C, MTN, Tiger Brands, Toyota, and Nampak, among many others.

He has been awarded at Cannes, D&AD, One Show, Clios, The Loerie Awards, The Eagles and The Pendorings. He has also been invited to judge at various shows, both locally and abroad, including Cannes, The New York Festival and The Loerie Awards.

Cloete says that he is excited to bring his experience to M&C Saatchi Abel's next phase of growth. "I noticed the agency has enjoyed meteoric growth despite what's been happening in the economy and despite everything that's been going on in the rest of the industry, so I wanted to be part of that journey. No doubt this agency has assembled some of the best minds," he says.

"The people here are incredibly intelligent and insightful and the prospect of being surrounded by such firepower as we pursue excellent work for our clients is very exciting."

On a personal level, he is looking forward to helping mould the next generation of creatives in South Africa, which aligns very closely with M&C Saatchi Abel's belief in talent development. "With the rapid growth of this agency, I also have the opportunity to do something that I am very passionate about and that is to grow and nurture young creative talent."

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