

Lauren Woolf



By [Louise Marsland](#)

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In the creative industries in particular, talent is expected and required. But how do you define 'talent' exactly? Ogilvy & Mather South Africa recently appointed a Chief Marketing and Talent Officer - Lauren Woolf - and she intends building lifelong fans of the agency with her talent search.

It is a uniquely created position to implement and drive the agency's talent and culture strategy as well as its marketing and communications initiatives.

In her role, Woolf is developing and implementing the agency's talent and innovation culture strategy while continuing to oversee the group's marketing and corporate communication initiatives.

"I am responsible for the marketing and amplification of the Ogilvy group of companies in South Africa, as well as being the head of Human Resources for the group. As head of 'Talent', my responsibility, together with my team, is to bring the right talent into our company and then have the right programs, interventions, environment and experiences to keep them here. And when they leave they are lifelong fans.

"Through this journey, our aim is to grow our client's business - and ours - through human capital," Woolf explains.

Woolf commented when her appointment was announced that the transparency of business, driven by technology, made this an exciting space to explore.

"Our industry is in constant transformation and it's critical to build sustainable experiences and value for both our clients and our people... I am fascinated by the connections between talent, culture, and communication. This rather interesting position and appointment, to me, is in itself indicative of integration and innovation at all levels of our business.

"The very strong and ever-strengthening links between strategy, organisational structure and process, culture, management and talent fascinate me, and this role allows for a fantastic overview and contribution to all these aspects of creative leadership."

Her immediate focus is to complete her eMBA through the Berlin School of Creative Leadership.

ABOUT LAUREN WOOLF

Lauren Woolf is Chief Marketing and Talent Officer of Ogilvy & Mather South Africa. She has spent 13 years at the agency in total, both in Cape Town



She also did a five-year stint in Switzerland as a Brand Manager for British American Tobacco prior to starting her own communications business. She was O&M Client Service Director in 2006 and was subsequently appointed to the board. In 2011, Woolf took on the position of Group Marketing Director with the key responsibilities of developing and managing the agency's amplification and reputation strategy. She also developed the Ogilvy Graduate Programme (OGP), as well as launched several O&M disciplines into the local market, including OgilvyOne Worldwide, Social@Ogilvy and Strike Media.

Q: What is at the top of your to do list?

A: People. Happy people. No matter how long my lists are, and how much they grow and shrink on any given day, people remain in the number one position.

Q: Why the talent and marketing hat in one?

A: The external and internal brand are barely - if at all - separate anymore, and social media has ensured that what we do and how we do it is essentially the same brand story inside and out. Further to brand reputation, the external brand perception and the internal felt experience of all players in a company ecosystem is one that needs to be as close, authentic, and dynamic as ever. A company-inside needs as much devotion, time and effort as it does outside - arguably far more. And with rapid and ongoing recalibration of our industry, focus on a strong talent-centred leadership style, mindset and brand are critical parts of the business. Every interaction of our people and clients and the ideas we create is an opportunity to share and spread our brand stories.

Q: Most important attribute needed to do your job?

A: Love and trust - two vital cornerstones in any relationship.

Q: The biggest trend to note in your industry?

A: Convergence.

Q: The contribution that you hope to make?

A: I hope to highlight and drive home a strong talent and people mindset throughout the organisation. I hope our industry grows even more obsessed with our human capital - finding them, giving them opportunities, developing and training them and finally working hard at keeping them motivated. Talent should be everyone's business, especially as it's the lifeblood of our industry.

Q: Where do you draw your creative inspiration?

A: My children, my colleagues, my eMBA cohorts and my love of contemporary art.

Q: How do you inspire others?

A: Through action.

Q: What are you currently reading for work?

A: *Age of Context* by Robert Scoble and Shel Israel.

Q: Your life philosophy?

A: Be present. Be kind. Be curious (source: Prof David Spann).

Q: At the top of my 'bucket list' is...

A: Kilimanjaro.

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMOG Files newsletter. Web: www.sourceagency.co.za.

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