

# M&C Saatchi Abel Group appoints new CFO

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One of SA's leading creative agencies, M&C Saatchi Abel, has appointed Graham Mears as the Group's new Chief Financial Officer (CFO). He brings with him over two decades worth of experience as a Chartered Accountant in the financial/marketing industry, with the last four spent within the advertising landscape. He has a wealth of digital experience and, as a result, is a self-confessed 'digital native'.



On his decision to make the move to M&C Saatchi Abel, he says: "I was excited by the prospect of joining a highly entrepreneurial agency. M&C Saatchi Abel has a unique partner model, with the partners having an equity stake in the business. The partner model incentivises a relentless quest for growth and innovation, whilst encouraging risk-taking and investment. Additionally, employees are encouraged to be brave, and to do so while living up to the ethos of 'Brutal Simplicity of Thought', which I love."

"It's also important to me to play a part in the ongoing transformation of the business, which already has a level 1 B-BBEE rating, whilst always being mindful that transformation is about more than just a scorecard."

With 2019 predicted to be a tough year financially for the country and, consequently agencies and their clients, Mears believes that while most agencies are engaged in cutting staff costs and juniorising their talent, this strategy will result in a race to the bottom. "The product suffers and therefore clients' ROI is poor; clients' response is to put pressure on the fee, which leads to further agency staff juniorisation and so the downward spiral continues."

To ensure that the year is a profitable one for the M&C Saatchi Abel Group and that offerings are affordable for clients, he will seek to promote a strategy of investment in the best talent to solve clients' business problems. "When we do this, clients will not be talking to us about affordability, but rather about how we can do more to help them."

Looking to the future, Mears shares that, as a 'finance guy', he's a little unusual as he's an eternal optimist. "Last year, most clients cut marketing spend and delayed initiatives, but this can't go on forever and the wheel will begin to turn in 2019. Business has to happen, the entrepreneur will come to the fore and things will start moving again. M&C Saatchi Abel has remained resilient through the tough times thanks to its enduring approach of creating beautifully simple solutions for a complex world and will be well positioned to benefit from any upturn in the economy."

M&C Saatchi Abel Founder and Chief Executive, Mike Abel, says: "The best partnerships are forged through aligned ambition. In Graham, we have found such a person. He is someone who believes in investing ahead of the curve and is a seasoned professional with exceptional global experience who is determined to help unlock and power local solutions and opportunities."

For more information, visit <http://www.mcsaatchiabel.co.za>.

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