

Shaka Sisulu acquires 51% stake in Retroviral Digital Communications

Entrepreneur, Shaka Sisulu has announced that he has acquired a 51% stake in creative digital agency, Retroviral Digital Communications, becoming its BEE partner in his personal capacity, a development that raises Retroviral's empowerment status to BBBEE Level 2.



Mike Sharman, Retroviral co-founder, CEO and chief creative strategist and Shaka Sisulu, entrepreneur and founder of digital and social media agency Plum. Image supplied.

Sisulu's own social and digital agency, Plum, has been collaborating with Retroviral since 2011. "With me becoming a shareholder of Retroviral, the two businesses will work in tandem. It is our vision to grow our combined revenues from around R30m to over R100m in five years through this alliance," says Sisulu.

Significant synergies

"The partnership with Retroviral unlocks significant synergies with many of my other operations, in particular, Plum, a leading digital and social media agency with solutions deployed in many of South Africa's blue-chip corporates.

"Retroviral has established a significant track record for delivering innovative solutions to blue-chip companies and specialises in creating and implementing not only award-winning campaigns but solutions that meet their customers' business objectives, to enhance sales. With this partnership, Mike and I are well positioned to further entrench Retroviral's leadership position", add Sisulu.



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Mike Sharman 6 Jul 2017



Mike Sharman, co-founder, CEO and chief creative strategist of Retroviral, says the transaction is not a BEE marriage of convenience. "Shaka brings diversity into Retroviral's ownership structure, but this is no superficial empowerment deal. We are bringing two disruptor agencies closer together in order to continue producing award-winning work. Shaka and I share the same vision and have only the greatest respect for each other."

Pioneers of social media influence

Plum and Retroviral are regarded as pioneers of social media influence in South Africa and are two of the most decorated digital PR and amplification agencies on the continent.

In its eight-year history, Retroviral has made more brands go viral globally than any other agency in Africa, while Plum has engineered the word of mouth that drove South Africa's most successful digital campaigns over the past three years.

Sisulu and Sharman describe themselves as viral scientists and are confident that this transaction will benefit their respective businesses and client bases alike. "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts with this relationship," says Sharman. "By having two best-of-breed strategy, content creation, content dissemination and reporting/insight businesses play alongside one another, we keep our nimble approach intact while continuing to trump the larger agencies on disruptive scalability."

A new board for Retroviral is in the process of being appointed. Sisulu will serve as executive chairman and Sharman will continue as company CEO. Sharman also retains 49% ownership.

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