

Cybercellar appoints AJ Nel as new CEO

Cybercellar, one of South Africa's leading online wine retailers, has appointed AJ Nel as its new CEO. Nel will be responsible for leading Cybercellar to the next chapter of its journey, as it grows its national footprint. Since joining the retailer, Nel has already made several key changes to the business model, including updating and improving the online wine retailer's user journey.



AJ Nel

Nel, who is experienced in market development, brand management and wine education, first cut his teeth in the wine industry as a young law student at Stellenbosch University. Nel would spend his weekends working in the tasting rooms of Helderberg wineries, learning about wine, customer service and sales.

Competitive market experience

After spending several years working within the local wine and retail sectors, Nel relocated to Shanghai, China, with the aim of expanding his knowledge of the global wine industry; gaining international experience in one of the world's busiest, most competitive markets.

In Shanghai, he was appointed sales manager of East Meets West Fine Wines – one of China's top wine distributors – where he worked with a portfolio of 60 wineries from twelve of the world's best wine producing nations. In a relatively short period of time, Nel was promoted to Sales and Marketing Director for East China, where he was responsible for all on-trade, off trade and private customer sales channels, as well as the sales strategy development and marketing across the region.

During Nel's tenure, East Meets West Fine Wines was recognised by the China Sommelier Association (CSA) as China's leading medium-sized importer for three years running.



Cybercellar opens physical store

25 Jan 2017



Customer centricity is key

Nel spent over five years in China before returning to South Africa, where he took on sales and operations roles with Constantia Uitsig and Origin Coffee Roasters. At the end of 2017, he joined Cybercellar, where he is able to combine his knowledge and passion for wine with his acumen for business, and his core belief that customer-centricity is the hallmark of any successful retailer.

As someone who is passionate about skills development and a firm believer in the importance of lifelong learning, Nel has a Bachelors degree in Law from Stellenbosch University, a Certificate in Wine from the Cape Wine Academy, an Advanced Certificate in Wine from the Wine & Spirits Education Trust (WSET), and is currently studying towards his Masters in Business Administration at UCT's Graduate School of Business.

Says Nel of his new vision for Cybercellar: "There are few things more exciting than the rapid global development of e-commerce, and to combine my passion for South African wine with this dynamic online environment is a fantastic opportunity and challenge.

"We are a young and energetic team, but also have the benefit of twenty years' learnings in the still fledgling South African online wine retail space. With a committed focus on customer experience and service delivery, we will continue to innovate and lead in this dynamic space."

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