

# Y&R SA and NATIVE VML partner up to form VML and Y&R Africa Group

Y&R South Africa and NATIVE VML are partnering to form the VML and Y&R Africa Group, a digitally integrated offering that will be positioned to deliver on the needs of an increasingly connected world.

The new group builds on the rich heritage of the iconic Y&R Advertising with its deep roots in Africa, the innovative shopper marketing credentials of Labstore, and the rapidly rising presence of NATIVE VML. This newly formed entity, which is already successfully working together on client business will bring this combined strength to bear on the South African market, where truly integrated communications is now becoming a necessity for local businesses.

NATIVE VML, Y&R, and Labstore will maintain their independence, but aligning them under one senior leadership team will bring a new and enhanced offering to market – one that will be perfectly positioned to partner with clients in building truly connected brands.



NATIVE VML co-founder and CEO Jason Xenopoulos will assume the role of group CEO and will be tasked with driving vision and strategy, with operational support from his current leadership team. The VML and Y&R Africa Group will have offices in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, as well as a network of 16 agencies in 12 African countries.

“This exciting development will secure our position as one of Africa’s top agency groups, both in terms of size and creative reputation, fast-tracking our vision to become the continent’s leading agency for the digital age,” said Jason Xenopoulos, NATIVE VML CEO.

Y&R South Africa’s current CEO Andrew Welch will be returning to London to run Landor, a Y&R Group company. Over the past five years, Andrew successfully launched Labstore in South Africa and worked hand-in-hand with Graham Lang, Y&R’s chief creative officer, to revitalise the agency’s creative profile and elevate it into the top three in the Creative Circle rankings for 2015.

VML, which was recently named on Ad Age's 2016 Agency A-List, provides the group with a depth of digital knowledge and experience that is unparalleled in the local market. Combined with the brand building expertise of Y&R this will position the group at the forefront of integrated marketing and customer experience transformation.

"Bringing one of the world's most famous advertising agency brands together with a cutting- edge digital marketing agency is explosive. No client can hope for better," explains Yossi Schwartz, chairman Y&R Africa.

David Sable, Global CEO of Y&R, stated: "We believe Africa is increasingly a critical part of our clients' business strategy. We have long invested in the market, most recently with the establishment of NATIVE VML. The creation of a single management team to oversee all our companies in the region assures our clients that they will have the full power of our entire offering."

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