

Odette van der Haar resigns from the ACA

The Association for Communication and Advertising has announced that CEO Odette van der Haar has resigned after eleven years to join J. Walter Thompson Johannesburg, also in the position of CEO.



Odette van der Haar, outgoing CEO of the ACA.

Haar's decision to resign was taken after much reflection and introspection on her time with the organisation, and the goals achieved during her tenure as CEO. "This has been a high-energy, fast-moving and a great challenge for anyone who thrives on pushing themselves further. It has been an exhilarating and a dynamic journey which has helped me grow as a person and as a leader. Looking back on my time at the ACA fills me with pride and I'm extremely thankful for having had the opportunity to lead this incredible organisation," said van der Haar.



Odette van der Haar appointed CEO J. Walter Thompson Johannesburg

JWT 4 May 2018



"While the ACA Board expresses its sadness at the impending departure of the CEO, the industry is assured of the continuation of the industry guidance and service excellence that she established together with the Board over the years. She leaves a legacy of organisational distinction and Odette has distinguished herself as an excellent and ethical leader, a symbol of professionalism within the organisation and the industry as a whole," says Boniswa Pezisa, ACA Board chair.

Although she will be leaving the ACA, van der Haar's skills, passion and energy will not be lost to the industry. While a change in the guard at the ACA takes place, van der Haar has stated her intention to continue playing an active role in the profession within the ACA structures where possible and if invited to do so.



Boniswa Pezisa, ACA Board chair and Network BBDO group CEO.



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Of her time at the ACA, van der Haar notes that she has worked alongside men and women of great intellect and integrity, who demonstrated the same passion for the profession. "I admire so many people with whom I have come into contact. These eleven years were incredibly stimulating for me and I hope that my colleagues, the Board and the committees feel the same way."

Under her leadership, the ACA has achieved a number of goals and milestones. These include driving transformation and seeing the MAC Charter promulgated; growing the Apex Awards into a highly respected awards programme; fighting intellectual property abuse through the Tenders and Pitches Code of Conduct and increasing the level of professionalism and business efficiency at the AAA School and also raising 72 bursaries via the Apex Awards.

Van der Haar fine-tuned and consistently promoted the industry code of conduct and professional culture, which has, over the past years, seen the ACA consistently judged to be the most highly respected industry organisation. She acknowledged the need to adapt the association in order to ensure long term relevance, while building a stable, financially secure base which would fund developmental and socio-economic priorities. She launched the Agency Locator, expanded the Salary Survey and was behind the soon-to-be-launched new website, which will include transactional functionality for members. Working tirelessly, she networked and developed mutual respect and an excellent working relationship with a number of government departments, NGOs and other industry associations.



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Van der Haar will remain in office through to the end of June 2018 and the board will in due course announce the official search for a new CEO.

"We will be engaging all stakeholders over the coming days and weeks and assure all of a smooth and transparent transition of leadership. We wish Odette well in her new role and look forward to her continued effective contribution to the industry, both as the CEO of a global agency, and through one or more of the ACA committees," concludes Pezisa.

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