

TBWA\South Africa collective shines at this year's AdFocus Awards

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Unique in Africa, TBWA\South Africa has once again proven that they are collective of expert-led, top-drawer agencies are not only specialists in their respective sectors, but they are also at the pinnacle of their game.



TBWA\SA and Grid Worldwide have been pronounced winners at the Financial Mail AdFocus Awards, with TBWA\Hunt Lascaris and Magna Carta shortlisted in key categories.

TBWA\SA has once again been awarded the Agency Group of the Year award as well as the Africa Impact award and Grid Worldwide has clinched Medium Advertising Agency of the Year.

TBWA\Hunt Lascaris and Magna Carta were finalists in the Large Agency of the Year and Public Relations Agency of the Year categories, with TBWA\Durban shortlisted with its client Build it in the Partnership of the Year category.

As a collective, the TBWA group's investment in talent, which empowers agency leadership by giving them both autonomy and accountability, has helped the agencies attract, retain, and promote some of the very best talent in the industry. These awards reflect the fruits of their vision, diverse talent, creativity and ultimately, business savvy.

Group CEO Luca Gallarelli says 2023 has been a phenomenal year for TBWA\SA, which is reflected in the AdFocus accolades for the stellar work of the collective's agencies. "We are immensely proud of the TBWA Group's work, which is our best in years. We have always endeavoured to be the best integrated agency on the continent.

"Across Africa, we have retained our long-standing client MTN and are now also entrusted with more of the continent's biggest and most prestigious clients."

The Africa Impact Award is testament to the group's powerful and effective work with MTN – which it helped reposition and relaunch in multiple geographies across the continent – Nissan and new client Absa.

In April 2023, the group added ABSA's Africa business to its client roster. "We are now driving the brand across nine countries north of South Africa, which entrenches TBWA as Africa's most connected agency network partnering with

Africa's biggest and most prestigious brands," adds Gallarelli.

Each year, we host our TBWA Africa Conference in a different location in Africa, bringing together 150 specialists from across the collective to share ideas, learn and align with each other.

TBWA\Hunt Lascaris not only landed the ABSA Africa business, but it also attracted new business from McDonalds, Windhoek Lager and Spotify.

Aside from new business, our agencies in South Africa enjoy some of the longest standing and healthiest relationships in the industry, which include Spar, Nissan, MTN, City Lodge, ABSA and South African Tourism.

Magna Carta has had a phenomenal two years, he says, which were capped off the end of last year with the acquisition of a top-drawer banking client such as Standard Bank and Windhoek Lager, while Grid Worldwide is at the top of its game: as this year's AdFocus Medium Agency of the Year, Grid grows brands from the inside out by giving them meaning across platforms.

Grid Worldwide has expanded beyond brand design and advertising into brand experiences through the launch of 608, which is key to its heightened success.

This year, Grid announced the next phase in its own growth with the opening of a new office in Cape Town.

Gallarelli, who is this year's AdFocus Awards Chairman, says Carl Willoughby's appointment as chief creative officer (CCO) has helped inject fresh new energy into TBWA.

"Carl has helped lead the group on some of our most innovative and creative campaigns. As an advertising specialist in finance, alcohol, broadcast, motor and FMCG industries, Carl is a worthy successor to Pete Khoury, who left South Africa earlier this year to take up a position as CCO of adidas worldwide at TBWA\Neboko."

Willoughby, who also drove TBWA\Hunt Lascaris's ground-breaking 'Stronger' mental health campaign for the Ricky Rick Foundation, was ranked as the top executive creative director in South Africa in 2021 and helped lead Nissan to global creative recognition with the disruptive Nissan Shwii campaign.

The Financial Mail AdFocus Awards are unique as they recognise agencies and individuals, not just for their creative and marketing skills, but for their all-around business acumen.

TBWA was shortlisted in six categories: Two for TBWA\SA (Group of the Year and Africa Impact award), TBWA\Hunt Lascaris in Large Advertising Agency of the Year, Grid Worldwide for Medium Advertising Agency of the Year, TBWA\Hunt Lascaris Durban and Build it for Partnership of the Year, and Magna Carta for Public Relations Agency of the Year.

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