Critical Mass Hires Valerie Carlson as Chief Creative Officer

Valerie Carlson has been appointed chief creative officer of Critical Mass, a 950-person digital marketing and experience design agency with offices in 11 locations around the world.

She replaces Conor Brady, who left Critical Mass last year. Carslon joins from Wunderman Thompson Los Angeles, where she served as executive creative director. Throughout her career, she's held creative roles Possible, Evolution Bureau and Razorfish. Carlson also briefly served as global vice president and creative director at cleaning products company Method.

Carlson told Adweek she was interested in taking this role because she's been "fighting to build teams and create work that is centered around people, our culture and human needs for over 20 years."

After speaking with the agency's CEO Dianne Wilkins and president Chris Gokiert, Carlson said she "recognized that Critical Mass is one of the very few agencies" that can build end-to-end experiences that "people truly want to engage with."

As chief creative officer, she plans to focus on helping the agency's clients and teams break down silos between areas such as traditional and digital media.

"So many clients are struggling right now to catch up from a digital ecosystem perspective," she said. "I'll be focused on

helping our clients and teams break through these silos to focus on long term business transformation versus short-term KPIs."

At Wunderman Thompson, Carlson said she recently helped Vistaprint on a "huge digital transformation vision" while working from home. She said the project involved shifting Vistaprint from a "business card provider" to an "end to end self-service agency" for small businesses.

"Normally we would have all been together in a room making changes organically and building systems together in flow, but instead we had to figure out how to make this happen online," she said. "It was tough, but we ended up making some of the best work of my career."

At Critical Mass, she'll be working with clients including Apple, BMW, Citi, AT&T and Marriott. According to Critical Mass, it's added eight clients to its roster this year.

Recent work from the agency includes a Pinterest-friendly push for Lactaid created to convince users that the product is in fact real milk. Critical Mass also recently worked with BMW on "Build Your Own," a car customization platform.

Earlier this year, Critical Mass collaborated with BBDO to create a campaign for AT&T starring Milana Vayntrub, the actress who became ubiquitous on TV screens across America a few years ago in the role of AT&T employee Lily.

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