

GroupM Names New Global Leads for Partnerships and Social



WPP media agency network GroupM named two new leaders in increasingly important areas, appointing Kieley Taylor to the role of global head of partnerships and Amanda Grant to global head of social.

Taylor will serve as part of GroupM's investment team with a primary focus on designing and implementing its partnership strategy, particularly with Google. A GroupM veteran of over six years, Taylor formerly served as global vp of social for GroupM's services division.

"We have reason to believe that programmatic access, digital delivery, the explosion of choice for leisure time, headless commerce and mobile access are here to stay. Covid is accelerating some of these trends, and the key global partners offer strong products, services, and scale to capitalize on the continuation of these behavioral shifts," Taylor told Adweek.

As global head of social, Grant will serve as part of GroupM's services division. A 10-year GroupM vet, including a stint as

paid social practice lead at GroupM agency MediaCom, Grant most recently established the social operations framework for GroupM as head of social for the region, based out of Singapore.

Grant explained that the impact of Covid-19 led people to spend more time on social channels, expanded how they approached shopping for household necessities, and altered definitions of “entertainment and luxury purchases” under social distancing mandates.

“While there was already a shift in place globally ... social platforms, given their scale and user engagement, definitely accelerated the rate of adoption and interest around ecommerce. What we have found is that, while market recovery has been recognized, the behaviors learned during 2020 for consumers has staying power coupled with the ease of convenience and instant gratification,” she said. “While there are some consumers that will shift back to their typical behaviors, new behaviors have been learned and perhaps now preferred.”

Taylor said the two roles were well-positioned for longevity under GroupM’s “one voice” approach, while noting that the kinds of opportunities GroupM prioritizes will evolve with changing client needs.

“Social is already an evolving discipline,” Grant added. “While we are inherently adaptive, we see the convergence through advancing tactics like commerce where media, experiential engagement and AI can meet together to satisfy the demands of advertisers and users. Our planning and activation principles will evolve to meet the needs of the market.”

Like the rest of the industry, WPP’s media agency practice has seen its share of setbacks in 2020, including a round of layoffs at GroupM in May as part of the holding company’s

cost-cutting strategy. In WPP's Q3 earnings report last week, the holding company noted that GroupM showed the strongest recovery among its integrated agencies in the quarter.

WPP CEO Mark Read also cited WPP's place at the top of new business rankings, with GroupM playing an instrumental role in its new business performance, including Uber's consolidation of its global media account with MediaCom and WPP's recent retention of global media agency duties for Walgreens Boots Alliance.

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