Jean-Paul Colaco Named WarnerMedia Ad Sales Chief After 15-Month Search

The WarnerMedia ad sales chief role, which has been vacant for more than a year, has finally been filled. Jean-Paul "JP" Colaco has been hired for the new role, WarnerMedia said today.

"JP is a well-respected, proven leader who brings with him a fresh perspective about the connection between the customer journey and advanced advertising," said Tony Goncalves, head of WarnerMedia's commercial businesses—and to whom Colaco will report—in a statement. "He understands our vision as a company—that in embracing moments of great change and taking risks, we can create a better customer experience around our brands."

Colaco comes from Apple, where he has led the Americas region for Apple search ads since April 2019. He previously was responsible for business development at Veseel and worked as svp of ad sales and operations at Hulu until 2013.

"It is humbling to be part of the team creating the next generation of advertising experiences alongside our incredible brand partners. We are in the midst of the next chapter of media transformation and advertising is a critical component to the fabric of the ecosystem," said Colaco in a statement. "I am excited to join this talented team and collectively build a customer-centric advertising experience delivering powerful and relevant brand messaging across platforms."

The WarnerMedia ad sales leadership team of Amit Chaturvedi,

overseeing revenue operations and product management; Katrina Cukaj, heading up ad sales strategy and network partnerships; Joe Hogan, leading sales and client Partnerships; and Amy Leifer, heading up operations and services, will report directly to Colaco.

Colaco fills the position that has been open since Donna Speciale, who had been with the company since 2012, was shown the door in July 2019 by WarnerMedia chief revenue officer Gerhard Zeiler, who at the time oversaw Speciale and her team as part of the WarnerMedia affiliates and advertising sales group.

As Speciale departed, Zeiler said he would lead ad sales as interim president and work with Chaturvedi, Cukaj and Hogan.

Buyers were told at the time that the arrangement would be temporary, but the company continued working under that same structure for more than a year, with Hogan, evp of sales and marketing at WarnerMedia, heading up ad sales without the official title.

In July, on the one-year anniversary of Speciale's exit, a WarnerMedia source told Adweek that the company had expected to select its next ad sales chief by the end of summer.

But timeline was upended in August, when new WarnerMedia CEO Jason Kilar unveiled a stunning executive overhaul at the company, which moved Otter CEO Goncalves to a head up a new commercial unit that combined U.S. advertising sales and distribution groups with home entertainment and content licensing. (Zeiler was tapped to head up a newly integrated international group comprised of the international operations of Warner Bros., HBO and Turner Networks.)

The company spoke with several candidates in late 2019, including former Viacom ad sales chief Sean Moran (who said he wasn't interested due to his plans for the future, according to a source). However, the search was sidelined earlier this

year when Zeiler first learned that AT&T would be consolidating its ad sales units and moving Xandr, its ad-tech unit, into WarnerMedia, under his oversight. At that point, according to the WarnerMedia source, Zeiler shifted his priority to focus on that new structure, which was made public in April.

According to the WarnerMedia source, the new hire would likely oversee both the WarnerMedia and the Xandr ad sales teams—and in August, as part of that transition, Hogan was given interim Xandr ad sales oversight following Kirk McDonald's exit in August.

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