McCann New York Hires Perry Fair for New Creative Role

McCann New York has hired Perry Fair as evp, global executive creative director and director of entertainment, a new role at the agency.

He joins from Juul Labs, where he most recently served as vp of global brand management. In this role, he managed global branding, loyalty programs, creativity and design.

Fair brings a mix of agency and brand experience to McCann. Earlier in his career, he held creative positions at agencies including TBWA and Grey before becoming president and chief creative officer of J. Walter Thompson Atlanta. More recently, he's worked at brands including Beats by Dre and Red Bull.

According to McCann New York, Fair will "devote a significant amount of his time to Verizon," its largest client.

Fair said he will leverage his background in entertainment at McCann. He told Adweek that entertainment has "always been a cornerstone" of his career, noting that he sold his first script to Intrepid Pictures in 2007.

As vp of global brand creative at Beats by Dre, Fair worked on a branded content series called "The Shop" featuring NBA stars LeBron James, Kevin Durant, James Harden and others. The series was ultimately picked up by HBO.

At Red Bull Media House, where he served as head of partnerships, Fair said he had the opportunity to "work with and support creators of culturally impactful work across, music, art, culture and sports."

Fair also noted that his time spent on the brand side has helped him understand the “challenges chief marketing officers face now more than ever in driving innovation, growth and navigating business challenges.”

“It’s great to know through experience what our clients are going through and how to be the right agency partner,” he said. When asked about his time spent at Juul Labs, which has found itself embroiled in controversy—and lawsuits—in recent years for fueling a nicotine epidemic among teenagers, he chose not to comment.

“We are always looking for people who can help brands like Verizon land in culture, and earn a meaningful role in people’s lives. And Perry’s work is all about that intersection of brands and culture,” Sean Bryan and Tom Murphy, co-chief creative officers of McCann North America, said in a joint statement. “We have been fans of his work for years, and we are really excited to have his perspective, and awesome ideas, here at McCann.”

In addition to Verizon, McCann works with clients including Microsoft, L’Oréal and the United States Postal Service. Its CEO Harris Diamond retired last year. Bill Kolb, who previously served as chief operating officer of the global network, succeeded Diamond. Devika Bulchandani, McCann’s North America president, left in November to join Ogilvy.

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Ricky Strauss Exits Disney+ in Wake of Streaming-Centric Restructure

Ricky Strauss, who has managed content at fast-growing streamer Disney+ as president of programming and content curation, is exiting the company after nine years.

The move, which Strauss and Disney international and direct-to-consumer chairman Rebecca Campbell announced in internal staff memos today, comes months after a major reorganization at the House of Mouse that positioned streaming at the center of the company and elevated Disney vet Kareem Daniel to head up the media and entertainment division.

The decision to leave, Strauss said the memo, was a direct result of that reorganization.

“After nine years with The Walt Disney Company, and much contemplation over the past several months, I have come to the decision that it is time for me to move on to pursue new creative endeavors,” he wrote. “It took much thought and consideration, but with our new structure and the changes to my role, the reorganization does not provide me with the opportunity to do the kind of work I love to do and to continue making the intended impact I have been so fortunate to have achieved at Disney.”

Joe Earley, evp of Disney+ marketing and operations—and one of Adweek’s 2020 Brand Geniuses—will take over in the content curation role at the streamer, reporting to Disney+ president Michael Paull, Campbell said. Brian Henderson, who oversees content curation for Hulu, will now report to Hulu president

Kelly Campbell amid the changes.

Strauss’s departure comes as Disney has enjoyed astonishing early success in its push into streaming. Disney+ last month cleared 86 million subscribers and announced plans to raise its prices and push into the international market even more aggressively with a general entertainment offering under the company’s Star brand in a December presentation to investors.

It is also investing heavily in content: Disney+ said it will release 10 Star Wars series, 10 Marvel series and dozens more projects from various other company divisions over the next several years.

Strauss has spent three decades in the entertainment industry, and he was instrumental in the rollout of Disney+ as president of content and marketing at the streamer ahead of its debut and in its earliest months. Before that, he served as head of marketing for Walt Disney Studios, where he oversaw the global marketing strategy for blockbusters like Star Wars: The Force Awakens, Guardians of the Galaxy, Maleficent, Frozen and Moana. Prior to joining Disney in 2012, he spent nearly a decade at Participant Media.

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CVS Names Michelle Peluso Its First Chief Customer Officer

Healthcare and pharmacy giant CVS Health appointed Michelle Peluso to the newly created role of chief customer officer, with direct oversight of its marketing and brand strategy, the company said today.

She will begin the job on Jan. 25, with a mandate to transform both the end-to-end customer experience and accelerate CVS Health's digital strategy.

"Michelle is a seasoned executive with a strong track record in building a world-class consumer experience and delivering results," said Karen S. Lynch, who will assume the roles of president and CEO at CVS Health on Feb. 1.

"Michelle's consumer focus will accelerate our work to ensure a connected health experience across all CVS Health touch points, as we continue to reshape healthcare as we know it today," she added in a statement.

Peluso joins the company in the midst of an evolution of its own: It rolled out its own in-house media network in late summer and was the first national retailer to accept PayPal and Venmo. As the largest pharmacy chain, CVS is attempting to hold off chief rival Walgreens, as well as newer entrant Amazon in an increasingly competitive field.

Peluso, who will directly report to Lynch, has 25 years of experience, including her most recent role as the CMO for IT services and software provider IBM, where she oversaw marketing and brand strategy as well as digital sales and the commercial business, with responsibility for over $5 billion in revenue.

She was also in charge of Big Blue's client experience, achieving a significant increase in the company's Net Promotor Score, with an emphasis on accelerating IBM's digital capabilities, according to CVS.

Prior to IBM, Peluso was the chief consumer marketing and

internet officer for financial services group Citigroup, leading that bank's digital transformation. Her resume includes retail, serving as both the CEO of the digital luxury retailer Gilt Groupe and as the CEO of online travel booking business Travelocity.com.

Her experience extends outside of the corporate world, too: She previously served as a White House fellow and senior adviser to former President Bill Clinton's Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman.

In addition, CVS described Peluso as a passionate advocate for women, diversity and inclusion. She is currently a member of the Ad Council as well as athletic wear giant Nike's board of directors, and is on the executive council of the board of directors of the Association of National Advertisers.

"I'm thrilled to join CVS Health and to help lead its purpose of helping people on their path to better health by giving every customer a connected experience that better meets their needs," Peluso said. "Covid-19 has accelerated changes to healthcare delivery, and CVS Health's diversified offerings give it an unparalleled opportunity to lead the way in providing customers with a personalized and seamless experience at every interaction."

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Salesforce Says Goodbye to

CMO Stephanie Buscemi, Elevates Platform Manager to the Role

Salesforce today announced that Stephanie Buscemi, its chief marketing officer for the past three years, is stepping down from the role and leaving the company. Taking her place is Sarah Franklin, most recently general manager of platform for the cloud-based software company.

Buscemi joined Salesforce in 2014 as svp of marketing for its cloud analytics platform, then serving as chief operations officer for cloud analytics and evp of product and solutions marketing before taking on the CMO role in 2018.

As top marketer, Buscemi reimagined Salesforce marketing strategies and launched its “Leading Through Change” video series, which has garnered more than 10 million views per episode.

Buscemi has also been a champion of diversity and inclusion at the company, serving as executive sponsor of Salesforce’s Inclusive Marketing training program and devoting time to mentoring women in the industry. In May 2020, Buscemi joined Adweek’s diversity and inclusion summit to discuss those efforts at Salesforce.

Franklin, who is taking over for Buscemi, effective immediately, has been at Salesforce for more than 13 years. She’s also an advocate for diversifying STEM and led the Salesforce team that launched Trailhead in 2014, an online, gamified learning platform that aims to democratize tech by making the expertise it requires more accessible to those

interested in a career change.

The changes come on the tail of another big announcement that Salesforce released at the end of 2020: On Dec. 1, it came to an agreement with Slack to buy the office chat app for $27.7 million.

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Hill Holliday's Longtime CCO Lance Jensen Departs

Lance Jensen, who's served as chief creative officer of Boston-based agency Hill Holliday for the past decade, has left.

"After 10 years leading Hill Holliday's creative department, Lance Jensen has decided to move on," Chris Wallrapp, Hill Holliday's president, said in a statement. "On behalf of the entire agency, I'd like to express our gratitude for Lance's creative leadership, work ethic and friendship over the last decade."

Wallrapp said Jensen is "truly one of a kind and has made an indelible mark on our creative sensibilities." The agency, which also has an office in New York, has recently created work for Boar's Head, the Celiac Disease Foundation and Fireball Whisky.

“We are a better agency for his influence and wish him all the best in the next chapter of his career,” his statement concluded.

It is unclear what Jensen’s plans are. In a statement, he said, “It’s time for the next chapter. For myself, and for Hill Holliday.”

Before joining the IPG-owned shop, Jensen served as executive creative director at Modernista!, a boutique agency he co-founded in 2000 with Gary Koepke in Boston. The independent agency, which closed its doors in 2011, worked with companies including General Motors.

Jensen’s departure from Hill Holliday comes a year after the agency lost Bank of America to Publicis Groupe. In 2019, the agency parted ways with Planet Fitness, an account it won in 2016.

In 2017, Dunkin’ Donuts, a client of roughly 20 years, launched a creative review that Hill Holliday declined to participate in. The business ultimately went to BBDO and Arc Worldwide.

In 2019, Hill Holliday was named creative agency of record for BMW’s motorcycle business. And at the start of 2020, waste disposal company Clean Harbors selected Hill Holliday as its lead agency.

According to the shop, it’s also “experienced impressive growth” since formalizing its healthcare practice, Hill Holliday Health, two years ago.

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The Biggest TV Executive Departures of 2020

As traditional advertising revenue collapsed and consumers flocked to streaming, 2020 has been a big year of change for traditional media's business models. It's also meant a lot of executive changes. As part of our annual Year in Review coverage, we took a look at the more than two dozen executive departures—double the 15 we counted in 2019—to give a sense of just how dramatically the TV landscape has shifted in the last 12 tumultuous months.

Rich Calacci, Pluto TV

The chief revenue officer of ad-supported streamer Pluto TV headed for the exit in mid-January a month after the ViacomCBS merger was finalized. Calacci's departure was one of several that came as ViacomCBS ad sales chief Jo Ann Ross set her ad sales leadership team. Others departing included Valerie Bischak, Viacom's evp of ad solutions; Mary Ellen Bottone, Smithsonian Channel's svp of ad sales; Michael DuPont, Pop TV's evp of ad sales; Bryson Gordon, Viacom evp of advanced advertising; and David Paschkes, CBS Experiences' evp and managing director.

Bill Abbott, Crown Media Family Networks

The president and CEO of Crown Media Family Networks and Hallmark Channel exited the company in late January a month after Hallmark Channel faced heat for pulling ads that depicted a same-sex couple kissing at their wedding at the

behest of an anti-LGBT group. The decision to pull the ads led to a #BoycottHallmark campaign stared by wedding planning brand Zola, whose ads had been flagged. Abbott's position remained empty until August, when Wonya Lucas, the former president and CEO of Public Broadcasting Atlanta, took over at the top of the company.

Randy Freer, Hulu

The CEO left the streamer abruptly in late January as Disney looked to further integrate Hulu into its broader streaming operations after assuming full operational control from Comcast in 2019. Kelly Campbell was elevated from chief marketing officer to president in late February.

Bob Iger, Disney

Iger's announcement that he would step down as CEO of Disney in February marked the end of an era at the entertainment giant. The announcement came with the news that Bob Chapek, the company's former chairman of Disney Parks, experiences and products, would take over, just weeks before the Covid-19 pandemic hit—and at a critical moment for Disney+, which fast became the most crucial part of the company's business. (Iger remains as executive chairman, overseeing the company's creative endeavors through 2021.)

Joe Ianniello, CBS Entertainment Group

The longtime president and CEO of the broadcaster's entertainment group, who had been acting CEO of CBS following Les Moonves' disgraceful exit in March, left as the executive shakeout from the ViacomCBS merger continued. George Cheeks, the former chairman of NBCUniversal Content Studios, headed in to take Ianniello's place leading CBS Entertainment Group as president and CEO.

Brian Lesser, Xandr

AT&T's ad unit Xandr in March saw the unexpected departure of

its CEO as the company was losing some external prominence as AT&T pivoted to focus more aggressively on video advertising. Chief business officer Kirk McDonald was named interim head a day later, but he, too, exited Xandr in August.

Peter Naylor, Hulu

The streaming service's longtime ad sales chief headed for the exits in April to take on a role at Snap as vp of Americas, as Hulu's ad sales team faced further integration into Disney and began reporting directly to Disney ad sales chief Rita Ferro. Following his departure, Hulu vp of national ad sales Jim Keller was given more purview—but he would also announce his own exit by year's end.

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My Mantra: Richemont D&I Head Doug Melville on Doing Better

For those on LinkedIn, Doug Melville, vp and head of D&I of Richemont, is a constant presence. Often, Melville raises some essential questions. The difference is that he spends time exploring their meanings. All that fits very much within Melville's mantra of: "know better, do better."

The idea is that people have a responsibility to disseminate wisdom to improve themselves while lifting their environments as well.

While at TBWA, Melville, an inaugural Adweek Champion award recipient, launched The Disruptor Series, a dynamic speaker platform that gave voice to a wide range of perspectives. Additionally, One Sandbox became a valuable search engine for diverse and multicultural businesses.

A Connecticut native, Melville is a voracious student of all subjects he sets his mind to. He noted that “if you don’t take information and use it for the better, it doesn’t help or serve any purpose to yourself or those around you.”

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Omnicom Appoints Emily Graham as Chief Equity and Impact Officer

Emily Graham has been named Omnicom’s chief equity and impact officer and svp of diversity and inclusion communications.

She takes on responsibilities previously held by Tiffany R. Warren, who left her role as the holding company’s svp and chief diversity officer earlier this year to take on a similar position at Sony Music Group.

Graham joins from PR giant FleishmanHillard, which Omnicom owns. At FleishmanHillard, she served as chief diversity and inclusion officer, a role she took on in June after holding various other roles at the agency.

According to Omnicom, Graham led a "global task force that accelerated DE&I as a business priority across the firm's 2,500-person network" at FleishmanHillard. She also launched and led True Mosaic, a DEI offering for the agency's clients.

Earlier in her career, Graham worked at PR firms including MWWPR and Burson-Marsteller. In her new role, she'll report to Omnicom chairman and CEO John Wren.

"Our goal is that every Omnicom agency, globally, be a pillar of diversity, equity and inclusion, and we are proud to keep our efforts moving forward under Emily's leadership," Wren said in a statement. "Emily joins us not only with a passion for DE&I, but a wealth of experience in the agency world where she consistently offered top-tier client counsel as a seasoned communications strategist."

In this role, Graham will be tasked with executing Open 2.0, an eight-point action plan that Omnicom laid out in July to help it "reach system equity" across the organization.

"I am honored to join Omnicom, especially at a time where vision, clarity and action on DE&I is essential. Achieving real systemic equity with urgency is the heart of our Open 2.0 strategy," Graham said in a statement.

Part of the Open 2.0 plan involves hiring diversity directors for each of the holding company's networks, which include DDB, TBWA and BBDO, as well as its various specialty practices such as Omnicom Health Group.

DDB appointed Nikki Lamba as its first-ever global head of DEI this week. Other Omnicom agencies, including BBDO and the Integer Group, have also appointed DEI leads in recent months.

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My Mantra: Circus Maximus' Ryan Kutscher on Avoiding the Promise Trap

Agency growth can come in many forms—and is a constant quest. As shops of all stripes seek new ways to build revenue and their next chapters, veering away from their foundational principles or core strengths can hinder progress. Indeed, it's great to stretch, but not if it means not being honest about capabilities.

Circus Maximus founder and creative director Ryan Kutscher has a simple mantra that addresses just that: "Do what you say you're going to do."

In Kutscher's mind, it's about integrity and humility in an industry that traditionally looked at boastfulness as a core competency. But not today. Being honest is one of the greatest services that an agency can provide its clients.

"Clients have such a vast array of needs," Kutscher said. "You might find yourself wanting to promise to be able to do things that you can't do. But that's a trap."

Additionally, it's incumbent that brands understand their agencies as well.

“If you see work that you like from us, give us a call,” said Kutscher, noting that his mantra applies to clients, too. “If you see work from other agencies that you like, but you want us to do it—that’s probably a bad fit.”

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Media Agency m/SIX Hires Belinda Smith as Americas CEO

Belinda Smith has joined global media network m/SIX as Americas CEO, a new role at the agency.

In this role, Smith will oversee the agency’s operations in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Argentina and Uruguay, reporting to global CEO Jess Burley.

Smith is no stranger to m/SIX. Up until recently, she served as head of global marketing intelligence at Electronic Arts, which handed media responsibilities to m/SIX last year. While Electronic Arts handles much of its media in-house, it selected m/SIX as its global strategic external partner.

“Since my initial meetings with the m/SIX team in 2017, I’ve felt strongly that the talent, leadership, strategic thinking and solutions they provide are unmatched in the agency world, and I am excited to lead such a pioneering group,” she said.

Smith added that she thinks the role offers her a “great

opportunity to change the way marketing is done and transform client-agency relationships.

“During my time at EA, I overhauled our agency roster along with our media, strategy, data, measurement and attribution disciplines, and now I look forward to bringing this expertise and experience to the larger market.”

Smith said her “No. 1 focus” will be on the agency’s people. A self-described marketing and diversity activist, she currently serves as the global diversity ambassador for the World Federation of Advertisers. Last year, she penned an op-ed for Adweek that detailed five ways agencies and brands can improve their DEI initiatives.

Since June, she has served as a special adviser to the board of The&Partnership, an agency network backed by WPP that partly owns m/SIX via a partnership with GroupM.

Her work involved advising the board on diversity and inclusion efforts.

“Talent is the core of every business, and I’ve always focused on building diverse, global, high-achieving teams. I look forward to bringing my sharp focus on inclusion and representation with me in the new role,” Smith said.

Prior to joining Electronic Arts, Smith served as director of programmatic strategy at 360i. She held roles at the Interactive Advertising Bureau and AT&T earlier in her career.

“Belinda’s experience client side and from an agency perspective gives her the 360-degree view needed to navigate today’s landscape,” Burley said. “Coupling that with her digital expertise makes her the perfect candidate for this role.”

According to a m/SIX spokesperson, the agency has won business from brands including Clarins, Haribo, Fossil Group and

Whirlpool this year. The agency network operates in more than 40 countries.

Last year, m/SIX partnered with adam&eveDDB on a launch campaign for FIFA 2020. More recently, the agency worked with Fossil Group, which handed its EMEA media account to m/SIX earlier this year, on a Black Friday “War Zoom.”

According to m/SIX, the virtual event “was designed to mimic a newsroom-style environment and enabled client and agency to analyze social, organic, onsite and media trends in real time and immediately adjust media campaigns and strategies across the U.K., Germany, France and Italy.”

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