

Wunderman Thompson Taps Bas Korsten and Daniel Bonner as Global CCOs



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A little over a year ago two venerable agency brands, J. Walter Thompson and Wunderman, merged to become Wunderman Thompson. The hookup brought together what was then the world's oldest ad agency and a network that established its chops in the digital and performance space.

Today, the WPP-owned agency appointed Bas Korsten and Daniel Bonner as global chief creative officers. Korsten will be based in Amsterdam and Bonner in London, both reporting to Mel Edwards, Wunderman Thompson's global CEO.

"Bas and Daniel each have an eye for creative solutions and a reputation for putting innovation at the heart of everything they do," Edwards said. "Their ability to make groundbreaking work is why they are the ideal creative leadership team at our agency. I couldn't be more excited to see what the two of them accomplish as creative leaders."

To date, Korsten, an Adweek 100 honoree in 2017, has won 35 Cannes Lions, including two 2016 Grand Prix awards for The Next Rembrandt for banking client ING. He was previously creative lead for Wunderman Thompson in Amsterdam.

Bonner held the role of Wunderman's global chief creative officer and served as jury president for the Cannes Lions Creative Ecommerce category last year. Each has been recognized by other awards programs including D&AD, the ADC, Clios and One Show.

The agency has made several other big moves recently, bringing on Taras Wayner from Saatchi & Saatchi as Wunderman Thompson's CCO in North America. Another was signing Cleve Gibbon as chief technology officer in the region in September.

"Appointments like this represent award-winning pedigrees," Bonner said.

Charting the near- and longer-term futures in their new roles, Bonner pointed to the fact that both organizations came "from two very different starting points," but that there is "an equal amount of ambition" even as the industry continues to grapple with constant change. The common thread, according to Bonner, is that creativity will, ultimately, be a point of differentiation.

"That's going to be a competitive advantage," he noted. "[And it couldn't happen] without the union of these two organizations."

For his part, Korsten agrees, but with a key caveat: that the gulf between the merged agencies' heritage must begin to narrow.

"I've always thought about technology and data as ways to infuse the creative work," he said. "Having so many brilliant people [in the organization] will be a great base for inspirational work. That said, [we need] to make sure that

everyone speaks the same language and have the same idea on the power of creativity within that process.”

Bonner noted that he and Korsten have been reaching out to the entirety of the Wunderman Thompson network to harvest ideas, but the proof will be in getting them into the light of day.

“With 20,000 people [in the network], there’s no shortage of world-class ideas, but it’s crucial that a client buys them,” he said. “It’s the same for any creative or product-based organization. The magic is when a client invests in these ideas and solutions.”

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