

Ryan McManus, chief creative officer at VMLY&R

By  Emily Stander

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This week, we talk to Ryan McManus, the chief creative officer at VMLY&R.



Ryan McManus, chief creative officer at VMLY&R

Passionate about his work, he also makes a point of making time for things outside of screens and finds happiness in the smaller details of life. “Get off Zoom and go outside every now and then. It will make you more productive, smarter and happier,” he said.

Here, he tells us more about his life, his career and his plans for the future...

■ ***As chief creative officer for VMLY&R, could you briefly explain what your role entails?***

I spend most of my time using strategic and creative thinking to solve real business problems – for our clients, their customers and also our own business. Creative ideas have the ability to go beyond the marketing department more than ever and I am always interested in answering real problems that can result in any manner of creative solutions. Sometimes entertainment, sometimes utility, but always trying to add value. I get to work with incredible people from diverse backgrounds and skill-sets to make things that didn't exist before.

■ ***What's really behind your mask - literally and figuratively speaking?***

An unkempt beard and a lot of ideas.

■ ***Growing up, what did you want to be?***

Shaka Zulu

■ ***How did you end up on your career path?***

Curiosity and a disdain for the ordinary. I also studied at AAA and then worked at some of the best agencies in SA, as well as all sorts of amazing creative companies around the world. I had some incredible mentors both in and outside of the marketing world who really revealed the power of ideas across all mediums.

I travelled a lot. I worked out what I don't want or don't like and what good opportunities look like. I think I have come from very creative parents who revealed the magic in stories and creativity my whole life.

■ ***What excites you most about your career?***

The unknowns. The possibility of making lives better through technology, communication, scale and ideas.

■ ***What advice do you have for the youth entering the industry?***

Work harder than everyone else and find a great mentor.

■ ***Where are you based during lockdown?***

Home in Cape Town. In the sea. On the mountain. In front of my computer...

Or being attacked by my children.

■ ***When you're not busy working, what do you do? How do you socialise these days?***

I have three daughters and two of them are under two, so that keeps me busy. Otherwise, surfing. Seeing a few friends. Walking the mountains. Going up the coast and tequila.

■ ***What's one thing not many people know about you, but should?***

I like musicals.

■ ***What's your favourite meme/gif of all time?***

My smallest baby daughter, Willow, dancing to Lord of the Dance on the kitchen table.

■ ***What are you watching/reading/listening to at the moment?***

The Gruffalo, *Where the Wild Things Are*, Oliver Jeffers, several screenplays, *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki*, *The Border Trilogy*, Netflix, WSL contests.

Bob Dylan, Black Pumas, Max Richter, Michael Kiwanuka, Bongeziwe Mabandla, Moana soundtrack, Maps of Home.

■ ***What's next for you?***

Creative solutions as products, prototypes, programmes and communication. Creative thinking applied across all types of mediums that ultimately create value.

ABOUT EMILY STANDER

Freelancer specialising in games and entertainment | My first loves are writing, music and video games

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