

Ahmed Tilly joins forces with CWDi

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Ahmed Tilly is an established creative problem solver with 25 years of experience in advertising agencies and is often referred to in the industry as "Mr Nando's", due to the award-winning Nando's campaigns he created in 14 countries around the world. He has judged the Loeries for close to two decades and has also served on international award panels including both the Cannes Lions and New York festivals. CWDi has repositioned the agency to offer a full through the line service and Tilly's contribution is expected to multiply the offering.



■ ***Congrats on joining forces with CWDi. Could you tell us what your role will entail?***

Thank you! It's so exciting to have CWDi onboard as one of my clients. CWDi has embarked on a journey to transition into a big ideas company that delivers great creative solutions irrespective of platform or media. This is something I believe will carry the business into the next phase of its journey.

I was brought on to challenge the thinking within the agency, help improve the quality of the creative product and by doing so help the agency grow. A tall ask but something I believe I can achieve, which is why I accepted the challenge.

■ ***How and when did this come about? How do you feel about it?***

I was approached by Lesley Waterkeyn to have a chat about her business. The conversation just felt right. I was excited by a business leader who sees the potential for growth in every aspect of her business and by her commitment to positive change. And most importantly, our shared passion for great creativity.

■ ***What excites you most about taking on this role?***

This role requires a shifting of the needle. I have always been motivated by change more than I am by maintaining a certain standard. To be part of a transition is both challenging and hugely rewarding.

“ Over the years I have learnt how important people, structures, processes and cultures are in successful creative companies. ”

My role will be to implement some of these at CWDi so that the company can revolutionise its creative approach and in doing so its creative product.

“ To able to make a fundamental difference in a creative business is something I cannot resist. ”

■ **You're an established creative problem solver with 25 years of experience. What are your biggest highlights?**

I have been blessed with many highlights in my career. However, if I have to single-out one, it would have to be starting Black River FC in 2005 as a completely unknown entity in the South African creative landscape and growing it into an exciting agency that consistently created some of the most talked about campaigns in South Africa. Also, to see young talent rise through the Black River FC ranks and go on to become the accomplished professionals they are today is most rewarding.

■ **What do you love most about your career, the industry and what you do?**

I fell in love with advertising when I started studying for it and the love never stopped.

“ There were patches where I hated advertising, but I chose to change what I hated instead of giving up. It's a decision I make regularly. ”

My current role as a consultant has reinvigorated my passion because it has given me the privilege of working with so many different people, different agencies, marketers and different types of projects. I'm now helping companies help their people deliver strategically sound, creatively inspiring work. My greatest source of joy is being able to share the knowledge I've acquired so widely.

■ **What is your biggest motivation in life?**

There is nothing I enjoy more than seeing people grow, helping them find their best selves and improving their lives whilst doing it. I wake up every day with the intention of helping someone be better by sharing what I've learnt. It's that simple.

■ **Could you speak about your vision for moving CWDi forward?**

CWDi has great clients, great people and a can-do attitude. I'd like to see CWDi break loose from its past by embracing a future where it becomes the agency its clients turn to for smart creative solutions.

“ The greatest currency any agency has is creativity and big-idea thinking ”

. CWDi has the appetite for this, so I have no doubt that it will be the agency that produces world-class ideas that are media agnostic. I will do everything in power to help make this a reality.

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