

Craftsman Tindall ticks all the right boxes for Burnett

After a long search for an ECD, the agency believes it has found the right man to maintain its creative momentum, Sara Kimberley writes

After going to Goldsmiths College with Damien Hirst, Justin Tindall knows what it means to work towards a high standard.

And he'll need all this experience and more when he joins Leo Burnett next year as its new executive creative director, replacing the much loved and respected Jonathan Burley, who left in April to join CHI & Partners.

Having been the creative partner at The Red Brick Road, Tindall's desire to up sticks and turn his back on an agency in which he had a personal stake may have come as a shock to some. But he says the opportunity at Leo Burnett was too big to miss.

"I've always loved the Leo Burnett brand and I immediately connected with the people there, which was important to me," Tindall says. "The agency also has a big breadth of clients and it's great to be working across all disciplines. It's a challenge that scares, but with positive fear."

His decision to leave The Red Brick Road, which he joined from DDB in 2006, clearly wasn't easy. While he refuses, for legal reasons, to talk about what will happen to his shares, he does go out of his way to stress his belief that the agency will continue to go from strength to strength, thanks in the main to a "fantastic set of partners who see the world in the same way I do." Yet there's also some evident relief.

At Leo Burnett, Tindall reckons he faces a different challenge to the

one that usually confronts a new executive creative director, because nothing needs "fixing." Instead, he says, his role will be to "build on a fantastic platform" put in place by Burley and the creative director Jim Bolton over the past few years.

The agency has seen a marked improvement in its work for McDonald's and COI, and has performed strongly in recent awards, thanks to its work for Shelter. And Leo Burnett's managing director, Paul Lawson, is keen for his new creative head to slot in quickly and carry the momentum. "We are now stronger creatively and we have to ask how we keep it going; how we progress with our on- and offline ambidexterity," Lawson says. "We have as much to learn as everyone else."

Joining the agency as the new boy at the top among agency stalwarts such as Bolton will inevitably be a daunting task for Tindall. The tangible chemistry of the management team has been key to the agency's recent recovery, and Burley was a vital component in that. And Burley's strong relationship with Bolton will also be tough to replicate, though it's hard to imagine Bolton himself really had any designs on succeeding Burley.

Tindall insists that Bolton and the creative team have already shown him tons of support and dismisses any possibility of tension in the ranks. "Jim and his department have already been very welcoming and supportive," he says.



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Perhaps there is, in part, just an element of relief that Leo Burnett has finally found itself an executive creative director after a seven-month gap. Andrew Edwards, Leo Burnett's chief executive, attributes the reason for the lengthy search to the agency's determination to find the right person rather than turn to the first available candidate. "We needed to find someone who was a good internal communicator," he says, "and who had a passion in all channels."

Tindall, Edwards reckons, was worth the wait. "I've never met anyone as enthusiastic as Justin," he says. "We didn't initially think of

him because of his equity and current state of employment, but when we realised there was an opportunity, he bolted from the back of the pack and won by a clear margin."

Tindall's unique vision also made him the perfect candidate for Leo Burnett's integrated offering, Mark Tutssel, the network's global chief creative officer, with whom Tindall will be working closely on the global creative board, says.

"Justin's an innovative thinker and visionary and that's what we were looking for," Tutssel states. "He is renowned globally and comes with unique experience and is arguably one of the most gifted

art directors in the industry. He is going to drive the business to the next level."

Studying at Goldsmiths, Tindall developed a passion for creativity and ideas across all channels. "I was taught not to attract yourself to any medium," he says. "Instead, it was all about coming up with the idea first and the medium after. That has sort of defined me."

Tindall first made noises in the industry as an art director at FCA, before joining BMP DDB in 1999. There, he worked his way up to head of art, before leaving in 2006 to join Paul Hammersley at The Red Brick Road.

His former colleagues at DDB included Adam & Eve's creative director, Ben Tollett, who describes Tindall as "an incredible ECD, who has a very good understanding of business problems that lie behind the creative brief. He is very approachable and somewhat of a perfectionist."

Pushing the boundaries of creativity is what Tindall says he's all about, and he believes that he now has an opportunity to do so. He underlines his ambition to make campaigns such as Shelter and McDonald's "the standard of work across all clients", and wants to see the agency become the best in any medium, "where the output is defined by the input".

"At the moment, we have media buckets to fill," Tindall says. "But I'm working towards having no bucket. I want to start with an idea and then work out the application."

Tindall's best work



2005 Harvey Nichols 'sins'



2006 Harvey Nichols 'beans'

March
Don't forget it's a diesel. Volkswagen

2003 Volkswagen 'elepump'

At last, a camera for anyone who's ever said, "I'm going to get a picture of the inside of that shark's mouth if it's the last thing I do!"

2008 Olympus 'shark'

2008 Sky1 'handcuffs'



2010 Magners 'method in the Magners'

