



MARIA MCHUGH

SYNOPSIS

I am a world class strategist, with a strategic planning career developed agency-side in both the UK and the US, at some of the world's most admired agencies. A left and right brain thinker, with a rigorous and creative, yet highly practical style. Extensive experience in building and leading multi-discipline teams to build and overhaul brands and develop fully integrated marketing and communication programmes. I have worked in small creative boutiques, and massive global agencies, but always apply the same principle – focus on the client's business problem, apply your craft with passion and rigour, inspire your team to want to make a difference, and leave the petty politics to others. My experience is extensive – category and channel agnostic in the truest sense. I am also a proud member of WACL and am passionately committed to lowering the ladder for younger women in our industry.

EXPERTISE

Commercial Strategy | Brand Strategy | Marketing Strategy | Creative Strategy | Qualitative & Quantitative Research | Workshop Facilitation | Global to Local | New Business Development | Employee Development & Mentoring.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

McQ Thinking, Present

Currently working with several organisations in both the UK and the US on projects, including: helping the Executive Board of an \$8bn US grocery retailer develop their purpose, vision and strategy, and helping their People team develop employee behaviours and KPIs; working with the founder of a UK spirits brand position their brand, and develop the creative strategy.

Iris London, Executive Strategy Director Jan 2020 - April 2022

Following our agency sale to Iris, I took on the leadership role of the Integrated Strategy department, leading the London team of 20+ integrated strategists across a fantastic range of brands. I was also part of the DE&I Leadership Team, with specific responsibility for helping to level the playing field for the women of Iris and created the global employee resource group *Iris Women*.

Founded, Planning Partner March 2014 – Dec 2019

We developed Founded into a highly profitable integrated agency, working across B2C and B2B, that we subsequently sold to Iris. I built out the strategy department and evolved our strategic offering to include brand strategy, branding, UX design and marketing & communications. I was instrumental in some of the agency's most pivotal new business wins, including P&O Cruises, Point A Hotels, Farrow & Ball, Dr Martens, Care UK and Paypal.

McQ Thinking, May 2012 – Feb 2014

Acting as an independent consultant, with a network of partners, McQ Thinking provided insight led strategic consultancy to companies needing to sharpen their brands. Clients included: Primark Beauty, Hershesons, Mencap, Silent Pool Gin, Warner Hotels.

Global Planning Director, RKCR Y&R, Jan 2011 – May 2012

Lead strategist in London on Lloyds TSB, Bank of Scotland and Bacardi global. In addition, I worked at an EMEA level, both on European pitches and as lead strategist on accounts run out of network offices, specifically Boehringer Ingelheim OTC brands (Frankfurt) and Beeline (Moscow).

Career Sabbatical, June 2010- Dec 2010

Hyper Island Digital Master Class Program, NY, June 2010

British Institute, Florence: Italian and Art History, July 2010, followed by three months travelling in Italy

EVP, Director Brand Planning, Y&R New York, Nov 2004 – May 2010

Head of Strategic Planning Department, with a team of 20+ brand, digital and communication planners, and part of executive leadership team for the NY office. Key achievements: transforming department from C to A+ standard; mentoring young talent; developing Y&R IMC planning process “Ignition”; winning Bacardi and Virgin Atlantic globally; Goldfish, Cellular South, Rubbermaid, Sunkist in US; helping to transition Dell into YRB from Enfatico; one of eight women across WPP agencies in North America selected to attend the first ‘X Factor’ course for women in business with Charlotte Beers; member of US AAAA Planning Committee 2003 – 2010.

Additional positions

Head of Planning, Fallon New York, May 2000 - Oct 2004

Senior Account Planner, BBH London, Sep 1996 - Apr 2000

Senior Account Planner, Still Price Lintas London, May 1992 - Oct 1994

EDUCATION

BA (Hons) Business Studies and Marketing (2:1), University of Westminster

Diploma of the Institute of Marketing

Mark Ritson Mini MBA in Marketing, class of July 2020

Squared Online, 2016

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Conversational French and Italian

Enthusiastic tennis player