**LAURENCE MELLMAN**

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**NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Insightful, pragmatic Non-Executive Director with a 30-year leadership career, including Big Four pedigree and 15 years at Board level within WPP plc.** Extensive experience as a NED who guides the development of ambitious strategy for major marketing and advertising companies, advises on large-scale corporate development and business transformation agendas, and provides robust and effective oversight of high-risk and crisis activity.

 **NON-EXECUTIVE & BOARD ADVISORY EXPERIENCE**

**promo veritas ♦ london 2021 – PRESENT**

NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Invited on to board by CEO to focus on improving quality of this UK marketing agency, propelling new revenue streams through partnership and relationships, and improving bench strength in anticipation of future ownership change.

**SINGLE & SINGLE WHISKY ♦ london 2020 – PRESENT**

DIRECTOR

Hired by founder to drive international expansion plans of a boutique bottler of high-end Scottish whisky, including launch into new markets and acquisition of a production facility.

* **Guiding company on development of clear, targeted expansion strategy;** played a key role in acquisition of UK Alcohol Wholesaler Licence.

**MEDIAPRO ♦ BARCELONA 2012 – PRESENT**

NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Appointed as a NED of this global leader in sports rights sales, AV distribution and video content production by WPP (minority shareholder) in 2012, and upon departure from WPP, invited by Chinese private equity fund (majority owner) to serve as representative director on board.

* **Currently advising majority owner on financial performance analysis, review of investment opportunities, and optimisation of complex capital structure.**

**WPP PLC ♦ london 1996 – 2020**

NON-EXECutive DIRECTOR | SPECIALIST COMMUNICATIONS2014 – 2020

Appointed Non-Executive Director on the Board of 35 agencies within WPP’s Specialist Communications portfolio, a top #6 revenue earner and profit generator for WPP. SC comprises majority and minority-owned agencies across marketing sectors in Europe, Africa, Middle and US with total combined revenues of $2.3BN. Led annual presentations to WPP Group Board.

* **Provided strategic guidance and advice to agency executive teams on high-profile corporate development activity. Highlights include:**
	+ **Oversaw disposal of market-leading UK TV post-production company for 9x EBITDA,** with agency subsequently experiencing substantial decline in profitability.
	+ **Steered strategic turnaround and high-growth of focus agencies,** working with CEOs to define and execute new strategies; highlights include MediaPro’s growth from near closure to €2BN revenues, and Spafax’s trebling of revenues to $60M revenues in ten years.
	+ **Mitigated financial and reputational risk, representing Board in complex, highly sensitive matters;** led internal / external corruption investigation related to WPP-owned global Sports Rights and TV Production business; secured non-prosecution agreement with US Department of Justice.

NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | UNITED & RED CELL NETWORKS2004 – 2014

Advised CEOs and executive leadership teams of United & Red Cell Network’s 22 agencies, spanning 20 countries and five continents.

* **Led WPP Scangroup Board’s efforts to successfully fight injunction related to set up of new advertising and media buying agencies in Nigeria,** partnering CEO of listed company in Kenya; WPP Scangroup is now umbrella for all WPP agency brands in Africa, comprising c1000 staff.

**EXECUTIVE experience**

**WPP PLC ♦ london 1996 – 2020**

COO | INTERNATIONAL SPECIALIST COMMUNICATIONS (ISC) 2014 – 2020

Held strategic, commercial and operational accountability for ISC portfolio of 35 agencies, overseeing a team of ten and reporting directly to WPP’s Group CEO.

* **Grew portfolio margin from 15% to 22%, well above industry and WPP benchmark;** devised value-creation strategies, working closely with individual CEOs to cut cost, increase efficiency and drive growth.
* **Instituted robust financial and operational controls across international group of businesses;** rolled out new systems for improved financial forecasting, management reporting and SOX compliance, led operating model changes, introduced hiring and remuneration controls, and sponsored Diversity & Inclusion strategy.

COO | UNITED & RED CELL NETWORKS2004 – 2014

Conceptualised and led United Network and Red Cell Network, reporting directly to WPP’s Group CEO; headed a multidisciplinary team of seven, with dotted line across brand CEOs.

* **Rationalised 53 advertising agencies into two manageable and profitable networks, United Network (9 agencies) and Red Cell Network (13 agencies).** Transformed collection of diverse agencies (location, client base, culture) into core, global portfolio; led closure of non-viable agencies, and transitioned others to wider WPP.
* **Drove business performance through operational excellence and rigorous visibility across the portfolio;** introduced global, standardised tools and processes which supported financial planning and management reporting.
* **Led significant talent refresh,** securing top industry performers for portfolio of agencies in 20 countries across five continents; successfully replaced CEOs and executive leaders with smooth exits and no material litigation.

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS1999 – 2004

Headed merger and acquisition activity for WPP across Europe and Asia across all sectors of business, overseeing internal and external teams of consultants and lawyers.

* **Key contributor to WPP’s growth from 30 to >100 operating companies;** shaped acquisition strategy and managed pipeline, leading end-to-end sourcing, due diligence, negotiation and closure of >100 deals in five years. Highlights include Tempus, Cordiant, Ogilvy India and Ogilvy South Africa.
* **Led range of corporate development projects for Group CEO,** including strategic divestment of seven joint ventures with Dentsu across Asia.

FINANCIAL CONTROLLER, ASSOCIATE COMPANIES1996 – 1999

Managed WPP’s portfolio of 30 associate companies globally (<50% WPP investment), performing onsite audits and reviews of financial controls and business performance.

* **Maximised dividend flows back to WPP,** instituting strong financial controls which optimised cash flow.
* **Drove acquisition strategy,** identifying emerging and high performers for increased WPP investment.

**PRICE WATERHOUSE ♦ LONDON1987 – 1996**

MANAGER, TRANSACTION SUPPORT 1992 – 1996

Delivered due diligence and long-form audit report engagements for clients, including Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, Reuters and WPP.

* **Co-led review of WPP’s operations on behalf of banking syndicate,** and produced quarterly reports on 30 operating companies. Advised on debt equity refinancings.
* **Reviewed potential chemical plant acquisitions for Goldman Sachs,** leading onsite due diligence in Poland.
* **Headed technology licensing engagement for Reuters,** seconded to Paris and Amsterdam operations.

AUDITOR & AUDIT MANAGER 1987 – 1992

Progressed from trainee to lead full audit lifecycle for major clients, including Kellogg’s, Reuters and Lloyds Bank.

**education & Qualifications**

**Chartered Accountant (FCA) | Business & Financial Professional (BFP), ICAEW**

**BCom (Hons), Commerce and Accounting, 2:1, University of Birmingham, 1987**