



INITIATIVE'S FEIN, GEER, COLTER TO DEPART FOR ACCENTURE SONG



THREE OF INITIATIVE'S LEADERS, INCLUDING CEO MELISSA FEIN, ARE SET TO LEAVE THE AGENCY TO LEAD MEDIA AT ACCENTURE SONG. THE TRIO WILL STILL WORK AT INITIATIVE IN THE SHORT-TERM AS THE AGENCY LOOKS FOR SUCCESSORS.

Lead image: Initiative CEO Melissa Fein.

Along with Fein, the agency's chief strategy and product officer Chris Colter and managing director Sam Geer are all set to make the switch in a triple swoop.

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By B&T MAGAZINE

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The bombshell news would see the trio abandon one of the country's most successful media agencies to join the sprawling Accenture Song team and lead its foray into the media side of the agency world.

This isn't the first time that Initiative and Accenture Song have become connected, however. Back in 2022, the agencies worked together to trv and land the full-service account for Coles.

Fein and Accenture Song ANZ president Mark Green confirmed the moves to *B&T*.

An IPG Mediabrands spokesperson added: IPG Mediabrands confirms Melissa Fein, CEO Initiative; Sam Geer, National Managing Director Initiative; and Chris Colter Chief Strategy and Product Officer have resigned from their roles.

“While we respect that there are many questions to be asked and answered, no further comment will be made at this time. Further details will be provided in due course.

“At this early stage, we acknowledge the tremendous contribution that Melissa, Sam and Chris have made to Initiative and the wider IPG Mediabrands company.”

‘REALIGNING’ THE MEDIA AGENCY SECTOR

At Accenture Song, the trio will join former Essence ANZ managing director James Graver, who set up the consultancy’s media planning and buying practice in 2022.

The trio’s signing will be viewed as a major coup for Green and his plans to turn Accenture Song into a full-service consultancy across the breadth of marketing, advertising and media services.

Accenture Song said the appointments support its plans to integrate creativity, technology and media, and will “significantly enhance and expand the existing media services offered to Song’s clients in ANZ”.

“There is no doubt that media is a business growth driver and strategic differentiator for our clients. Melissa, Sam and Chris are strong hires for us, and their addition to our team in Australia reflects our global strategy to deliver future facing media and integrated solutions for our clients,” Accenture Song ANZ president Mark Green said.

“Media is a growth area globally for Accenture Song and we are seeing momentum in our end-to-end media offerings in all regions. These appointments serve to extend our footprint into this market that will improve our ability to service the region.”

TrinityP3 media lead Stephen Wright said the move will be closely watched by clients and competitors.

“Accenture’s move overnight has the potential to significantly realign the media agency sector in Australia,” he said.

“The loss of Mel, Sam and Chris is significant; they are one of the best pitch teams in Australia and Initiative’s new business record is testament to that. Initiative Australia has done a lot of work to establish itself as a leader globally and the opportunity for (IPG Mediabrands CEO) Mark Coad and the team now is to bring fresh eyes and build the next evolution of their product.”

Since joining Initiative Australia in 2017, Fein has led the agency to become one of the most awarded and rapidly growing media shops in the country.

In 2023, Initiative had a bumper year, claiming the **second most media account wins**. It was recently chosen as Campaign’s Global Agency of the Year, and in 2022 claimed the **B&T Awards Media Agency of the Year**. On a personal level, Fein won the coveted Woman of the Year at B&T Women in Media Awards (see below) – one of the top accolades in the industry.



Last year, the MFA board member also won CEO of the Year Award in the \$20m–\$100m category at the prestigious CEO Magazine Awards.

Geer and Colter are widely regarded as some of the sharpest strategists and media thinkers in the Australian market.

The trio’s departure leave a sizeable hole for Coad to fill. *B&T* understands that Coad confirmed the departure to Initiative staff late on Thursday, 16 May.

Note: This article has been updated with new comments from IPG Mediabrands, TrinityP3 and Accenture Song on Friday, 17 May.

Reporting by Arvind Hickman and Tom Fogden



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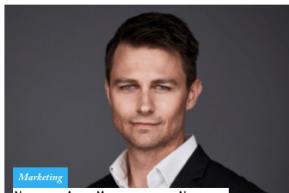
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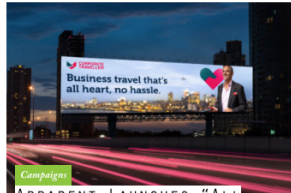
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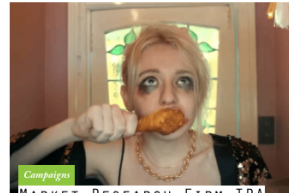
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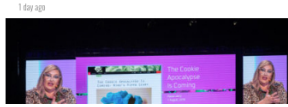


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