



NEWS

UPDATE: Initiative's Melissa Fein, Sam Geer, and Chris Colter confirm move to Accenture Song

May 17, 2024 7:47
by NEIL GRIFFITHS



UPDATE: Accenture Song has confirmed it has hired Melissa Fein, Chris Colter and Sam Geer from Initiative.

In a statement given to Mumbrella on Friday morning, Accenture said the appointments will "support Accenture Song's promise to create impact for clients through the integration of creativity, technology and media, and will significantly enhance and expand the existing media services offered to Song's clients in ANZ".

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"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."

Accenture Song declined to comment when asked by Mumbrella if Fein, Colter and Geer were being brought in to lead a new media arm.

Following [reports of their exits on Thursday evening](#), IPG Mediabrands has confirmed the departure of three Initiative senior leaders.

On Friday morning, the group confirmed the resignations of Initiative CEO, Melissa Fein, chief strategy and product officer, Chris Colter, and national managing director, Sam Geer, in a statement given to Mumbrella.

"While we respect that there are many questions to be asked and answered, no further comment will be made at this time," the statement reads.

"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."



Melissa Fein

Mumbrella understands that Fein, Colter and Geer will lead a new media arm at Accenture Song.

Mumbrella has contacted Accenture Song for comment.

Speaking to Mumbrella, TrinityP3 media business director, Stephen Wright, said the moves could suggest a big shift for the local industry.

"The great thing about the media industry is how dynamic the space is. We see talent and money flow to the best opportunities all the time and that's what keeps our industry healthy and vibrant," Wright said.

"Accenture's move overnight has the potential to significantly realign the media agency sector in Australia and will be watched closely by clients and competitors alike.

"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 Mark Coad and the team now is to bring fresh eyes and build the next evolution of their product."



Sam Geer

Fein has been at Initiative for nearly seven years, **joining in 2017 as chief executive**. She joined from IPG Mediabrands' partnerships and brand experience agency Ensemble, where she spent around 18 months as CEO.

Geer joined Initiative in 2018 as chief strategist, from fellow IPG Mediabrands agency UM. In 2020, **he was elevated to national managing director**, in a move Fein described at the time as being because of his "trailblazing strategy leadership".

Colter **joined in 2019** as national strategy director, also from UM. Alongside Geer in 2020, he was **promoted to chief strategist**, before **moving into the chief strategy and product role in late 2022**.

Under their leadership, Initiative has been widely commended as one of Australia's leading media agencies, with a client roster including **Sanitarium, Priceline, Specsavers, Crown Resorts, Afterpay** and **Pernod Ricard**, among many other leading brands.



Chris Colter

In March, Mumbrella revealed that DuluxGroup has taken its master media account to pitch, which **Mumbrella understands Initiative was invited to partake in**.

It has also been **invited to re-pitch for Specsavers**, which went to market last month.

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Neil Griffiths

Neil Griffiths is the editor of Mumbrella. He joined the company in October 2023.



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