

Ogilvy EMEA chairman Paul O'Donnell announces retirement, ending distinguished 4-decade career at Ogilvy

Issued by [Ogilvy South Africa](#)

11 May 2022

Ogilvy has announced that Paul O'Donnell, chairman of Ogilvy EMEA, will be retiring after 37 years with the agency. Throughout his tenure, O'Donnell has held a range of leadership positions spanning clients, geographies, and businesses.

"It has been an honour to have worked with thousands of Ogilvy colleagues and clients across the globe during my career. It has been a rich and fulfilling experience in which I have travelled the world and helped grow brands and businesses in just about every market you can imagine," O'Donnell said. "The longevity of my career was due to two things: working with great people and managing to bring enough variety to my roles. Now, I'm proud to leave behind a highly skilled and experienced team that is driving the business forward as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic and we are already experiencing significant growth under their leadership," he added.

Andy Main, global chief executive officer of Ogilvy, said: "Paul's career, spanning four decades, has the hallmark of reinvention. He progressively challenged himself and the teams around him to adapt to the needs of our clients and take Ogilvy's business forward. We are very grateful to Paul for his leadership, passion, and dedication to Ogilvy, our clients, and our people. We wish him all the best as he begins this exciting new life chapter."



O'Donnell joined Ogilvy in 1985 after completing a BA (Hons) in Politics from the University of Hull. His career began in telemarketing and account management, before rising through the ranks to help establish the Planning Department in London. He then went on to hold key positions in Jakarta, Singapore and Hong Kong where he spent three years as the president of Asia-Pacific. O'Donnell's skills as both a marketer and a business leader were apparent early on. During his term as managing director in Singapore, he led the business to become one of the most creatively award-winning offices in the global network in a few short years.

He was a key part of the team that created OgilvyOne, being responsible for the brand and identity of the new agency. In 1998 he was appointed executive vice president, International Development Director of OgilvyOne Worldwide, where he strengthened capabilities through more than 20 mergers and acquisitions. This was followed by becoming CEO of the Ogilvy Group in the UK, where he led a team that delivered five years of double-digit growth. In 2014 O'Donnell was appointed CEO for all Ogilvy operations across EMEA, becoming Chairman in 2021. In this capacity he led the project to consolidate all of Ogilvy's UK operations into the award-winning Sea Containers building on London's South Bank.

O'Donnell's experience in the industry extends far beyond advertising to digital marketing, CRM, data, public relations, design and more. He has brought this range of experience to his role on Ogilvy's Global Executive Committee, which he has served on since 2014. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Data & Marketing (IDM), being one of the first participants in the BDMA Diploma. He holds the INSEAD Diploma in Consulting and Coaching for Change and a master's degree from HEC, Paris.

O'Donnell has also been active in the industry beyond Ogilvy. He served as a Trustee of the IDM, helping successfully

merging it with the DMA to create a single powerhouse for the UK's Data and Direct industries. He has been the president and chairman of the International Advertising Association, UK Chapter. He is currently president of The European Association of Communication Agencies as well as being a director of The American European Business Association.

After Ogilvy, he intends to spend more time sailing, skiing, and playing tennis. He will also further his interest in wine by studying for the WSET Diploma and launching a specialist sherry business. He also hopes to develop a small portfolio of non-executive and mentoring roles.

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