

COMMERCE

Wheels Up names first-ever chief digital officer, installs new chief marketing officer

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Kristen Lauria will become chief customer and marketing officer, and David Godsman will be the company's first-ever chief digital officer. Image credit: Wheels Up

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Private aviation firm Wheels Up is creating an executive position for an incoming expert, promoting one other talent from among its own ranks.

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The firm has announced that Fortune 100-level professional David Godsman will become the company's first-ever chief digital officer, as consultant Kristen Lauria steps into the role of chief customer and marketing officer. The succession and simultaneous formation of a new position will offer Wheels Up the opportunity to accelerate member-facing strategies.

"As Wheels Up continues to pursue our vision to make the extraordinary possible every day, I'm pleased to bring aboard two dynamic and seasoned leaders to help take our business to the next level," said Kenny Dichter, chairman and CEO of **Wheels Up**, in a statement.

"David and Kristen each bring deep experience in business transformation at some of the largest and most successful companies in the world and will help deliver significant benefits for our members and customers."

Jet setting

The new leaders are charged with driving profitability while amplifying customer-focused business tactics.

Joining June 1, 2023, Mr. Godsman will take on Wheels Up's newest role, helming the digital product, technology and data services teams. Tasked with expanding the firm's technological investments, optimizing operations and improving infrastructure to heighten the client experience, the newly-installed executive is to be based out of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Before Wheels Up, Mr. Godsman was the CEO and director of Fintech lending company Foro. Further back in his 25-year career, he held senior digital positions at Bank of America, Starwood Hotels & Resorts and The Coca-Cola Company.

Ready for takeoff [#UPthewayyoufly pic.twitter.com/YYTBteuaNA](#)

Wheels Up (@WheelsUp) [February 27, 2023](#)

Based in New York City, Ms. Lauria will focus on driving membership value and overseeing the brand's customer experience, starting May 15, 2023.

Wheels Up's forthcoming CMO holds a wealth of leadership experience at both B2B and B2C businesses, previously serving as the executive vice president and global chief marketing officer at healthcare and insurance behemoth Cigna Corporation. While there, Ms. Lauria successfully launched the \$100 billion health services subsidiary, Evernorth, at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At American multinational IBM, Ms. Lauria also attained a leadership position, and like Mr. Godsman, specialized in digital innovation. For over 15 years, she guided teams through modernization processes including transitions to mobile platforms, increased use of cloud technology and the implementation of AI.

The MIT Leadership Center advisory board member and senior advisor to consulting firm McKinsey & Co has been a management consultant for Wheels Up since January 2023. She takes over the chief customer and marketing officer role from Lee Applbaum ([see story](#)) who is departing to focus on personal ventures.

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