



New CEO named at Wildbrain

Polis to replace newly named ambassador Rivkin

By MICHAEL SCHNEIDER

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Now that he has been named President Obama's choice for ambassador to France, Wildbrain president-CEO Charles Rivkin has unveiled his succession plan at the production company.

Wildbrain, the studio behind kidvid hit "Yo Gabba Gabba," will now be run by Michael Polis, who has been named CEO of the shingle.

As for subsidiary Kidrobot, the designer toy manufacturer/retailer will continue to be headed up by CEO Diego Marchioni -- but Marchioni will now report directly to the Wildbrain board of directors. He previously reported to Rivkin.

Polis has served as chief marketing officer of Wildbrain since 2007, and led the company's global marketing and licensing push for its franchises, including "Yo Gabba Gabba." Polis will now oversee Wildbrain's continued expansion into film and primetime TV.

Wildbrain board member Jim Caccavo cited Polis' "impressive record of achievement" in bumping him up to CEO.

"He has been a big part of our success," said Caccavo, who is also managing general partner at Steelpoint Capital Partners.

Most recently, Wildbrain partnered with MRC to produce the animated series "The Ricky Gervais Show," which has been greenlighted by HBO. Wildbrain is also producing the stunt puppet show "Teen Smithereen" with Dan Clark.

Wildbrain recently secured a third season order from Nickelodeon for "Gabba," the hip-hop tot show. It is also developing a feature based on the series.

And Wildbrain continues to produce commercials for companies such as Coca-Cola, Honda, Kraft and Nike.

Wildbrain was first launched in 1994; Rivkin took over as president-CEO in September 2005. Before that, he was president-CEO of the Jim Henson Co.

Rivkin will officially depart Wildbrain on June 5. Although he still must go through a confirmation process, Rivkin was announced on Wednesday at a Los Angeles fundraiser as the president's choice for the France ambassadorship (*Daily Variety*, May 28). Rivkin served as Obama's Southern California campaign finance co-chair, along with Nicole Avant.

Before joining Wildbrain, Polis worked under Rivkin at Henson, where Polis was senior VP of marketing.

Polis' credits also include a stint in marketing at Universal Home Entertainment.