

Charles Classen

Charly Classen is Vice President and General Manager, ESPN – Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), a role he has held since January 2014. He is responsible for the strategic guidance, development and oversight for all of ESPN’s business and operations in the region – including digital media, television syndication, as well as the company’s relationship with BT Sports (who operate an ESPN-branded TV channel). He also is responsible for identifying and developing new business opportunities in the region, whether through organic growth, acquisition or partnership.

Languages

German

Native or bilingual proficiency

French

Professional working proficiency

Spanish

Professional working proficiency

Portuguese

Professional working proficiency

English

Native or bilingual proficiency



Background

Based in London, Classen works closely with ESPN executive management and with the company’s global syndication, sales and digital media teams in developing best-of-breed content, businesses and sales and marketing solutions. ESPN’s EMEA business includes a suite of products and services that include leading digital brands like ESPNcrinfo, ESPNFC, ESPN.co.uk, ESPN.com and ESPNscrum, as well as live broadband streaming service ESPN Player, and syndication of major sports content including NCAA sports (including football Bowl games and Playoffs, Basketball Championship Tournaments and more), X Games, IndyCar, NASCAR, ESPN Films documentaries and more.

A **native of Hamburg**, Germany who has lived in the UK for 20 years, Classen previously served as UK Commercial Director and head of EMEA Business Development from 2009 until December 2012. In those roles, Classen worked with ESPN International’s senior management team to identify and implement new growth opportunities in the TV and digital space. Among the areas and activities that he played key roles in were: the launch the UK ESPN channel; managing the transition of ESPN’s business approach in the UK as it shifted to a premium subscription TV model; negotiating carriage agreements and managing the day-to-day relationships with ESPN distribution partners in the UK; collaboration around subscriber acquisition and retention

activities; the completion ESPN's sale of its UK and Ireland TV channels to British Telecomm and the development and direction of ESPN's on-going digital-first business in the market.

Classen first joined ESPN in 2006 as Director of Business Development, EMEA. Prior to ESPN, he held positions at Fremantle Media and marchFIRST.

Since October, 2012, Classen has served as a representative for The Walt Disney Company on the SuperRTL (German joint venture between RTL and Disney) advisory board.

Classen holds a BA in Politics, Philosophy and Economics from Oxford University. He is fluent in English, German, Spanish, and Portuguese