

Blink Tower wins gold in NAE video contest

Blink Tower, a Cape Town-based animated video company, scooped gold in two categories of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) Engineering for You Video Contest, held last month.



The NAE competition, held in celebration of NAE's 50th anniversary, invited participants to submit a 1-2 minute video showing engineering's impact on society in the last 50 years, and to project its contributions in the next 50 years.

Chosen as the overall winner of \$25,000 from more than 600 videos submitted, Adrian Burger and his Blink Tower team are "absolutely honoured, thrilled and still in somewhat of a state of shock." Their submission, "Engineering is Amazing!" also won an additional \$5,000 in the General Public category.

Make engineering approachable

Burger says the great challenge of this brief was to make engineering an approachable discipline: one seen as academic, but not aloof; as meticulous, but not tedious; as empirical but not uncaring.

He describes his motivation for entering the initiative, explaining how the competition seemed designed to tempt Blink Tower: "It was an opportunity to make a short, explanatory video that promotes a good cause and champions education and problem-solving. We got to do what we love, for a message that we're highly passionate about."

"We wanted to convey the passion many engineers feel for what they do: the mindset of rising to challenges, problem-solving and hard work. We wanted to put a smile on their faces, and for them to come away thinking 'Woah - that video really represents not just what I do, but why I do it.' And, at the same time, we wanted to encourage non-engineers to see the field with a fresh perspective and be inspired to become champions and advocates."

Single words, short statements

Born around the idea of using single words and short statements in the dialogue and having visuals that implied a double-meaning, each scene in the video has a single striking image which keeps the screen uncluttered and allowing the narrator's voice to resonate. Even given the seriousness of the subject matter, the video is cheerful, light and accessible.

Burger and Head of Pre-Production Graeme Comrie, found great combinations of simple ideas and visual metaphors, and slowly chiselled the script into shape over a few weeks. Production itself was a midnight oil-fuelled race over the course of a weekend, and the result was a winning combination.

View the video at Engineering is Amazing! video at www.nae.edu/e4u.

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