

Saluting Vizeum's single-minded media innovation focus

 By Leigh Andrews

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RECMA recently named Vizeum the world's fastest growing media network in its Overall Activity Billings 2014 report, with Vizeum South Africa ranking fourth locally. Here's how they got this right, in a time of matchy-matchy results...

Before we get into the nitty-gritty, it's important to note that RECMA is the only research company that evaluates digital and media agencies worldwide. In fact, their Overall Activity Billings (OAB) report is based on a unique metric that takes into account traditional buying and planning billings, as well as non-traditional billings including digital and diversified services. That's what makes these results credible, and why it's such an achievement for Vizeum South Africa to have ranked so highly.

Thomas Le Thierry, global president for Vizeum; Tanya Schreuder, joint MD for Vizeum South Africa; and Murray Douglas, regional director for RECMA shared some insight into what exactly this means...



Douglas, Schreuder and Le Thierry

■ **1. Firstly, what are the criteria involved in the RECMA assessment?**

Douglas: The "Qualitative Evaluation" assesses the media agencies according to 16 criteria, in four areas of assessment: competitiveness in pitches; momentum in terms of new business balance, management stability, growth and activity; resources, based on international/pan-African staff, ratio of diversification and number of specialists; and client profile in terms of big advertisers, ones with SA headquarters and relationship stability.

For each criteria, each agency scores between 2 and -1 (2 is high strength / 1 is strength / 0 is average / -1 is an area of

weakness), leading to an overall score and classification as: dominant/high/good/average or low profile...

In the latest evaluation classification of South African agencies, the split of the market was as follows:

- Dominant profile: 0 agencies
- High profile: 2 agencies
- Good profile: 7 agencies
- Average profile: 2 agencies
- Low profiles: 1 agency

■ **2. Shifting focus to Vizeum then, why is it auspicious the OAB report comes from RECMA?**

Le Thierry: RECMA is considered as the leading independent voice in the global advertising and media community. Clients and auditors often use RECMA data to help guide them on which agencies to include on pitch lists.

■ **3. Talk us through the numbers of having increased OA Billings by + \$2183m (the 3rd highest growth listed).**

Le Thierry: We won't go into details on the numbers, but what we can say is that Vizeum has achieved a momentum in pitch reviews by being agile, innovative and building a consistent culture and approach.

■ **4. How did your SA 2014 billings, together resources, updates and recent moves, play a role in your ranking?**

Schreuder: 2014 was a watershed year for Vizeum SA, not only did we win new business, but we had very healthy organic growth with our existing clients. Our media partners recognised us by voting for us to win the [MOST Media agency of the year](#), Best Specialist Agency in Johannesburg and Best Full Service Agency in Cape Town. We also had a great awards year, with work that we did on BMW winning at the [Assegais](#) & Roger Garlick Awards. We ended the year on a high note, when up against the two largest agencies in SA we not only retained the BMW business, we also won MINI.

■ **5. That's impressive. Explain Vizeum's growth since 2003 in getting to this point, with a specific focus on Africa and SA.**

Schreuder: Vizeum launched in South Africa in September 2007, and eight years later works with many of South Africa's blue chip clients. Many of our clients are looking beyond South Africa's borders, Dentsu Aegis has focused on making acquisitions into sub-Saharan Africa, so we can offer our clients solutions across the African continent. We continue to evolve with our offerings to clients to ensure we are at the leading edge and a partner that helps solve business problems.

Clearly a winning business strategy. Follow the [Vizeum Twitter handle](#) for more.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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