

Of ownership and multiculturalism

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

19 Aug 2016

The dreadlocked founder of Amusement Park, Jimmy Smith, believes two of the key take outs he has learnt in his career is that ownership and working with people who are different from you produce magic.



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“When cultures smash together to make ideas, that’s when the magic happens,” he told the audience at the DStv Seminar of Creativity, during this year's Loeries Creative Week. Throughout his working life he has found that when he has been teamed up with people from different backgrounds, the outcomes have been the most productive and rewarding.

Bunny rabbits and basketball stars

He also raised the point that agencies don’t own what they create, which can have a nasty sting in the tail.

He cites the *Hare Jordan* campaign, where basketball legend, Michael Jordan and Bugs Bunny starred in a series of spoofy ads combining animation and live performance.

On their debut appearance at Super Bowl XXVI, viewers were thrilled to see the two against a team of bullies in the spot for Nike, imagined by Wieden Kennedy creative director Jim Riswold.

The insert proved so popular that it was repeated the following year. Nike wasn't interested on capitalising on this success. "We sell shoes," they said. So Warner went ahead without them and produced a spin-off movie, *Space Jam*. The movie grossed \$283m at the box office and resulted into \$3,5bn in merchandising revenue.

"People paid money to see a 90-minute advert," he said.

And of this, the copywriter originally responsible for the concept saw next to nothing. "He got about \$10,000 for rewriting a page of the script, but that's just because the producer felt sorry for him," Smith said.

Reliving dreams

It seems that the *Space Jam* experience lays the basis for how Smith does things. There's a whole story behind his campaigns.

In 2010, he was responsible for Gatorade's *Replay* that tapped into many a middle-aged man's dream, a chance to turn back the clock and replay that all-important sports moment at school. In this case it was a drawn high school football match.

The multi-channel campaign included online webisodes and even a documentary TV series charting the story of reuniting the players and getting them in shape for the rematch.

Online activity included the workout programmes used by the now middle-aged men to get back in shape, and a Facebook app to allow followers to reunite their own sports teams.

Gatorade sales in the part of the country where the competition was held rose by 63% and the campaign generated more than \$3m worth of media coverage. It was also picked up and followed by sports news roundups on channels including CNN, from just \$225,000 of paid media.

The biggest dare yet

A year later, Smith founded his company, Amusement Park, which is built on the back of this formula. His business is not just about selling products, but also providing massive entertainment value.

Just a few weeks ago Smith pulled off one of the scariest campaigns yet. The highest-ever skydive without a parachute. Skydiver, 42-year-old Luke Aikens, jumped out of an aeroplane at 25,000ft and landed safely in a giant trampoline, making it a Guinness World Record, watched live by millions of people.

The client? A chewing gum called Stride.

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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