

Kevin Swanepoel on forming a global community for creative individuals

 By Ann Nurock

10 May 2017

I chatted to Kevin Swanepoel, CEO of the One Club, ahead of One Show Creative Week, live in New York.

■ ***Kevin, it's a pleasure to be back for my favourite award show because you do so much more than just creative awards. You've had a very busy year, please tell me about it.***



Kevin Swanepoel, CEO of the One Club for Creativity.

It has been a really interesting year. When we spoke a year ago, there was no understanding of what would be coming down the pike. In one year, we've had discussions with the [Art Directors' Club](#) (ADC), and we have merged the ADC into what is now called the One Club for Creativity. So we have embarked upon changing the name of the One Club. Our mission is to bring about the formation of a global community for creative individuals. So our focus is now more so on building community. We also have our four pillars of programming that we work around.

The One Club is a non-profit focused on education, first and foremost. We also work on inclusion and diversity, professional development and are doing a lot of gender equality at the moment. Our organisation is here for the creative individual, it's not just here to recognise people although that is the biggest thing that we do and is the single piece that generates revenue, which allows us to do all the rest of this great programming.

■ ***What is the difference between the ADC and the One Show?***

One of the big discussions that came about when we decided to do this merger with the ADC was that everybody asked if we'd just be double-dipping agencies, getting them to enter two different award shows. We had to think really long and hard about this and I think that we came up with a really good solution. One, it's not our intention to be taking the same work into both shows, so they don't just mirror each other.

Sure, there will be a 20% to 25% overlap among the different disciplines between the two shows, but the things we set ourselves out to do right from the start is, how do we make these shows remarkably different? It comes down to a couple of things. Firstly, it's the jury. How do you put together a jury that's going to look at the work with a different lens? Looking at those lenses, the One Show is based on great concepts and ideas, and how they're executed – it's more skewed towards advertising, whereas the Art Directors' Club, now in its 96th year, making it the longest-running award show globally, has been predominantly focused on art direction and design.



All the ADC Gold Cube winners for 2017

9 May 2017



Our task and mission going forward is to build the art directors' awards – we'll drop the 'Club' as it now falls under the One Club for Creativity – into the most innovative and forward-thinking award show for design, innovation and craft. With that we've been very careful in our selection of the jury members so that when they're looking at the work, they're looking at it

with a completely separate lens and the work is different to the work that's being awarded in the One Show.

■ ***Both the ADC and the One Club have a focus on developing young talent. What are your plans to develop these?***

Well, the other thing we did that made so much sense when looking at the different programming of each award show offered, was to notice that the One Club lacked development and educational work for high school students. The ADC had an amazing programme called Saturday Career Workshops, which they've been running for many years now, helping to educate students still at school and seeing that pipeline going into colleges and universities. So we were thrilled to pick up that programming and bring it in under the One Club for Creativity.

Another really compelling brand that the ADC owned and did exceptionally well with was Young Guns. Young Guns is world-renowned as the premier award show for talent under the age of 30. We have now taken this and, by putting it under the One Club for Creativity's wing, we are doing away with our One to Watch programming, which was very similar to Young Guns but focused on those were a lot younger and not as established as the Young Guns. So, rather than have two conflicting programmes, we have looked at the strengths from both organisations and we have taken the decision to move forward with the Young Guns and do away with One to Watch. This strengthens the brand and allows for some impressive programming.

The portfolio nights were part of ADC and have been running as a programme now for 14 years – we purchased them from the previous owner. Although they were dovetailed into the ADC's programming, when their executive he left, he took that programming with him. We thought, 'our mission is to build this global creative community and what better way to bring together all the young people to get their books reviewed'?

Portfolio night normally brings together 15,000 to 20,000 creative individuals per year, with 3,000 to 4,000 art directors reviewing their books. There is no better tool in my eyes to bring about the community, getting these young kids' books reviewed by seasoned professionals at agencies.

This is wonderful, and what I always say about the One Club for Creativity is that it really is the one award show that has a [sense of purpose](#). I wish you a lot of luck for this week, it's going to be very exciting – thank you!

Visit our [One Show special section](#) for the latest updates!

ABOUT ANN NUROCK

Ann is a Partner at Relationship Audits and Management, a global consultancy that measures and optimizes client /agency relationships. Her proprietary Radar tool is used by 30 corporates globally and as a result she interacts with over 80 agencies of all disciplines. Ann spent 25 years plus in the advertising industry as CEO of Grey Advertising South Africa, and head of the Africa region followed by President and CEO of Grey Canada. Contact details: ann.nurock@relationshipaudits.com | Twitter @Annnurock

- #BizTrends2023: Memories not clicks, the impact of 'short termism' - 31 Jan 2023
- Mentorship programme for the advertising industry - 27 May 2021
- #CannesLions2019: CNNs Julia Chatterley on talking pride, *Out of the Shadows* - 25 Jun 2019
- #OneShow2019: Double diversity, diversity of skill and diversity of self - 13 May 2019
- #OneShow2019: Put people at the centre, appreciate creativity and innovate - 10 May 2019

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>