

SMMEs, ignore them at your peril

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Seven years ago, the Apex Awards launched its bursary programme. Since then it has funded 60 bursaries. This year proceeds have enabled it to increase that number to 72, which is an additional 12 bursaries.

Before announcing the bursary recipients, Mike Gendel, CEO and chairman of the Gendel Strategic Marketing Group and ACA board member made an impassioned plea to the audience gathered at the awards ceremony at the Sandton Convention Centre to open their brands and agencies to the opportunities that small, medium and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) present.



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“The young students of the AAA are split equally in their desire to join an agency or start their own. Most cut their teeth in formal agencies and then decide they want to do it their way. The talent is there and all they are asking for is a fair break, access to opportunities and acknowledgment if they make a success of it.”

In South Africa SMMEs are drivers of economic growth and employment, with SMMEs contributing to 57% of the turnover in the services economy - in which the advertising, marketing and media sectors operate in - and creating 90% of jobs, he says.

“It has been proven that over 60% of people who start a business will then start another one and then another one... Entrepreneurship yields great results.”

The passion and risk taking of SMMEs is a health indication of an economy and their role cannot be underestimated. “In the advertising sector, despite the long track record of the local advertising industry being entrepreneurial in its culture since its start decades ago, SMMEs in our industry are battling to compete and gain traction.”

In South Africa SMMEs face a myriad of challenges from Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) codes, labour laws, tax and labour laws and issues. In this regard, he says clients need to play fair, especially in terms of cash flow challenges and so we need to rethink how we work with SMMEs in our industry.

“SMMEs can be loyal and passionate suppliers and I am appealing to all agencies and clients to open yourselves up to SMMEs. If you offer them the opportunities they will rise to the occasion. They will form a JV, scale up as needed or form partnerships.”

The point, he says, is that stimulating the growth of SMMEs is in the best interest of agencies and the industry as a whole. “Yet I believe that marketers pay lip service to this. This lack of opportunity offered to SMMEs is at the peril of agencies and big business and so I appeal to you to yield this call.”

The following AAA students were awarded bursaries at the Apex Awards ceremony:

- Biopelo Keikelame
- Hope Ntshangase
- Khutso Mafema
- Lerato Monyemoratho
- Mamauba Malahlela
- Monde Mvundle
- Phumla Dhlamini
- Sherwin Roper
- Thoriso Pilane
- Avo Ndiko
- Franki Lock
- Nikho Rudah



#Apex2017: All that glitters and only one gold

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ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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