Creative Circle launches Champions of Creativity Award

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The creative industry is pretty good at patting itself on the back. Let's face it; you'd be hard-pressed to name another industry with so many award shows on the calendar!

Don't take this the wrong way; nobody is knocking award shows. They keep us sharp, they keep us competitive, and they keep us creating. And we know that's good news for our clients. But the reality is that no one can create great work without a great client.

It's for this reason that the Creative Circle launched Champions of Creativity in 2014 - an award that recognises the clients who recognise the value of creativity.
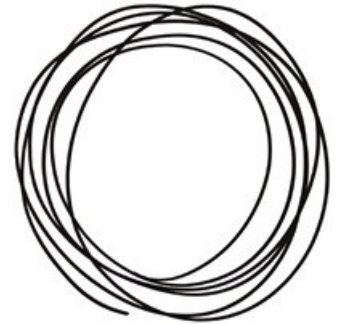
"Raising the creative standard of South African advertising requires a collective effort from agencies and marketers alike. Unfortunately, however, the marketers involved in pushing for great work are too often overlooked," explains Creative Circle Chairman and FoxP2 Creative Founding Partner Justin Gomes.

Justin Gomes

"It takes courage to sell category-redefining work in organisations that, these days, tend to be ruled by numbers and number crunchers, and the Champions of Creativity initiative looks to put the spotlight firmly back on the marketers who believe in creativity - and fight for it.

Unfortunately for the creative industry, it is becoming harder and harder to sell creative work, as the magic of what we do is increasingly eroded by science, data and over-analysis. Which is not to say that we don't welcome research. It should go without saying that the more information creatives have regarding the brand, the audience, the competitors and playing field, the better. But, by its nature, nothing truly original has been done before so there are no 'best practices' against which to measure a truly creative, out-of-the-box idea. It's a scary place to be, and it requires a special kind of courage to not only believe in this work, but also support it in front of a board of directors, and push the button. It's interesting to note the majority of winners at the Apex Effectiveness Awards on Monday night were not campaigns approved through research, but rather by marketers who recognised truly original ideas and backed them to deliver business results. The "Jenna Lowe Get Me to 21 Organ Donation" campaign, the "FNB ATM Machines" work, the "Sanlam One Rand Man" social experiment, the "Garagista Taking Craft Beer Back From The Hipsters" campaign are all examples of marketers taking a step of faith without analysis paralysis," says Gomes.

"Truly creative work would never see the light of day without marketers like our Champions of Creativity."

In 2015, the Creative Circle officially put pen to paper and announced the first Champion of Creativity - Geoff Whyte, current CEO of Nando's, but also the man who stood behind some of South Africa's most iconic (and successful) advertising campaigns - Castle Lager "Worldwind", Hansa "I Hate Being Black", Lunch Bar "Crutches" and Halls "UFO", to name just a few.

The second recipient was announced in March - Gavin Krenski, marketing and innovations director at brandhouse Beverages. Think Johnnie Walker, Bell's, Drive Dry, and before that, the unforgettable Axe "Get a Girlfriend" campaign.

This year, the Creative Circle will award three more Champions, bringing the annual total to five. The association will select five Champions each year; marketers who have helped produce creative work that has, in turn, worked for them.

"In keeping with the Creative Circle's goal of promoting creativity as a business tool, each Champion is chosen not only on his or her ability to bring forth category-defining work, but also work that actually works," says Gomes.

"In so doing, we hope to not only help raise the standard of South African advertising, but also its standing in business circles.The more the business world is exposed to the hard fact that creative advertising is effective advertising, the better for us all. By raising the profile of those marketers who too often work behind the scenes, and sharing their success stories, we hope to encourage more marketers to take that step of faith required to leverage the power of creativity," he concludes.

The Creative Circle's third Champion of Creativity will be announced soon. Watch this space!

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