

Digital download with... Native VML & Joe Public

 By Leigh Andrews

24 Mar 2017

Local digirati shone at the recent IAB Bookmark Awards 2017. Here's some feedback from Native VML strategist Donovan White and ECD Ryan McManus, as well as Pepe Marais, Group CCO at Joe Public United.

Native VML walked away with 14 pixel awards in total on the night, including a gold award for the Absolut 'One Source' integrated through-the-line campaign. That's why White says the following emoji string describes how he felt on the night, with McManus adding the 'rock on' hand emoji:



White explains, "At the time I felt the tornado emoji mixed with a blushy face and a banana because it happened so fast and I really didn't think I would win. While on the stage, I felt a couple of panda emojis ([Panda, panda, panda with some broads in Atlanta](#)), and now I feel like the shiniest Dono, the unicorn emoji!"

The 'Go Sandile' campaign, presented with digital installations and activations silver, content strategy bronze as well as the Pixel for Purpose Special Honour on the night, was conceptualised by Joe Public in partnership with client Nedbank:

"Creating content and experiences in a digital space has become more pertinent than ever in order to effectively reach consumers and build brand loyalty. We are honoured to have been recognised for our efforts on such a worthy cause," says Marais.

White, individually presented with a silver craft strategy pixel on the night for 'Make New South African Heroes Happen', adds that he's instantly drawn to work that can really make a difference in people's lives. That's why he loved working on #GoSandile with Joe Public for Nedbank, as these projects never start with the awards in mind, they really are about passion and, at its core it's so simple that anyone can relate. He says, "The power of the #GoSandile campaign was drawn

from my own experience with my late dad's own battles with disability. It's personal and #GoSandile touched my soul. I think that's what makes a real strategist and a real creative. It's about working hard to make a difference and then looking back and being real proud of the work. I remember a couple of awards from the Loeries in 2016 and Fox P2's #OpenEyes had that same feeling for me. It's beautiful, simple and above all, one heck of a **human digital strategy**."

Commenting on the current calibre of SA's digital work, McManus says: "It's great to see the different kinds of digital work that is winning at Bookmarks. It's no longer some quirky or gimmicky banner ads; it's great thinking based on human insights that really connects with real people. For me, digital is such a powerful medium to connect with people directly, and consumers get to choose what they want to spend time with. This can only make the work greater and more relevant to people, and that will always make the work that much better. I am really excited to see how much storytelling and entertainment has grown in the digital space, particularly when you see how much these cases have shifted the bottom line for the brands, with real, measurable results."



McManus in black and white.

Work that works for White



White with his silver craft strategy pixel .

White elaborates further, stating, "Overall I saw a lot of work with so much power. I just felt like our industry was standing up for a higher purpose of doing good and it was coming from a very surprising place – The alcohol brands are proving that they should not be banned from advertising, especially if they are doing such thought-provoking work."

That includes #LetsTalkColour for Viacom MTV by [Ogilvy](#), with its simple black-and-white execution shouting at him without having to say a word (he says this deserves an applauding emoji); the Absolut work Native VML's Cape Town team did with #OneSource for Pernod Ricard SA, as well as their I am Muslim campaign, which he says is the type of work that can unite the continent, and sends a louder message in a way you can feel the energy in the wake of xenophobia; the Amarula #NameThemSaveThem campaign by [Liquorice](#) and

FCB, which left him wanting to customise his own elephant – it's captivating work that speaks for those who do not have a voice; as well as Net#work BBDO's Mercedes Benz C-Class Coupe VR Test Drive and Ogilvy's Shakin Shakin for KFC, as the new tech in both of these enhances the brand message and is not use of tech just for the sake of using tech.



Team Native VML at Bookmarks 2017.

Finally, White says **it doesn't have to be high tech all the time**. Tusker is one of his favourite beers in the world and he has fond memories over a Tusker on the beaches of Diani in Mombasa, so he's always thrilled to see what Tusker has done next and says [Net#work BBDO](#)'s 'Team Kenya' is just another addition to the pot of great work.

Interestingly, White shares that he had personally taken a bit of a hiatus from Twitter because he felt that the conversations were becoming negative. But after seeing all these digital marketers wanting to make a difference in Africa, he's excited and for the first time, he only wants digital marketing on his timeline. He concludes: "On the whole I am excited to see the positive role digital can play and I hope that this is just the start of great things to come!"

As are we. [Click here](#) for the full list of 2017 IAB Bookmarks Award winners and visit our [special section](#) for the latest updates!

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

- #Loeries2020: Behavioural economics as creativity, but not as we know it... - 24 Nov 2020
- #D2020: Ignite your inner activist - representation through illustration - 27 Feb 2020
- #D2020: How Sho Madjozi brought traditional Tsonga *xibelelani* into 2020 - 27 Feb 2020
- #D2020: Silver jubilee shines with Department of Audacious Projects launch - 26 Feb 2020
- #BehindtheSelfie with... Qingile 'WingWing' Mdlulwa, COO at The Whole Idea - 26 Feb 2020

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

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