"Africa is the birthplace of creativity" - Melanie Campbell

By Leigh Andrews

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We've heard from the advertisers, producers and other behind-the-scenes creatives responsible for SA's success at Cannes Lions 2017 - now it's time to hear the marketers' voice. First up is Melanie Campbell, head of marketing at Pernod Ricard SA.



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Campbell has 15 years of experience in roles across consumer insights, brand management, innovation management and portfolio management across a number of international markets in Europe and Africa and is currently head of marketing in South Africa on Pernod-Ricard, the white spirits and rum portfolio for French-owned second-best global wine and spirits producer.

Her influence has touched iconic brands including Heineken, Guinness, Johnnie Walker and Absolut, where her track record for growth and market share gains is evident as she's focused on "delivering best-in-class strategic business plans, coupled with ground-breaking creativity that delivers tangible business results."

This was recently highlighted at Cannes Lions, where the Absolut One Source campaign took home a Gold Lion for Lions Entertainment as well as two Silver Lions in Lions Entertainment and Lions Music for Entertainment, with a Bronze Lion for Lions Media rounding out the campaign's roaring global success.

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24 Jun 2017

Here, Campbell talk us through the campaign's specific touchpoints with consumers, as well as the role of trust and mutual respect in making any collaborative work a success…

Talk us through the Absolut One Source campaign brief issued to the agency, Native VML and the resulting touchpoints that have resonated with consumers.

The brief was to deliver a communications strategy for Absolut vodka, which:

- Continues to build on the previous year's campaign, which affirmed Absolut's war cry in standing for African creative originality.
- Continues and evolves the role of Khuli Chana as the personification of someone who is Absolut and adding value to his life beyond monetary exchange.
- Communicates Absolut's One Source intrinsic in a relevant and compelling way.
- Entrenches Absolut's role in popular culture.

The campaign was around Africa's biggest creative collaboration in both music, fashion and art or creativity, where the consumer played the role of executive producer, making key decisions regarding the collaboration along the way. The album was called One Source as all humanity originated from Africa, establishing Africa as the birthplace of creativity. Beyond the album there was a music video, a four-part documentary and limited edition pack, which culminated at the annual MTV Africa Music Awards.

That's a really impressive run. Did you know from the start you had a big winner with this specific communications strategy?

I knew the moment Native VML presented the communications strategy that this would deliver on the brief, was fresh and on brand with what Absolut has always stood for and that it would resonate with consumers transforming Absolut's commercial success.

What I did not know was that the scale of the commercial transformation would be five times what we anticipated and that this work would play a significant role in influencing the global strategy for Absolut. Nor did I even consider the potential to be recognised on a global stage at Cannes!

Successful collaboration was clearly a big part of bringing African creativity to the forefront of the globe's creative stage. Explain the collaboration in particular with Egg Films' Sunu Gonera and brand ambassador Khuli Chana.

Absolutely everything around this project involved collaboration as well as trust and mutual respect because without the latter, collaboration is nothing more than a hook-up or a transactional exchange.



#CannesLions2017: "This is who we really are" - Sunu Gonera

Leigh Andrews 6 Jul 2017

This manifested on many levels:

- Trusting and respecting Khuli, Sunu and Native around a table to make brand business decisions and them trusting brand to input and shape their creativity.
- Trusting in the team to go to Ghana to shoot a documentary and record the lead song with no script, manifesting in the music video being shot before the song was even written!
- We are incredibly fortunate to work with the smartest, most creative, talented but yet humble individuals in the industry – that's when magic happens.

That's for sure. Watch this space for tomorrow's interview with Native VML, responsible for bringing the Absolut One Source brief to life and click here for Campbell's MyBiz profile.

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.

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