

Awards after awards. Enough already

 By [Rolf Akermann](#)

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Advertising awards are plentiful. Cannes Lions, Loeries, Pendorings, CIO, AAF, AotW, CRESTA and LIA to name but a few, and all these awards are about creativity. I would love to know how much is spent by SA advertising agencies to enter these awards.

We all know that one can enter the same work into many different categories, so as to up one's chances. Clients are paying indirectly for the entries, but do they agree to this? Don't get me wrong, I believe creative awards are good for the industry, BUT there is a lot more that needs to be awarded.



Advertising Age creative workshop 1988. "The big idea"

1988 was the first time Advertising Age split delegates into groups of 10, made up of different skills, and gave us a brief to execute in two hours, if I remember correctly. It was the time before smartphones, Google and laptops, so it was pen and paper and crayons for the creatives.

It was a great experience to work with people from around the world. The judges were the famous pair, AL Ries and Jack Trout. Our team won the trophy, as we were the only team out of 40 that wrote a strategy! Once a strategy is in place, the creatives have something specific to work on, and generally deliver superior work.

How does one win a creative award?

It goes without saying that you need a client!

1. You need good client relationships. The client must trust the agency, and allow them to "push the boundaries". The idea needs to be sold, these elements are the responsibility of client service.
2. The strategy and brief needs to be spot on and set the boundaries for the creatives to work within. Wrong strategies will not create award-winning material.
3. The "idea" needs to be produced to the highest standards. Many great communication pieces fail due to low levels of production, this is of course the responsibility of the production department.
4. What is created ie. TV, print, social media / digital, radio etc. is decided by the media planner, together with the strategist and client service. It is not the decision of the creative department.
5. Then one needs great creative talent to come up with the goods.

So, what I am saying is that there are many "non-creatives" involved to produce the work that win awards. Sadly, these people win zip. All the accolades go to the creative department.

The Oscars gets it right!

Comparing these two industries might not be fair, but it does point out where the advertising industry is not rewarding many of those that contribute to the winning of an award. Every discipline that goes into making a movie is honoured at the Oscars. Directors, actors, producers, editors, wardrobe, art direction, lighting, special effects etc. They recognise the value of every contributor and honour them. This helps to grow the whole industry, all competing for recognition, thereby uplifting each discipline, which is what it should be about.

Can this be rectified?

It will be difficult to replicate the Oscars for the advertising industry, but we should try and improve. I believe it is possible to have strategy, media and production awards. Client service most probably will not be possible, but at least let us honour them for all the hard work they do.

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