

Business of Design speaker Q&A: Jonathan Deeb

 By Jessica Tennant

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Business of Design (BoD) is back with a [speaker lineup](#) of note. The two-day seminar is held annually in Cape Town and Johannesburg during October and doesn't just focus on design in itself but has a much broader vision for the field in all areas of business. Delegates include everyone from business owners and creative entrepreneurs to retailers, marketing and brand executives, trend analysts, design students and other employees from various industries.



Tracy Lynn Chemaly on Business of Design and other things

Jessica Tennant 18 Jul 2016



New to the conference is 'Open Sessions', a platform for delegates to ask the BoD founders (Trevyn and Julian McGowan of The Guild Group, and Laurence Brick and Cathy O'Clery of 100% Design South Africa and Platform Creative Agency) as well as fellow delegates any questions they may have, and together overcome any barriers to growth and challenge new ways of doing business.

I asked Jonathan Deeb, CCO of [FCB Joburg](#), what he loves most about being in the 'business of design' and to let us in on what he'll be sharing during his Johannesburg session.

■ ***Why are you excited for Business of Design this year?***

Creativity is the manifestation of inspiration. It's not just fun, it's inspiring. That's what I'm looking forward to – being inspired and hopefully inspiring others too.

■ ***Comment on the importance of events such as this that recognise the role design plays in (and the impact it can have on) various industries?***

Design is a reflection of culture and surroundings. Putting great design thinking to work in many industries can have a powerful effect. It has the potential to shift the way people think about things, change the way they engage with their world and even affect how it makes them feel.

Ideas are often fragile things. Platforms like this, where stories of how creativity has been harnessed successfully in various business contexts, are important for inspiring people to nurture their ideas and successfully bring them to life.



Jonathan Deeb

■ ***Comment on the current state of design in South Africa (and internationally).***

Africa has an explosive, diverse, rich and layered design offering. It's exciting to see the world hungry for our unique perspective. A living Afro-futurism allows us to define how the world sees us and more importantly how we see ourselves in a connected world.

■ ***What is your/your company's involvement in/contribution to the local design scene?***

FCB Joburg is committed to building South Africa's most-loved brands and creating South Africa's most-loved

communication. Without a true reflection of our culture, this is not possible. If an ad is truly a success, it gets spoken about at dinner tables around the country. Having the potential to bolster business results and influence and reflect the fabric of South African culture is our passion.

■ **What do you love most about being in the 'business of design'?**

Successful brands are like people, they are alive, responsive and reactive to their environment. Waking up every morning with the intent of harnessing the world out there and reflecting it in our work makes every day exciting. I love the feeling of discovering what makes people tick.

■ **What is the title/subject of your talk and/or what are you going to be sharing?**

The new African voice, the west should not be telling us what Africa is about, nor should it be appropriating 'Africanness' for its own means. Too often, companies abroad are dictating to the world of fashion, music and popular culture who we are as a continent. This is our domain. It is a story we should be telling and an agenda we should be setting. Who we are, what makes us laugh, cry, like, share and even rage, is our story to tell, whether in the form of branding or popular culture, it's our responsibility. We'll also be looking specifically at some of the work we've done for South African brands.

■ **What's the key takeout?**

South Africans have so many unique perspectives and so many right answers. There is no formula. Do your homework, follow your gut and make sure that whatever design solution it is, if it interrupts a person, it should at best improve their lives, but at the very least give them a little smile.

*The Cape Town version takes place 11-12 October, followed by Johannesburg on 18-19 October, and **our readers qualify for a R450 discount**. To take up this offer, email tracy@businessofdesign.co.za with 'Bizcommunity' as the subject. In the meantime, follow #BODCT and/or #BODJHB for more pre-event speaker interviews over the next couple of weeks to get your creative juices flowing.*

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