

# 'Doing good, is good business'

 By Louise Marsland

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Brands that do work that does 'good', will also do well in today's marketplace. This was the core message from Loeries 2014 - not only from the great talks, but it was also reflected in the work that won the top accolades.

The DSTV International Seminar of Creativity as it is now billed, featured the impressive international Loeries judges up on stage in the imposing Cape Town City Hall, Friday, 19 September 2014, including from the creative shop that made the famous, award-winning 'Dumb Ways to Die' Metro rail campaign in Australia.



This is my take on some of the top creative and brand trends that emerged from the workshop, which was also reflected in the work that won the ultimate prize, the Loeries Grand Prix, at the award ceremonies on the following Saturday and Sunday nights:

**1. Be agile:** Agencies needed to move like tech start-ups, stressed PJ Pereira, chief creative officer and co-founder of Pereira and O'Dell, San Francisco, in his presentation on the 'Three rules of Content'. This means being brave enough to take more risks, experiment more and do "real world" testing and rapid development. "Great ideas will present their return on investment," he says. The problem was that agency culture didn't have an "R&D" mindset, probably because if something went wrong with a brand, the agency was fired! But there had to be experimentation with "marketing possibilities" to unlock and discover those brand surprises and emotional connections that touch a consumer's heart. Pereira referenced the Skype ['Telling Stories' campaign](#) as an example.

**2. Afrocentric:** It made sense for brands to focus on Africa, said Yaw Nsarkoh, Unilever managing director, Nigeria, because seven African countries fall into the top 10 fastest growing economies in the world; it is a baby-booming continent with the fastest growing youth population in the world; the second biggest continent in the world with 1.1 billion people; a strongly-aspirant emerging middle class; and Africa has a compelling story. "Business has an opportunity to do well by doing good," Nsarkoh emphasised. There were still frontiers in Africa that could be pushed but the continent had a plethora of opportunities, provided brands took on the challenge of humility and were prepared to "unlearn" everything we know about marketing. Brands needed to take to the streets, agencies needed to venture into the unknown - to the margins of society - in order to craft brands for life.

**3. Diversity:** In order to deliver on a range of ideas and understand various consumer segments, agencies themselves had to employ a diverse group of people - from different socio-economic backgrounds, gender, race, ages and interests, PJ Pereira continued. "We work in a very tense industry. I'm interested in the things people do outside of work. Those experiences are the material [that lead to] great stories." Facebook's head of Europe, Middle East and Africa, Rob Newlan, emphasised that we need to understand the humanity behind ideas.

**4. Storytelling:** The elements of great storytelling that resonate with consumers are often the most simple, PJ Pereira outlined. They are real stories, with raw emotion, touching, humorous, poignant, unscripted, human. They make you laugh out a loud or leave you with a lump in your throat. Facebook's Newlan touched on this too, with a French campaign that [Nescafe](#) did, whereby they got a real guy to meet all his Facebook friends, documenting and filming the meetings, as he pitched up with a couple of cups of Nescafe. Comedian and owner of Whacked agency, John Vlismas, added that the industry needed to "get real" in order to tell real stories and stop trying so hard to be cool all the time.

**5. Co-operation:** In order to do magic together, agencies had to work harder at getting clients on board as partners and killing the 'us and them' mentality. Agencies needed to "think like a marketer", said Pereira, to understand and appreciate the challenges that marketers are dealing with too. Trust is key to selling brave work to brave clients, said Patrick Baron, executive creative director of McCann Australia. Creative departments had to trust that their clients know their own brands.

**6. 'ADDvertising':** Rob Newlan said "people who do, make a difference in this world". He quoted comedian and actress Amy Poehler, as saying, "I want to be around people that do things." He believes the opportunity is now to harness art and science, technology and creativity to bring ideas to life. He wants everyone to stop debating what the right thing is to do and just step forward and do it. "This is the core truth," Newlan says. Brands and agencies need to create experiences that will add value to the lives of consumers and make a difference in their worlds: ADDvertising vs advertising.

**7. 'F\*ck the formula':** That is exactly what Patrick Baron did when they created the much-awarded Metro campaign '[Dumb Ways to Die](#)' which was also a global viral sensation. "We believe there is no formula," he says of the creative industry today. He believes in the diversity of ideas to produce authenticity in creative work. They knew they couldn't replicate the success of 'Dumb ways to die' for any other client, so they didn't try.

## ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

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