

The Namibian perspective with Chrisna Basson

 By Leigh Andrews

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Welcome to Loeries Creative Week Durban! With #WomensMonth also in full swing, I caught up with regional judge Chrisna Basson, head of strategy at Weathermen & Co in Namibia. She shares that a more inclusive world won't happen by itself.

August is both [#WomensMonth](#) and time to celebrate creativity across Africa and the Middle East, with the Loeries. As a result, I merged these two themes and caught up with Basson ahead of her judging the categories of shared value, service design and effective creativity.



Chrisna Basson, Loeries 2017 regional judge for shared value, service design and effective creativity.

Formerly account director/strategist at Y&R Namibia, Basson has worked on brands for JWT in South Africa and Germany as well as for King James in Cape Town, where she was part of the Johnnie Walker strategy team behind the 'Meet Your Match' and 'Gentlemen's Wager' campaigns that put the brand back on the map and racked up awards left, right and centre.

Also a judge on last year's effective creativity and service design judging panel, Basson knows her stuff. Here, she shares her personal female business mentors and the need for better female representation in the creative industries...

■ **Explain your personal Loeries highlights over the years – your best moments from attending, and work that won.**

When something you've worked on wins, there's this wonderful energy that draws the team together. I love it, whether it's my team or seeing it happen to other teams. It's a thing of beauty! Another highlight was Mafikizolo's performance last year.



Mafikizolo and Tresor to release Loeries' official song

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■ **Talk us through the need for better female representation in the creative industries.**

The way I see it is simple. There's an Afrikaans saying: "*Soort soek soort*," which is the underlying issue. We tend to choose what's familiar and comfortable, whereas we should actually surround ourselves with and expose ourselves to what is real, different, strange and foreign. We have to consciously create the world we want to live in – a more inclusive, ever-evolving and interesting world, which won't happen by itself. We have to make ourselves uncomfortable and get comfortable with it. Learn, grow, evolve. From what I've experienced, the problem is that many leaders tend to recruit a specific 'type'. Especially in our industry, to our detriment. The more diversity in an agency, the better. However, the business model or work ethic should grow and evolve with it, too.

“ You can't expect new generations to think like older generations and you can't expect a mother or father to work until 7pm every night. ”

Recruit good talent and help them flourish in whichever way is most effective. It might sound like an HR nightmare, but I don't think it is; if you keep the focus on why we're all here – to deliver great work. Those who free-ride stand out quickly and can be dealt with easily.

Change is very exciting for me and I definitely don't want to look back in 20 or even 10 years, having the same work experience as I have now.

■ **How does being a Loeries judge tie in with that and what else should be done to ensure more empowered females shine in the local creative industries?**

Loeries selects a balance of male, female, South African, regional and international representatives to judge. That's why I'm here. I don't think there's more to it than that. It's about judging the work and getting the right mix of people – regardless of their age, nationality or gender, to do so.

■ **That's for sure. Who are your personal female business mentors?**

I have two incredible aunts, both very successful business women, who are my business mentors. The one is a writer, journalist, publicist, mother, in-denial-widow, style guru, beauty appreciator and confidant. The other is supposed to be a retired media corporation MD but now runs a TV station, two farms, a school in the North and my entire family of 60+, of which three are her own strong, independent and hard-working daughters.

I'm very blessed to have them in my life, to observe how they stand tall and deal with different scenarios. They've taught me that age is just a number. You are as young and fresh as you allow yourself to be, and you do that through travelling, reading, learning, discovering, and making yourself comfortable with being uncomfortable. They are hands-on and down-to-earth, they don't sweat the small stuff and they don't play victim, which are characteristics I believe make for great leaders and great success.

They certainly do – that's what I call inspiration all round. Follow Basson [on Twitter](#), click through to [Weathermen &](#)

[Co's press office](#) for more, and keep an eye on our [Loeries Creative Week Durban special section](#) for all the latest updates! Loeries Creative Week Durban takes place from 14 to 21 August 2017.

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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