

Why creativity is essential to business today

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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What does an advertising awards festival have to do with business today?



Image supplied. Roanna Williams, Net#workBBDO & Creative Circle chairperson

“The world is changing radically and for businesses, creativity is now being seen as an investment that can actually change the course of business and the ways that brands interact with the world,” says Roanna Williams, Net#workBBDO and Creative Circle chairperson. “This is why we see many brands – and businesses - doing work that is purpose-led because it not only affects their business; it affects the state of the world.”

And where better to find these ideas that are leading the change we need in the world than the Cannes Lions, the Olympics of creativity? “We will be sharing insights from the recent Cannes Lions at the upcoming Creative Circle Full Circle 2022 event that is taking place this Thursday, 4 August,” says Williams.

She adds that this is also the perfect opportunity to gather in a room, have face-to-face meaningful conversations about creativity, after not being able to do so for close to two years or more.

Here is a sneak preview from Williams of some of the conversations you can expect:

Why is Cannes this relevant to us in South Africa?

There is a shift happening in the world and we are seeing this in the work that is winning at Cannes Lions. The stand-out winning work is coming from countries that have really tough economic and social problems and let's be honest, we are one of them.

Work from India, for example, is standing out massively. 90% of the Indian work that won was addressing real societal problems. Their budgets are small (similar to South Africa), but their ideas were big and disruptive – the varying approaches had one thing in common - making India better, more inclusive, and fairer.

The Full Circle will be an opportunity for South African businesses to view this work and gain insights and inspiration from it and our panel.



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■ ***Tell us a bit more about the upcoming Full Circle panel***

The speakers will be unpacking their experience in Cannes. There is nothing like that actual experience of sitting on a jury panel with diverse jurors from across the world who are all top advertising creatives and marketers. The conversations that take place around the work is in-depth and super insightful and sets the benchmark.

They will be sharing those insights, which you cannot get anywhere else. Yes, you can read a few things about Cannes online, but they physically sat in those rooms and the growth for creativity lies in those conversations.

This is so important as Cannes ultimately sets the standard of creativity.



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Danette Breitenbach 21 Jul 2022



■ ***Why is creativity such a big deal? If I work in a bank, for example, is creativity something I should consider as important and relevant to my business?***

People box creativity into I cannot draw, sing, dance, etc.

Creativity is so much broader than this. The bigger aspect of creativity is the ability to think out of the box and solve problems and that's why creativity has become a business asset.

We are living in a world with so many problems - and to change and solve these problems we need out-of-the-box thinkers. Creative people don't look at problems in the same old-fashioned way; and this kind of thinking is what the world needs.

This makes creativity an imperative business tool today; the ability and opportunity to tackle our real-world problems head on and we are seeing increasingly more of that.

Today, businesses are hiring and collaborating more with creative thinkers; individuals and partners with the ability to think in a unique way that solves real business problems.



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17 Jun 2022



■ ***There is a lot of talk (and has been for some years now) about purpose-led work and we saw a lot of this work winning at Cannes. Why should we be paying attention to purpose-led work?***

Purpose-led brands, through creativity, literally solve or address a real-world problem. Purpose-led work is how can a brand be relevant and authentic in a world where there is not much trust.

When a brand stands for something that is relevant to its brand it is real. That means they must be culturally relevant on the ground. A more long term purpose-led approach that builds trust. Are you with the people or just being a face and making a lot of noise? Purpose-led brands don't talk at you, they talk with you.

However, many brands talk about purpose-led work but that's all they do... talk about it. They don't actually do it and consumers see right through that. Power lies in doing.

It's also not about jumping onto the latest trends. Consumers see right through brands that attach themselves to the latest trend but don't stand for something. Because just attaching yourself to something is not authentic. It comes back to how you do it constantly in a relevant way.



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■ ***Where does trust come into this?***

Trust is tricky thing because trust takes time, and this takes patience and consistency.

Trust is also built over the entire ecosystem of a business. It starts internally. Your employees and directors, salesmen, retailers - every touchpoint with the brand has to live your purpose. And then you can communicate this to the external world with an authentic voice. What consumers then see is not advertising telling them this is something the brand cares about, but that it is something that is embedded and is growing from the roots of the entire business.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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