

Non-profit creative agency launched

The Net#work BBDO Group has officially launched what is reputed to be the first non-profit creative agency in South Africa, The MAL Foundation. The founding members of this new age consultancy are leading adman and creative activist, Mike Schalit, and chairperson of Net#work BBDO, Boniswa Pezisa.



Co-founders of MAL Foundation -
Boniswa Pezisa and Mike Schalit.

The pair will still retain their overarching management positions within the Net#work Group and say they are inspired by Churchill's wisdom: "We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give".

"Our offering is to advise decision-makers on how to use the philosophy of 'generous brands' to gain a competitive advantage. This means aligning their marketing and social responsibility initiatives, and creating ideas that connect imaginatively with their target market using unconventional touch-points. The end objective is to deliver on their triple-bottom-line," says Pezisa.

She adds that nature, society and business are interconnected in complex ways and call for a symbiotic relationship. "So if brands don't start crafting a new brand journey with a focused higher purpose, then their economic future may look bleak."

She says: "Businesses will pay for our service so we can repatriate the money back into social development.

Pezisa says they envisage advising and managing 'goodvertising' projects for any private or public enterprise or government body.

Busy cooking up ideas

Schalit has been cooking up 'ideas for good' for Net#work clients for some time, one such example being the Nedbank solar panel billboard, erected in 2008, which is still, to this day, powering up a school kitchen in the Alexander Township in Johannesburg.

Schalit says: "On the wave of post-World Cup optimism, belief is back. We know that when we work together we can create a better society and even teach the world one or two things. Brands have a major role to play in making a difference in areas that matter. 'Goodvertising' is more than just a new catch-phrase; it's a real leverage point for businesses that want to combine their smarts with their hearts."

Schalit predicts that 'ideas-for-good' is the most enduring and stable marketing currency that can deliver a real return on investment. "So while businesses are constantly evaluating BEE, they need to start thinking about their GEE (Good Economic Empowerment) credentials. That's just as deep, life-changing and real."

As Mandela calls upon South Africans for new sets of hands, Schalit reckons MAL is a prime example of just that.

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