

Living in the 'imagination world'

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

8 Jul 2016

The pressure is on agencies to deliver creative work and the way they are doing that is questionable in many cases, says King James co-founder and group creative director, Alistair King.



As a result, he is often embarrassed by the industry:

“We need to stop acting like teenagers in a beauty pageant. If we not take ourselves seriously how do we expect marketers to.”

One of six high-profile speakers at the APEX Awards Master Class held yesterday, King asked hard-hitting questions of the industry in his presentation titled “The glorious element of surprise.”

The glorious element of surprise

Truly great ideas are the ones that crash in and take us utterly by surprise, he says and many brands are breaking their own rules or changing them, but these ads are

being done outside of the system and the idea was the lead. “But why is some of the best work in the world being created outside of the system?”

While the industry celebrates work that bucks the trend, King says it gravitates to its own comfort zones in its own work. “It is one of the great contradictions of our business. Our industry retreats to our security blanket, affects us mentally and physically, and so we delude ourselves.”

One of the reasons for this, he says, is the process. “Yet we are aspiring to do something unexpected and this requires the loosening of systems and clients. When you have something profound, no one asks how you did it.”

“ [@ALsparkles](#) speaks the truth in one slide. Thanks and nuff said! pic.twitter.com/IPVftLyt3W— Michael Jones (@LeaderOfTheMike) [July 7, 2016](#) ”

He says some clients get it and others don't, and it is the same with agencies, but regardless it requires faith in your intrusion or faith in people who do the work for you. “We, as agencies, are trying to sell methodology, but that's rubbish. Clients are buying the intuition of the people in that group. Asking them to come up with something new and amazing. Clients should know that.”

Consumers respond to uncommon sense

We pretend that what we do has a methodology, he says, but the reality is that there is none. There is a miracle that happens, and it is intangible and we cannot guarantee it.

“We are like plumbers; we charge by the hour, have a tax bracket for every person, and we piece this together and think a great idea will come out [of it]. However, it is the idea that we do not charge for because we do not know how to reconcile it, despite the fact that it is the idea that makes our clients millions.”

Often the stuff you think is risky is not, he believes. “The work I think is powerful is not risky, but unfamiliar, and that is risky because it is not known. Common sense is overrated. When uncommon sense happens, it is messy and cumbersome and you have to accept that but that is what moves people and what consumers respond to, and it is an exciting place to be.”

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 VMts.

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