

Paying tribute to Erik du Plessis

Issued by [Kantar](#)

29 Jan 2019

Erik du Plessis, a local research legend and the former chairman of Millward Brown South Africa, has passed away.

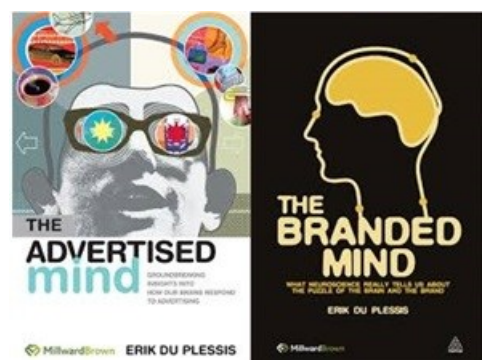


Erik du Plessis founded the local research and insights company Impact Information in 1984. In 2000, Impact Information merged with Millward Brown to become one of the biggest research companies in South Africa today.

Not only a pioneer in South Africa, Erik's contribution globally to the thinking around neuroscience and its influence on brands, was in many ways, a precursor for much of the modern world's understanding of the brain and its ability to process advertising. His books, *The Advertised Mind*, (which won WPP's Atticus Award for the most original thinking in communications), as well as *The Branded Mind*, were widely read in both industry and academic circles.



Erik began his career as a market analyst, researcher and brand manager at SFW before joining BDDO advertising as media director and research director. He later started Impact Information, and went on to build one of the largest databases in the world of tracked television commercials called Adtrack. During his career, Erik consulted with nearly every major company in South Africa on brand management, research, advertising strategy and media planning.



Erik's thoughts were published globally in the *Journal of Advertising Research*, *ADMAP*, the *Harvard Business Review*, as well as many local publications. He was the Visiting Professor at the Copenhagen Business School teaching neuromarketing from 2007-2009, and a Teaching Fellow at the Curtin University of Technology, Business School in Perth, Australia between 2007 and 2009.

The recipient of many awards, Erik won best paper at SAMRA on three occasions, he was the winning author at the Telmar Awards in New York, and in 2001, was awarded the SA Media Directors Circle Platinum Achievement Award.

Erik, you will be truly missed! Our thoughts go out to his family and friends.

Remembering Erik

Charles Foster:

“ Erik was my mentor, friend and father figure. The encouragement, belief and support that he gave me from my first meeting with him in 1986, through thick and thin over more than 30 years, are memories I will cherish forever. He was a giant of a man and I will surely miss him deeply. ”

Natalie Otte:

“ Erik was truly a very special person. The impact he made on my life will stay with me forever. ”

Eric Salama:

“ Erik was a true giant. His influence extended way beyond South Africa to Kantar, our clients and the industry around the world. I have no doubt that his legacy will endure. ”

Mike Broom:

“ Great sadness to hear of Erik's passing away. A giant intellect, inspirational person and wonderful friend for over 40 years. Will be sadly missed. Condolences to Marikie, Erika and the rest of the family. ”

Neil Higgs:

“ Erik was a doyen of the industry and very passionate about research. He was really interested in understanding South Africa and South Africans. He used LSMs for this and was the first person presciently to develop a short-form version - which only garnered interest as research on mobile devices emerged. He and I revived the idea and updated it a few years ago, developing many bespoke versions for various clients. He and I co-wrote a few articles on various aspects of South Africa, primarily aimed at students. He had a huge intellect and will be very much missed. ”

Chris Moerdyk:

“ Erik was a giant in his industry and as a media journalist I frequently quoted his words of wisdom and his research data which was always presented in his logical and easily understandable way. He has left an indelible mark on the industry... ”

Leigh Andrews:

“ Erik had a wonderful way with words, was quick to latch on to new technology, passionate about research and instrumental in keeping the industry on its toes. His regular missives in my inbox will be sorely missed. ”

Chris Brewer:

“ My dear friend Erik has gone and the industry has lost a truly great and wonderfully gifted man. We were friends for decades and he gave me enormous support and help in so many ways. He was an inspiration for me and always encouraged my writing and business. I shall always remember the innumerable laughs we used to share and how I always

hung on to every wise word he said over a wide variety of subjects. We will all remember him as a gentle, patient, funny and deeply thoughtful man and the world feels more empty today now that he's no longer here. I will never forget you Erik. My thoughts are with his family and colleagues. ”

Nigel Hollis:

“ Erik was a genuine, warm and insightful person. He will be sadly missed. ”

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