

Creating engaging experiences and going viral

 By Leigh Andrews

12 Oct 2017

Business of Design 2017 targeted the ultimate 21st century business dream - creating an engaging brand experience with Studio H and Thingking, with The Kiffness sharing how he goes viral on social media - but it's not quite as easy as 1,2,3,4.

Hannerie Visser and Marc Nicolson, founder of Studio H and cofounder of Thingking respectively, kept the post-lunch BODCT crowd entertained with insights into creating engaging experiences for brands.



Visser, Nicolson and Scott.

Visser began by describing the piñata as the most basic form of sensory experience, as you can't see, feel, smell, hear or taste anything until cracking it open, which heightens the anticipation and, as a result, the experience. That's what she tailors through the lens of food each day.

Tasty design experiments

Ultimately, you want people to remember the experience with your brand by engaging with all their senses. To share what she meant by this with the audience, we were given paper bags labelled 'taste experiments'. First up was a paper strip to lick. For the 'super tasters' - apparently 25% of the population - the taste was bitter. For the rest, it tasted like, well, licking paper. We also experienced the effect of sound on the taste of food by opening a packet of crisps in silence, and chewing on a few, then comparing the taste to the exact same crisps with aeroplane white noise in the background. This has been found to increase the crunch but reduce the saltiness and sweetness of the taste – no wonder food served on planes is usually deemed as bland!

We also determined whether colour plays a role in taste, with the audience live-voting in a Twitter poll on whether orange, green or white marshmallows tasted sweeter despite all being the same flavour:

“ Which colour did you like the most?— Studio_H (@Studio_HV) [October 11, 2017](#) ”

Great believers in collaboration and the endless possibilities of tech, Visser explained that Studio H regularly collaborates with Thingking, effectively handing the speaker baton over to Nicolson, who explained that lots of research and development goes into what they do.

Surprise and delight consumers

This includes image recognition and the gamification of typical consumer interaction. So instead of getting customers to walk into your store, fill out a digital contact form or complete a shopping cart payment online, they can tweet or WhatsApp their requests such as with the world's first Twitter-activated vending machine for Bos and a mind-reading vending machine for Castle Lite, an interactive taste and smell activator for Johnny Walker, an interactive giant speedometer for Mini Cooper, and a three-kilometre-long interactive outdoor website for Toyota RAV4 - offering the unexpected is the ultimate way for brands to delight consumers.

Having seen some of their work in action, it's little wonder Thingking won Best Stand Design at COP17 for the Department of Environmental Affairs and Best Stand for World Wildlife Fund at the Cycle Expo.

Catching the viral vibe of The Kiffness

David Scott of The Kiffness was next at the podium. He is a "meme-generator, planet-shaker, thought leader and music maker," who joked about having used PowerPoint for the first time since high school for his presentation on going viral on social media. That's because his social media posts are anything but serious, with many going viral overnight and over 10,000 followers on Instagram, with 55,000 likes on his Facebook page. Here's how he does it...



The Kiff interview

Pasqua Heard 29 Jul 2016



Scott explained that his social media strategy is to create content that plants a seed and challenges people to think. As a result, many brands approach him to make viral content for them, but it's not as simple as that, as Scott's posts aren't based on selling something. Instead, what he enjoys seeing and posting online highlights what he calls 'the absurdity of life' and our preconceived ideas of the world.

**David Scott**
about 8 years ago



I'm proud to present my finest piece of journalism to date.

THEKIFFNESS.COM

First person goes to Afrikaburn without telling anyone

For years it was believed that going to AfrikaBurn without telling anyone...

 110  8  26

He shared that the first social posts that went viral for him was a response to the love 'em or hate 'em Telkom 'talking babies' ads. His response got in the region of 22,000 likes.

**David Scott**
about 9 years ago



And now [702](#) have picked up on this momentous battle with [Telkom](#). Listen to the spot here. And they think that I'll just gracefully withdraw from the battle after Telkom's response? Hah! Just you wait. This is 21st century David vs. Goliath in the making!



T.CO

"The Kiffness" campaign to end Telkom's "talking babies" ...

A campaign by Capetonian live electronic act "The Kiffness" to stop Telk..

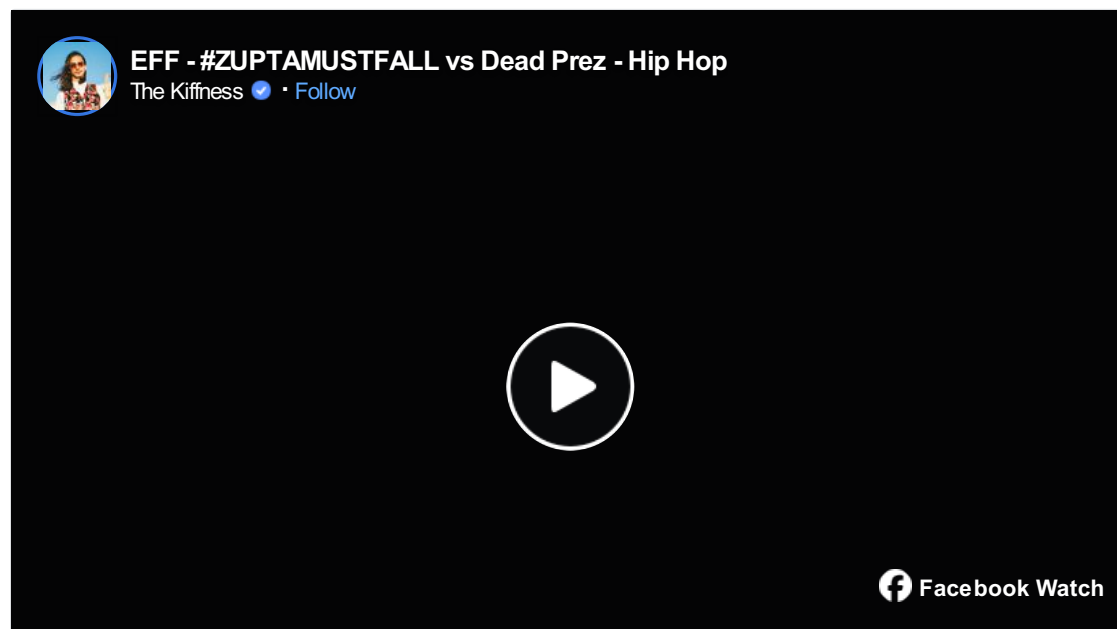
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He only hears from the brands over the internet, which he thinks is pretty cool. He's also not afraid to shoot a social video wherever he is – it's the mark of authenticity as the idea is most important.

His four-step process is as follows:

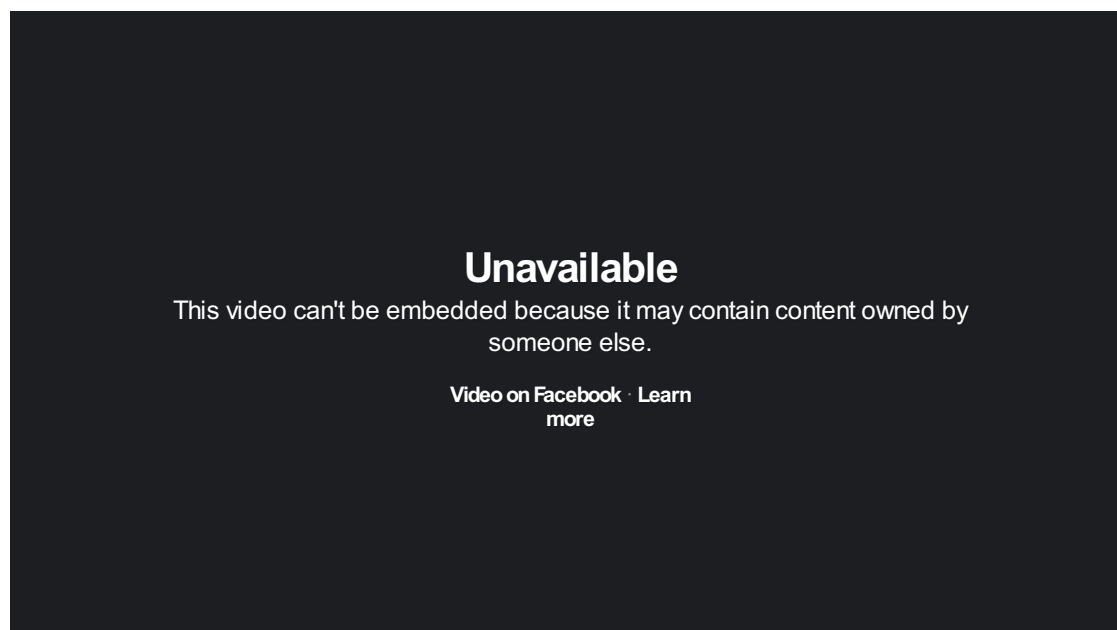
1. Posts what he likes to see

It could be as simple as recording the sound of a hadeda while out walking, or playing the clip of EFF chanting 'Zupta must fall' during the State of the Nation Address over a catchy beat:



2. Posts what people are talking about, with his spin on it

Scott scrolls through social media to see what people are posting and puts humour into topics that make others angry.



On hitting the sweet spot for your brand, Scott admits lots of what he posts has nothing to do with his career, but it does happen that there's overlap and that creating a meme garners a better response than a simple text status update.

3. Not afraid to speak his version of the truth

Scott says life is too short to please others, so he goes for it. Surprisingly, there's lots of support in addition to those that disagree online. Scott feels the grey areas that can offend are often the best topics to talk about.

**David Scott**
about 8 years ago



When I called Woolies out about their scrawny mannequins, I knew that there would be a lot of haters but I'm humbled by the overwhelmingly positive support that the post has received.

This is a great write up by [Good Things Guy](#), which explains perfectly why this all matters. The overwhelming response to my post has put pressure on [WOOLWORTHS SA](#) to rethink their policy on the size of their mannequins, and when they do change their policy I think it would really make a difference in the way a lot of women view themselves.

Now we wait to see what Woolworths says!

[GOODTHINGSBUY.COM](#)
The Kiffness, Woolworths and Body Shaming. All you need...
The Kiffness, Woolworths, Skinny Mannequins and Body Shaming... her...

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For example, Scott lost roughly 1,000 fans in the space of an hour for a single tweet.



The Kiffness
about 7 years ago

Kgagamatso



29 years, I've called you "Jane"
Even though that's not your name.

All these years, you've ironed my clothes,
Made my bed & who else knows.

All these years I was too blind,
to see the name you left behind.

Your face lit up when I said the word -
an umlungu saying things unheard...

"KGAGAMATSO" - your name of birth
A name that carries so much worth
(directly translates to "amazing")

It's time that Jane moved out the way
Kgagamatso is too beautiful a name, not to say.

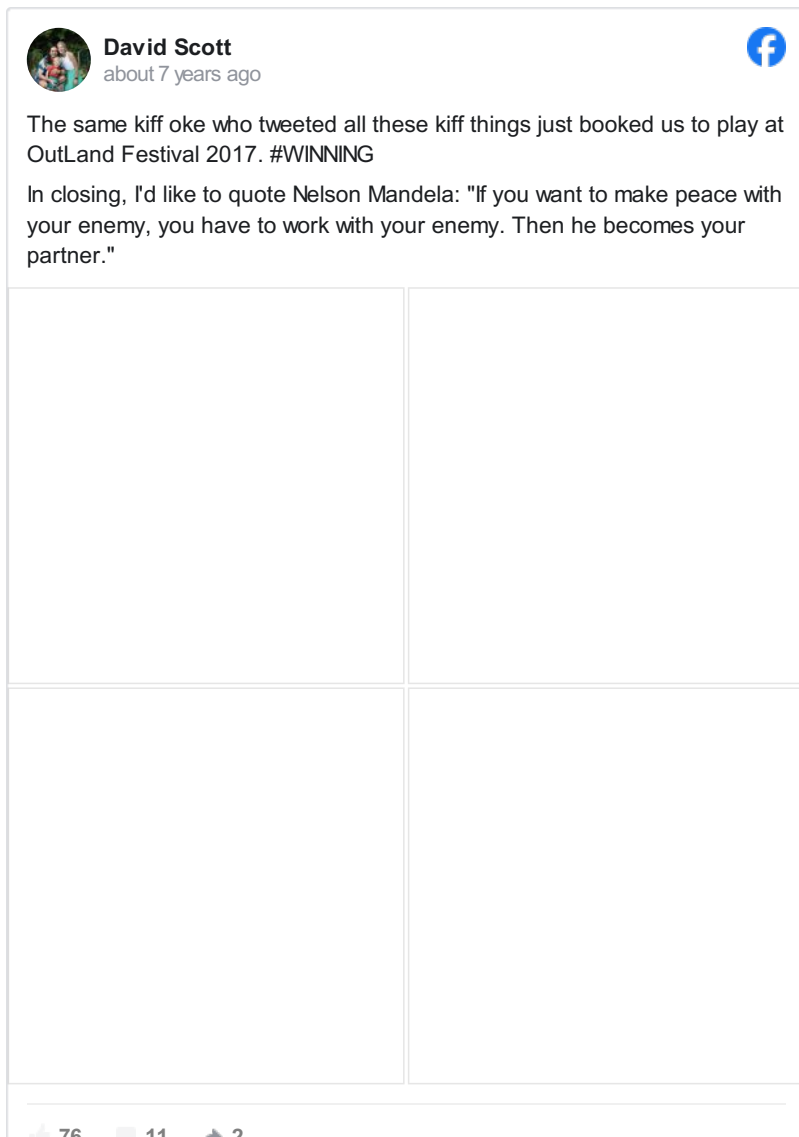
Having a privileged upbringing in South Africa often comes with the privilege of having a domestic worker. My family's domestic worker "Jane" has been part of our family for longer than I've been alive, but only this year I came to know her Tswana name - Kgagamatso.

Most domestic workers that I know working in middle to upper-class white homes have adopted English names, because their African names are apparently too difficult for us whiteys to pronounce. I say it's complete...

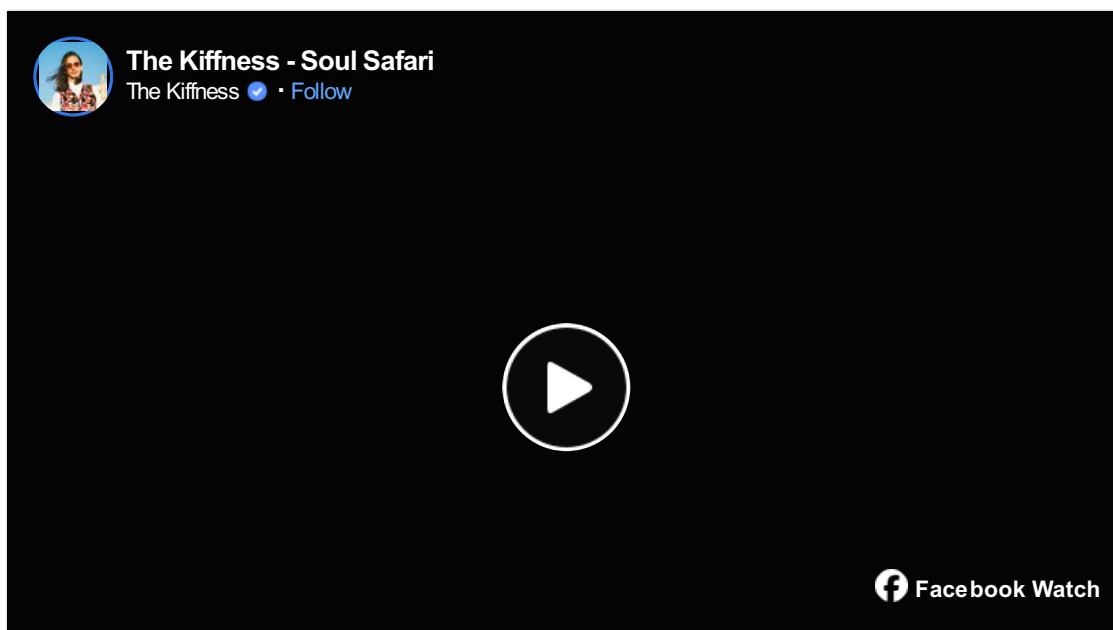
[See more](#)

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Many musos steer clear of sharing their views as they don't want to offend, and a healthy amount of backlash is to be expected. It can also lead have a positive response:



4. Learned to laugh at himself



Ignore your haters or surprise them with kindness, advises Scott.

That's just a taste of the current flavour of design-thinking. [Click here](#) for our Business of Design coverage, and be sure to follow [@busofdesign](#) for the latest updates.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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