

Your employees are always on - now TRUST THEM

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

17 Aug 2017

You hired your employees for what they bring to the business and have trained them up on all your brand stands for, but do you trust them enough to run with their own ideas of the best customer experience? Chantel Botha of BrandLove shares why you need to cut the cord and let them do so at the first day of CEM Africa 2017.

Botha spoke on the topic of "Connection lost... reconnecting". The presentation was compelling for many reasons, not least of which was that it was hand-drawn by Botha. Clad in bright pink Doc Martens, she began with the Youtube video on whether we're living an 'Insta Lie' by presenting our best selves on social media, which got a few uncomfortable laughs of recognition from the audience.

Botha said this is indicative of consumers' mindset shift from an attitude of 'we' to 'me' and from being humans using technology to living technology-enabled lives. Botha then spoke of the difference between an office from the 1960s to one of today. Looking just at structure there's an obvious change: We're now working in much smaller spaces and are increasingly disconnected from our colleagues, with some working remotely and others sitting with earphones on in their own world. To get the customer experience right we therefore need to break down hierarchies and work together based on functionality, not on company rank.

Build your tribe of connected brand warriors

Focusing on communication next, Botha pointed out that the popularity of WhatsApp means we're all 'always on' and constantly communicating - but not necessarily producing the best work. She quoted statistics that show our email checking is up to 36 times per hour, with 16 minutes of refocusing needed thereafter. Even scarier? When in meetings, 91% of respondents sit and daydream while 73% of attendees admit to doing other work. And as most of us face up around 56 interruptions a day, there's little wonder we struggle to get anything done, despite - or because of - just how 'busy' we are.



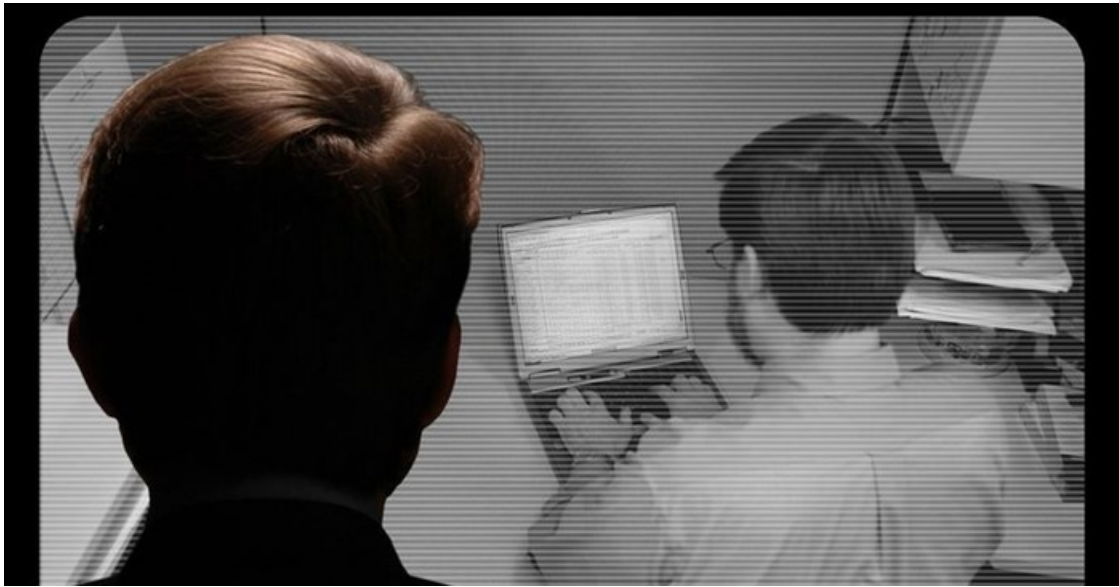
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While the French have recognised this with their 'right to disconnect', the rest of the world still has a long way to go, especially when you factor in that the newest members of the work force often have low self-esteem and with the pervasiveness of social media, this is a fast-spreading trend across generations - linking back to those feelings of discomfort you felt on watching the 'Insta Lie' video, or the need for a 'conscience filter' raised by this year's SA Cinemark Cannes Young Lions 48-hour film competition winners:

Because we're always on social media, comparing our lives and experiences to those of others, we feel irrelevant, incompatible and like we will soon be relics. Botha says to get over this, we need to reconnect with ourselves and display our purpose. Brands need to design rituals, give themselves permission to fail and bring aspects of play into work to keep the tribe together.



You hired them, now trust them to get the job done. JR Bale © – 123RF.com

Botha also echoed an important point from the day's opening panel session: Most of us know what good service looks like, from wearing our consumer hats, but we need to cut through reams of red tape and ask for permission to give it.



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Botha says, "Trust your brand warriors - you trust them with your brand, they trust you with their hearts." Embrace those values that stand true to your brand and inculcate them in your employees, as corporate culture can't be manufactured - it's a culmination of characters and carefully hiring people with the specific attributes you want to push as a brand.

Following her presentation, Ian Golding presented Botha with the CXPA 'extra mile' award - thoroughly deserved. We could have spent all day listening to and learning from her.

“ Honoured to present [@chantelbot](https://twitter.com/chantelbot) with the [@CXPA_Assoc](https://twitter.com/CXPA_Assoc) Extra Mile Award at the [@CEMAfricaSummit](https://twitter.com/CEMAfricaSummit) - hugely deserved! [#CX pic.twitter.com/MMh6StcpvD](https://pic.twitter.com/MMh6StcpvD)— Ian Golding, CCXP (@ijgolding) [August 16, 2017](https://twitter.com/ijgolding/status/928888888888888888) ”

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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