

KFC's sad radio ads win a Grand Prix, not quite the saddest thing of all

By  Jessica Tennant

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Ogilvy Johannesburg did particularly well at the Loeries this year, as runner up (in second place) to the Agency of the Year (Impact BBDO Dubai) with 17 awards, the highlight being a Grand Prix in the Radio Station Commercials category for its KFC Double Down Sad Man Meal campaign.



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“The KFC Double Down campaign is at heart a promotion,” explains Mariana O’Kelly, ECD at Ogilvy & Mather Johannesburg. “We are selling chicken in these ads and driving customers to get it in-store while the offer lasts. It’s a reminder to me that promotions can still be fun and customer centric and don’t have to be loud and over the top to be effective.”

The Awards took place on Saturday, 19 August and Sunday, 20 August at the ICC in Durban, and saw the agency accumulate 1 Grand Prix, 3 Golds, 4 Silvers, 7 Bronzes, 1 Gold Craft and 1 Craft Certificate. This follows shortly after its Grand Prix win for the trio of 'Sad Man Meal' ads at Cannes.



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Here, O’Kelly comments on the win and provides some thought leadership on how she compares the agency to an airport and why we must go back to basics.

■ ***What do these wins mean to you/for the agency and the client?***

Personally, I love to see my teams win. Consistent global and local recognition is great to get them the exposure they need to help them get ready for whatever next chapter their careers have in store for them.

That applies to all my teams inside Ogilvy Joburg. I see the studio as an airport. When planes land, my job is to build a jumbo jet out of them and when the time is right they will take off and do their next big thing. I have a rule inside the agency. You are either building jumbo jets or you are growing to become one. There is no middle ground.

I can't speak for the client, but I guess it shows them that creative work can sell and that great things can come from a true partnership and trust.



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■ ***Briefly explain the concept and why you think it deserved this/these win(s).***

The KFC Double Down is a no-nonsense, gut-filling burger with two fillets of KFC chicken replacing the buns. Guys absolutely love it and it's even got a bit of a cult status. But sadly, for them, it's a limited time offer. So we spurred on sales one more time before it came off the menu with a radio campaign featuring ordinary guys finding empathy and reassurance from a comforting radio psychologist character, who confirms that it is ok for men to be sad about some things. Of course, when he hears that the Double Down is coming off the menu, it breaks him because it is the saddest thing of all.

■ ***This year, KFC Africa's CMO Mike Middleton won the Marketing Leadership and Innovation Award, so KFC has done particularly well this year in more ways than one. Please comment.***

I am so happy and delighted for Mike and the KFC team as they are true partners to us on this brand. It really feels like your talented brother has won this amazing award and you want to celebrate it at a Sunday lunch with the grandparents. Innovation is at the heart of everything KFC does and we have annual innovation projects where we try new things and do prototypes of ideas and then when successful, roll it out across the market. It's a wonderful way to make sure we stay fresh and relevant and keep each other honest regarding the next chapter for the brand and that we keep pushing the creative agenda long term while still driving sales overnight.

■ ***Comment on your experience of Loeries Creative Week 2017.***

I judged the Print and Outdoor category and was overwhelmed with the level of craft coming from Dubai and the lack of it from SA. We can't afford to become a jack of all trades and master of none. In the age of integration and a new TTL creative breed we have to retain our deep skill specialisation and craft to stay on top of our game. Talking to other judges from other categories made me realise we need to work harder inside our agencies and ad schools to retain pure writers, art directors and designers and push them inside their core skill set. We can't discard craft just because we are creating for a fast-consuming social media market. People still love beautiful things as it will always move them and make them connect better with brands. We must go back to beautiful basics.

■ ***What was your key takeout from this year's DStv seminar of Creativity and/or Loerie Awards?***

I appreciated Gotz Ulmer's candid approach towards ads. He spoke about putting relevance aside and just doing cool stuff. I think that maybe sometimes we get lost in our strategies and forget that the real people out there that we are talking to have no idea about comm strats, brand analysis and competitor reviews. They simply like what we do as a brand or they don't. We need to look at ourselves the way they look at us.

■ **What's next?**

I think that the only way forward is going back to basics on all levels. Something along the lines of 'Love. Make. Sell.'.

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