

TBWA\ Africa kicks its focus on disruption up a notch

"Only businesses with strong fundamentals, a consistent approach and gutsy resilience have been able to weather the particularly tough business environment in sub-Saharan Africa over the past 12 months, and they are going to have to maintain a robust constitution for the foreseeable future," says TBWA's director of Africa Operations, Graham Cruikshanks.



Graham Cruikshanks

He says breaking through the negative sentiment of a difficult 2015 and 2016 has been challenging for all businesses in Africa, but TBWA's decision to re-boot its proprietary Disruption tool across its Africa network in 2015 paid dividends. "The move saw offices transformed and processes modified. There is a palpable sense that Disruption is more deeply embedded throughout our business than ever before."

And clients like what they are hearing. "The thinking that has emerged as a result of our renewed focus on Disruption has been a significant source of new business growth and resulted in reduced client attrition."

Speaking ahead of TBWA\ Africa's annual Africa Conference, Cruikshanks says the group intends to kick Disruption up a notch when it hosts its 2016 conference in Windhoek at the end of the month. "This is in line with TBWA's global 21st century ambition to use Disruption as the engine to drive growth by attracting 21st century brands.

"At TBWA\ Africa we know we cannot rely on Western models to change our path under the current economic circumstances. Just like some countries in Africa can no longer rely on oil as a sole revenue stream, operations such as

ours need to be focused on creating unique solutions and working our businesses differently,” he says.

One aspect of the Disruption methodology is Disruption Live, which is a major component of TBWA\’s ambition to operate differently. “As African businesses evolve to become more effective, we as a network are doing the same. Disruption Live is a way to be constantly proactive on clients’ businesses, to identify triggers in the world that affect culture and to leverage these for creative ideas,” says Cruikshanks.

This year’s conference will see Cruikshanks and his team share global updates as well as TBWA’s own Disruption Roadmap for the business and how it translates for Africa.

The group will also introduce a further aspect of Disruption – ‘Disruption Innovation’ – which is aimed at helping clients innovate their businesses and look for different opportunities for future growth. “Disruption Innovation involves asking left-field challenger questions to elicit new ideas about how a business can evolve,” says Cruikshanks.

TBWA\ colleagues from Dubai, New York and Turkey will talk to various aspects of Disruption at the conference and provide insight into global trends. A host of other topics will be covered in talks and workshops, providing both inspiration and practical application.

Cruikshanks says the conference is ultimately about reinforcing TBWA\’s commitment to being actively engaged in adapting to changing economies and continuing to be a highly relevant network to help clients adapt and be innovative, nimble and dynamic in tough times.

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