

Marketing Leadership and Innovation winner, Doug Place!

 By Leigh Andrews

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Doug Place, CMO at Nando's, is the well-deserved recipient of this year's Loeries Marketing Leadership and Innovation Award. He says the only thing to fear is being mediocre.



Doug Place, CMO of Nando's, is this year's recipient of the Loeries Marketing Innovation and Leadership Award | Photo by Roy Esterhuysen / 2018 Loerie Awards / [Gallo Images](#)

It seems the 'funny business' of chicken advertising is fair ground for local marketers.

Doug Place, CMO at Nando's for almost three years, was just awarded the Marketing Leadership and Innovation Award for his efforts, while last year's honour was bestowed on Mike Middleton of KFC.



#Loeries2017: Marketing Leadership and Innovation Award 2017 goes to KFC's Mike Middleton

Jessica Tennant 19 Aug 2017



Winning the 'Marketing World Cup'

Fittingly, we interviewed Place at the Loeries back in 2016, soon after he took on his award-winning role at Nando's. We spoke to him after his Mobile Marketing Association or MMA Forum presentation, which was innovative itself.

Not your standard text- and graph-heavy PowerPoint presentation, it was presented largely in tweet format as he believes the real art of good marketing lies in simplicity. Place aimed at debunking marketing myths – many of which are still in play today...

Only in the role for eight months at the time, Place shared that working in Nando's marketing is a lot like 'winning the marketing world cup'. He said he was excited, proud and a little bit intimidated to be standing on the shoulders of giants like those at Nando's – now, in his role for going on three years, Place has taken his place as one of those giants.

Doug's Place in the marketing innovation and leadership annals

His career reel reads like a highlights package itself, with Place having previously served as marketing director of Ster-Kinekor Theatres for five years, and before that he worked at Cadbury South Africa and Snackworks (AVI), stewarding many of South Africa's favourite consumer brands to record market share highs under his leadership.

As a result of his firm understanding of the brands he works on, Place has received in excess of 30 international and national marketing and advertising awards, including a Loeries Grand Prix for the Ster-Kinekor "#OpenEyes" campaign.



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Leigh Andrews 31 Aug 2016



One of *Destiny Man* magazine's 'Young and Powerful' industry leaders of SA in 2015 and on *The Media*'s list of 'Top 40 Under 40' SA media personnel in 2014, Place has also formally lectured and guest lectured on various marketing topics at the University of the Witwatersrand, University of Johannesburg, and The AAA School of Advertising.

Little wonder, as Place passed both his Bcom degree and honours degree in marketing cum laude and at the top of his class, having been awarded the title of 'top marketing student' as well as top Honours post-graduate at Wits in 2004.

Working that marketing magic

Place describes Nando's as "a challenging brand to work on," and called it a challenging time to work in marketing, but the

Nando's brand has a proud heritage of being brave and courageous, firing things up.

That's largely because there's no denying advertising needs to be where consumers are spending their time, and that's increasingly on social media – not the easiest media for your marketing message if there's a lot of red tape involved in getting out a time-based tweet in response to what's trending.

“ *Nandos ruffles feathers with Zuma 'cold shower' ad* <https://t.co/TotZiXI09G> pic.twitter.com/KTT7wtyqdY— Times LIVE (@TimesLIVE) [November 3, 2016](#) ”

Place said there's often a misunderstanding between media and marketing, with digital punted as the future of consumer brands, to which Place says nonsense, marketing is the future of consumer brands – that's just now taking place more prevalently on digital media.

“ *Marketing is the race car, media is the race track.* ”

So it's not just a case of doing more on digital for automatic brand success but about being strategic and running your campaign on the right channels to reach those customers.

Clever commentary in near real-time

Fast-forward to 2018 and the Nando's #RightmyName campaign is proof of this, having picked up a 2018 Loeries Grand Prix for tactical use of newspaper on the night.



Nando's and *Sunday Times* partner to #rightmyname on Human Rights Day

Juanita Pienaar 20 Mar 2018



Taking a step away from just posting funnies related to commentary on important issues in near real-time, M&C Saatchi Abel worked with Nando's on something with personal impact for each citizen it touched – a Human Rights' Day themed campaign called #RightMyName, which Place described as follows:

“ *At Nando's, we've always loved celebrating South Africa's diversity. So, when we noticed that after more than 30 years, spellcheck still highlights Nando's as a mistake, it got us thinking. What about other names in South Africa? Names like Nokuthula, Elodie, Darawees and Tebatso. Why are their names highlighted as mistakes too? Not cool.* ”

Place further explains that the brand is not about controversy or about going contrary to popular belief at all. Instead, marketing takes place in real-time because consumers behave in real-time and are often waiting for that 'Nando's comeback. So it's not about generating cutting content and pushing it out, but rather voicing an opinion that represents the people.

There's no hierarchy to this, instead, they present an idea they'd like to share in a way that's as simple, slick, smart and South African as possible, and off they go.

Place explained on [CapeTalk](#) last year:

“ There is a tonality and cheekiness to a Nando's brand, and we have the ability to laugh through difficulty. ”

He added on the night that when times are tough, we should see them as a comma, not a full stop. That's what makes Nando's creative work resonate, and why we'll be hearing Place's name for years to come.

Keep your eyes glued to our [Loeries special section](#), which features the latest updates and live coverage of the 40th annual Loerie Awards, taking place in Durban from 16 to 19 August 2018.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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