

Be the popes, the geeks and the rock and rollers, says Creative Shop's Weera Saad

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

18 Aug 2017

First up at today's DStv Seminar of Creativity was Facebook's head Creative Shop: MEA, Weera Saad, who spoke about how things have changed over time and how we need to change to ride this new wave that's arrived. "It's a brave new world, the big wave is here and it's perfect, and it's staring you in the face." We need to surf it, she said.



Weera Saad Photo by Gallo Images/Alistair Nicoll

"I don't believe time is linear, I believe it's secular in nature. I believe that if you really want to have a firm eye on future, you need to reground yourself and be mindful of the present, but most importantly, you need to really grasp the past in your hand, so speaking of past and speaking of creativity and speaking of communication, let's go back in time."

Disruption is key, she said, but people are looking for connection more than disruption. Our brains are evolving as a species, at a rapid rate, streaming 40 HD movies every second. These days, one second is actually an eternity. Saad went on to explain the side effects of this. "The pace of content creation is surpassing our ability to consume, and the way we adapt to this new reality is by rationing attention, but when you get people's attention, you don't hold it for long, so it can be said that it's become our scarcest resource. "We have to evolve to catch up with people," she said.

Creative heroes are people who pushed boundaries, changed things, challenged the norms and accepted that there's a new way of doing things, and yet it seems that the rest of humanity doesn't get it.

Pope Julius II contracted Michelangelo to actually paint the Sistine Chapel. Michelangelo was a sculpturer, Pope Julius II already knew that but He also knew that he was going to be the one person who would challenge him, say no to him and bring completely new, fresh thinking to the table, when the other thinkers would have just said yes and done what he had asked them to do. He did not stop at that, he gave him the words 'best brief', 'for the greater glory of God, I want you to depict the creation of the universe'. In my opinion, that's the best brief, that's first best brief in the world. The best part of this story is that he created a masterpiece.

So how can we be the Michelangelo's of our time, how can we change? Some principles...

Cocreate, collaborate and blur the lines

An example of this is Ogilvy's VW Beats by Kwesta campaign – a track made using the streets of Joburg and FB Live:

Build for people where they are, not where they are

"Is this a positive? Yes, it is." Basically, when creating campaigns for mobile, it's not one size fits all. One person could consume some content on the go (immediate type of content/short form), while leaning forward (interactive) and leaning back (immersive). This is really common sense, have you ever thought of your campaigns this way?

Some examples of immediate content is Heinz (motion design and framing), Mr Clean (looping), Tide (art direction and compressions) and Jeep (copywriting), all within 2-7 seconds.

An example of interactive is 'Guardians of the Galaxy' mixtape trailer.

And an example of immersive content is Netflix's interactive questions.

Move fast and break things

If you're breaking things, you're not moving. If you're a creative... You can perfect your craft as you go along, experiment with new ways of doing things.

For example, the FCB case for SA Tourism. The agency created "the best travel case on the planet" of 176 insightful videos

of the world in 3 days. “They broke the rules, said Saad, “it takes a year, they did it in less than a week.”

Saatchi & Saatchi/BBR, on the other hand, used a drone, a weekend and a small crew. “All it takes is a great client and a great team.”

Then there’s the Studio Chevy challenge, where a universal insight, that when it comes to the new year, people make resolutions but never keep them. This campaign was used to build a global platform to drive positive opinions of the Chevrolet brand over new year’s eve and offer clarity to the meaning of the brand’s tagline ‘find new roads’. “Insights matter more than ever...”

This is the most challenging period for creativity. But it’s also the richest. Content is consumed differently on mobile, so you should know your playground, and then play some more. Some creative considerations for mobile video are capture, design, frame and play.

1. Get to the good stuff
2. Treat the first scene like an overture
3. Find the most impactful footage to lead with
4. Push your climax to a place beyond words
5. End early

An EMEA example that gets this right is BBDO’s challenge of helping Mercedes gain traction for their 360 video of Lewis Hamilton racing his AMG around a race track.

Define the non-goals, it’s the gift of clarity

She asked, “What are you willing to sacrifice for greatness?” The next piece is a piece of clarity, also from the EMEA, is FCB/HC’s challenge of helping Toyota raise brand awareness for its AYGO amongst 18-21 year olds.

Unchain yourself to experiment and to learn

Poke & Publicis’ Heineken ad is a good example of this.

In summary, South Africa and the greater EMEA is top class. 50% of the cases Saad presented this morning come from this region. She questions why the terms ‘emerging’ is used to describe it because when it comes to creativity, there’s nothing emerging about us. “To heck with the term emerging market,” she said. We should be calling it “amazing markets”, “awesome markets”, anything but emerging, because we’re on top of the world.

From here came the first Instagram ad in the world, she explained. KFC’s ‘Summer Burger’ was the first ever Instagram story. Then there’s Sanlam’s Whatsapp Soap Opera and Boom Interactive’s ‘Close Up’ campaign.

So what she’s really saying is, “Be the popes, the geeks and the rock and rollers that I know you are... Help us change the rules. Come back to me next year and tell me you’ve done it.”

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