

Sanlam on marketing in a corporate environment

 By [Ann Nurock](#)

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Ann Nurock spoke to Mariska Oosthuizen, Head of Brand and Sonja Sanders, Head of Marketing at Sanlam, during Loeries Creative Week Durban 2015, and spoke on how creativity must be commercial, where marketers stand in the value chain of a corporation and the accountability agencies and clients need to take.

Sanlam, with their agency King James Group, walked away with three gold, four silver, one bronze and two certificate awards. While Santam won three gold, one silver and two certificate awards.

Nurock: What are your expectations for the Loeries?

Sanders: I think some inspiration and some awards!

Oosthuizen: It's interesting, because we were talking about Cannes earlier, and I didn't really come to the Loeries with any high expectations. Yes of course we come to see if our peers award the work that you've done, that's quite important because they recognise that there's something about it, it's done something good and achieved some kind of objective. But I think the Loeries is lacking a bit in the inspiration department.

Nurock: Why are the Loeries important for Sanlam?

Sanders: I think the Loeries are important because it's peer recognition of what you do. I think it's good to spend time with other creative people in marketing and advertising and to get their view of the the work we do.

Oosthuizen: I'm going to pick up on something Sonja said, I think it is important because it rewards creativity. I think the thing is with advertising is that it's commercial creativity, it's not just creativity for the sake of creativity. So I think sometimes we can lose sight of that and we can get so swept up in it all forgetting that it actually needs to reach an objective. The Loeries should focus more and more on rewarding creativity that works, gets attention, lasts and changes behaviour.

Nurock: What is your definition of great creativity?

Sanders: I believe great creativity has the power to influence behaviour. With our One Rand Man social experiment we saw its power to influence the way people think about money. Instead of just talking about savings and having to have a budget, things people like ignoring, we got creative and actually made people think about how they spend their money and what they need to change to live the lives they hope for.

Oosthuizen: Saving money in South Africa is such an important thing, and many people don't do or can't do it. That's why it was so important to do something different and original so that people actually notice it. If people don't notice it, it's not going to break through and it's not going to change behaviour. So it's about originality and work that breaks through.

Nurock: It's been proven that great creativity drives profits and brand growth. Do you agree with that?

Oosthuizen: I think there is some great creative that does that. We were talking about Santam's One of Kind and how it actually makes people smile and gets them talking about it and passing it on. That's what we are trying to do with the One Rand Man and One Rand Family campaigns, we want to get people thinking and talking about their finances in order to address the bigger savings issue in South Africa. I don't think all creativity drives profit or purpose for that matter. Often it's just creativity for the sake of being creativity. The magic happens when everyone clearly understands the objective and finds a creative solution to reach it.

Nurock: What in your opinion, are the greatest challenges facing agencies in terms of great creativity?

Sanders: I think one of the greatest challenges is how to do beautiful, great work and move products at the same time. The measurability and accountability of campaigns are increasingly important.

Oosthuizen: It's like what Sonja was saying earlier, when you work in a corporate environment, they don't often place value on creativity or marketing for that matter. We are often seen as the people who do the ads. We're called in at the end and told to just sell something. It needs to change, and therefore it comes down to accountability. The biggest threat to creativity is that it is seen as creativity just for the sake of creativity and not as a solution to a bigger business problem. And therefore not important.

Nurock: What in your opinion, are the greatest challenges facing marketers?

Sanders: Showing return on investment and providing useful strategic insight to the business. We need to be closer to informing business and should not be comfortable sitting at the end of the value chain.

Oosthuizen: It's about gaining that respect, and the only way to do that is to actually show the value that you add. Finding creative solutions to business problems. Take something like Uber - that's creativity. We need to start looking at creativity in a broader way.

Nurock: How do you think agencies can sell their creative work better?

Sanders: I think it's less about selling, and more about working at having partnership and respect. The agency has to

respect the client for certain things, and vice versa. It should be an open relationship where you work together to make something great.

Oosthuizen: Having a background in strategy, it comes down to the strategy behind the idea and then showing me why it's going to work for the target market it is intended for. If the thinking is solid it's not hard to sell, the problem is that sometimes they try and selling a creative idea instead of selling the solution to a business problem. I am starting to sound like a broken record so I think you get the idea.

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