

Eating part of the elephant, not the ant

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Collaboration inside agencies, between agencies and between agencies and clients was a reoccurring theme that dominated that the recent APEX Master Class.

Held on the morning of the APEX Awards, the Master Class comprised six high-profile speakers. Each speaker was given 12 minutes to address the audience before finding themselves in the hot seat, being questioned by Jeremy Maggs and the audience.



Director of media and digital insights at Millward Brown, Monique Claassen kicked off the morning. She believes that while agencies need to understand they are all on the same page and not competing, it is brands' responsibility to drive this relationship. "Collaboration will only happen when two competing agencies can pick up the phone and talk to each other." She believes that while this is difficult and challenging, it is possible. "Maybe I am very optimistic, but it is also the only way agencies are going to survive."

Collaboration: From disruptable to disruptive economy

Taking the collaboration theme further, Enver Groenewald, Unilever's CCM director for Africa, says most of us do not understand collaboration. "This is because we are good at transactional, because we come from a transactional economy. The transactional economy is highly disruptable while the collaborative economy is highly disruptive. Brands need to understand the difference."

Unilever's All Things Hair, a website in the UK, is a demonstration of the type of collaboration required to move your brand from the transactional to the collaborative economy.

Collaboration requires you to take yourself out of your environment, he says. "Humble yourself, you are not the final voice, rather talk to your segment. That requires humility, but that is the world we live in today."

Fostering collaboration is logical if you think about it says Ivan Moroke, chairperson of the APEX awards Jury 2016 and Co-Currency CEO. He asks: "In the age of Vuca! our environment is so complex how can one agency have all the answers?"

Vuca: Volatile, Uncertain, Challenging, Ambiguous

"Vuca! is an acronym that stands for challenging, volatile, uncertain and ambiguous and it describes the world we find ourselves in. A key issue is exploring what brands need to do, and in this, Vuca!"

Collaboration is difficult because of the egos in the industry and during these tough times everyone is also hanging onto their piece of the pie, he says. "However, I would suggest you rather eat a piece of the elephant than the ant."

Regardless of what anyone says, it is true that collaboration inside an agency, between agencies and between the client and agency, makes winners and this is what we need to cultivate, he says.

The final presentation of the day, titled 'Capturing the Wind' was presented by Logn Falsk, a Swiss designer, focused on the aesthetics of a product, ignoring its functionality. Following his presentation, and the unveiling of his latest product, the Lope, he was put in the hot seat and questioned by Maggs. After stating that the product would sell itself and not saying what its purpose was, the Swiss appeared to infuriate Maggs, who said he had enough of this nonsense and, to gasps from the audience, told the Swiss to leave the stage.

“ Brilliant campaign [@joepublicunited!](#) [@Lognfalsk](#) showed the world that work that doesn't work... wont sell! [#Apex2016](#) [pic.twitter.com/TL3KsmDL0Q](#)— Brent Lindeque (@BrentLindeque) [July 7, 2016](#) ”

Before anyone could react too strongly, however Maggs invited his guest back on stage and it was explained that Logn Falsk was not real – the person we had seen on stage was an actor hired for the occasion. The objective of the skit was to demonstrate the fact that effectiveness and creativity have to both be present for marketing to work.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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