Andrew Human's Loeries resignation not 'unexpected' - Andy Rice

By Issa Sikiti da Silva: @sikitimedia

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Advertising analyst Andy Rice believes Andrew Human's resignation as the Loeries CEO is not an untoward event. "In my opinion there is absolutely no reason to consider Human's resignation as 'unexpected', if by that you mean that there is more to it than meets the eye," he said.



Andrew Human, outgoing Loeries CEO.

"He has given several months' notice and will stay on in an advisory capacity thereafter - that is not the hallmark of an unexpected resignation," Rice, a former University of Cambridge student, told Bizcommunity.com yesterday, Monday, 10 October 2011.

Declined to comment

Human, who has had a frosty relationship with the media during his tenure, declined to comment, referring all queries to Loeries media and operations manager Michelle Barrett.

"I can't talk to you right now, I'm expecting a call, sorry," he said on ~~Monday~~ Sunday before cutting off. He later sent an SMS, saying: "I am unavailable today, send all queries to Michelle Barrett."

Barrett said Human is currently on vacation and will only be available for comment when he gets back in the office. She also referred Bizcommunity's queries to Loeries chairperson Boniswa Pezisa.

"Ensure that we have a seamless change"

Said Pezisa, "I'm the one who has negotiated his stay on the committee because he has been invaluable to the organisation, and to ensure that we have a seamless change over his organisational knowledge will be critical to the new CEO.

"I only have respect for Andrew and I salute and celebrate his personal achievements. His contribution to the broader creative industry is nothing short of remarkable."

As speculation mounted about Human's sudden stepping down from the Loeries, Odette van der Haar (nee Roper), Association of Communication and Advertising (ACA) CEO, sharply came to the defence of Human, stating that the outgoing CEO is highly respected by his peers for his contribution to the Loeries and the profession at large.

Rubbished all speculation

Roper rubbished all speculation about his resignation, stating that Human merely wants to explore other things and avenues.

"Andrew has been with the Loeries for seven years and he has achieved much, which is evident from the excellent 2011 Loeries Awards held in Cape Town recently. He certainly has grown the awards into a formidable event. Part of what Andrew contributed to the company is systems and procedures that will outlive any one CEO.

"The next CEO may bring a different perspective to the Loeries and will be expected to build on what Andrew has already put in place and ensure continued success of the annual event. This will be overseen by the company's board of directors as in the case with Andrew and any company for that matter."

"Transformed from a one-week creative indulgence"

Rice, a founding partner of Yellowwood Future Architects, seemed to echo Roper's sentiments, saying: "The fact is that Human has transformed the Loeries from a one-week creative indulgence into a year-long celebration of the advertising and communications industry's capabilities that showcases South African talent throughout the country and across the world.

"Thanks to Andrew, the Loeries is now a very efficientand almost self-sustainingmachine and it was inevitable that he would look for new challenges sooner or later."

Roper said Human reinvented and raised the standard of the Loeries year after year. He put in place systems to run the backend of the awards program, streamlined the entry and adjudication process, and introduced an in-house ticketing system, as well as the Travelling Exhibition and the scholarship programme.

What will happen?

Given the enormous ocean of innovation Human has brought to the Loeries, what will happen to these awards, come end of February 2012, when his tenure officially ends?

Pezisa said, "If you did attend the 33rd Loerie Awards in Cape Town, you would agree that [this] awards weekend was one of the best awards ceremony we have staged thus far. So, like any brand, we are raising the bar to do even better in 2012. The search for the CEO will begin shortly once we have ticked all the necessary corporate governance boxes."

However, while the Loeries continue to generate high fever and suspense every year, the one-million-dollar question that keeps popping up is whether awards such as these are still relevant in today's fast-changing business environment.

Said Rice, "As for awards generally, I think that they are, if anything, becoming more rather than less relevant, especially as it becomes clearer that there is a direct correlation between creativity and campaign success.

"Check out the recent UK analysis that cross-references the Gunn Report [global creative league table] with the IPA Effectiveness Awards [the UK equivalent of the Apex Awards] and you'll see that, on the basis of a sample of more than 430 campaigns across 16 years, creatively awarded campaigns are seven times more efficient than non-awarded ones (*Campaign*, 17 June 2011)."

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Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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