

Digital agencies still tops at Bookmark Awards



By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

4 Mar 2016

NATIVE VML took top honours at last night's Bookmark Awards. Held at The Forum in Johannesburg, the agency walked away with the Best Digital Agency in the Special Awards category as well as a number of gold, silver and bronze awards.

Other awards in the Special Honours Awards included Best digital youngster Christopher Cannoo, Best digital brand award: SuperSport, Best digital marketer: Charl Bassil, and Best digital publisher: Eyewitness News. The Best individual contribution was awarded to Pete Case for growing the industry. No award was given for Best digital student.

This year there were over 60 categories with almost 70 entries. John Dixon, CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi Brandstock, and Bookmark Awards Jury President, says that generally the standard was not as high as last year, but this said there were still some outstanding pieces of work. "What was great to see was the growth in some of the categories, such as the branded content category which was also a strong category."

A trend he believes is set to continue is the blurring of the lines between the publishers, marketers and builders divisions. That distribution is becoming less relevant he says.

He commented that while the advertising agencies are getting better and better, the Awards are still dominated by the digital

agencies.

NATIVE VML CEO Jason Xenopoulos says this year has been gratifying. “We have work that carries through from big platforms through to smaller platforms with concepts that included through the line fully integrated campaigns.”

He was very happy with the agency’s performance at the Awards. “We created NATIVE VML as an agency for the digital age. So our ideas are born from digital but can extend into other forms.” He thanked the Agency’s clients saying: “A big thank you to our clients without them we would not exist.”

King James’ collected a number of Awards, in recognition of their work coming out and of the hard work the agency has put into that work. Creative director at Society, the social media agency of the King James Group in Cape Town, Dan Pinch explains that the Awards means a lot as King James is seen as a traditional agency. “We have put in a lot of work behind the scenes to create digital teams and while we have been under the radar, we are now coming out as our work speaks for itself, and it’s really exciting.”

Pete Case, founder of Gloo, says winning a Bookmark is always special. “It’s a sign that your peers believe that your work is above industry average. This is feedback that agencies and their clients like to hear. Winning work should reflect both creativity and effectiveness and not one or the other.”

Kim Browne, a founder and CEO of Twisted Toast who won a bronze says the calibre of entries is high and that is why they entered. Gloo@Ogilvy’s managing director digital portfolio, Ben Evans, who was a judge, adds to this saying that the Awards bring together the technical, results and creativity and all of these are important to our industry. “As a judge I was impressed by the debate and deep interrogation by the judges.”

Graeme Stiles, group head: organic search at Quirk and another judge, says the focus was on on results. “The entries put more effort into data and results and the return on investment for clients. So it was about more than just the big idea.”

Deirdre Ingpen, head of commercial at 24.com and jury chair: publishers says the category was disappointing as so few publishers entered. “Some work will need to be done to get publishers to understand the category and the Awards and to encourage them to enter.”

Ryan McManus, ECD NATIVE VML and a judge this year says some key pieces rose to the top. “There was some great branded content this year.”

This was the first time the Awards used the Loeries judging system. As a result, some of the judges were familiar with it.

The criteria was different, but the back end and hardware is the same. “This is a step up for the Awards and gives them more integrity. It also made the task of the judges less onerous. The judging was on the basis of in and out on a one pager in round one. In the next round all the material was viewed by the judges,” says Dixon.

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.

- Newspapers: ABC Q1 2024: The slow steady downward trickle continues - 23 May 2024
- Media24 digital publishing audience dips in April - 22 May 2024
- First of its kind MAOC Fund to raise R10.2bn to transform creative industry - 13 May 2024
- Under Armour, challenger brand, shows up, launches icon brand house in Sandton City - 29 Apr 2024
- Sabre EMEA 2024 Awards: Razor PR, Retroviral top SA agencies - 18 Apr 2024

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>