

: Sarah Britten chats to Jason Little

How does creativity drive business? How do you inspire creativity in others? In an exclusive series for Bizcommunity, Sarah Britten interviews seven creative leaders from around the world. See them in person at the International Seminar of Creativity in Cape Town on 20 September, which forms part of [Loeries Creative Week Cape Town](#).



This week, Sarah Britten chats to Jason Little, Creative Director at Re, Sydney.

1. How important is creativity when developing successful solutions for your partners?

Creativity is our currency. It's the difference between achieving something remarkable and simply doing the job. Creativity breaks paradigms and challenges the status quo. It inspires and opens minds. Creativity is why our clients come to us. It's why we turn up to work everyday.

At every point in the journey, from initial conversation and briefing, to final delivery we need to exercise our imagination and problem-solving skills, and ultimately transform our clients business through creativity.

2. What's the most exciting project you've worked on recently?

Over the past five months we've been working on the complete brand overhaul of Optus, the second largest telco in Australia. When it entered the market in 1992, it was the classic challenger brand, offering choice in a monopolised industry, and regularly introducing game-changing innovations that forced the entire market to shift and follow suit. In recent years, however, consumers felt neglected and taken for granted. Customer consideration had all but disappeared. Their dissatisfaction also had a direct impact on staff morale, which was at an all-time low.

It was pretty clear the business had to have a fresh injection of positivity - and soon - if it was to succeed in an increasingly

competitive market. Getting it right was critical to the brand's survival, and we were in the daunting but exciting position to help them. The entire process has led to a radical shift for Optus. In a market dominated by formal and formulaic brands, the new identity is a clear departure from what many Australians would expect from a large telecommunications provider.

The work has been embraced from the very beginning without compromise. Our relationship with the client goes from strength to strength, and the work continues to excite and engage everyone involved.

Through the process, I've witnessed sheer brilliance in the creative team, with designers taking huge leaps in their experience and ability. The teamwork has been inspiring to see, with both full-time and contract freelancers working tirelessly towards remarkable outcomes. We've also had the pleasure to collaborate with some exceptional specialists, including Parisian typographer - Mathieu Reguer, Brisbane-based Illustrator/ animator, Marco Palmieri, and Sydney photographer, Tim Jones.

The project continues to be a pleasure to work on, and probably the most enjoyable journey of my career.

3. Creativity can be a challenge when you're on deadline, or client has bombed the work, or your team is tired. How do you keep inspiring creative thinking in others?

I'm a firm believer in studio culture as a catalyst to creativity. That means creating the conditions under which creativity will flourish. It's about fostering a culture of personal achievement, collaboration, day-to-day happiness, and fearlessness to fail. Easier said than done.

I treat the studio as a place of learning - A place that taps into the wants and needs of the individual whilst solving our clients' problems. Every designer is different, but his or her ability and willingness to learn, play and take risks, and also have the trust and backing of the studio to pursue their own aspirations, is universal.

4. Can you name an example of a brand that has inspired you lately?

There is rarely a day I'm not inspired by the revolution taking place in branding. I've really been inspired by the shift from corporate control to creative bravery, that arguably began when the 2012 Olympics identity by Wolff Olins came into the public eye way back in 2007. Dynamic identities are the flavour of the decade, and the likes of MIT, AOL, Nordkyn, University of Helsinki, ITV and more recently, the Whitney Museum are all making it an exciting time to be in brand identity design.

What keeps me really inspired at the moment however, are the brands that are focussing on their purpose and how to deliver on it. Pedigree's 'We're for dogs' is a fantastic story that plays out in everything they do. Going from a dog food company to the well-being of dogs, they've implemented dog-centric policies at work such as day care, dog walking, health care benefits etc, and support of animal shelters with volunteering and adoption drives.

Closer to home is Air New Zealand, with their intent to 'liberate travellers from the ordinary'. They consistently deliver an exceptional 'Kiwi' customer experience that is friendly, quirky, and less inclined to take themselves too seriously - just see their in-flight safety videos.

5. What's your favourite vacation spot?

It takes very little for me to be content on vacation, but there are a few prerequisites if it's to be considered for the top spot. For a start it has to be on the coast, with quick access to waves. Secondly it should be a little remote, and ideally have bad signal reception so that I have no choice but to unplug. And finally, if it involves speaking another language, even better.

Over the past decade I've been drawn to the perfect waves of Bali and Java time and time again. A few surfs a day, some hearty meals, and a good book. When I'm enjoying that life, I often wonder how I ever had time to work when the days seem so full.

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