

The Creativity Q&A: Rod Baker chats to PJ Pereira

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What makes award-winning work? How do you inspire creativity in others? In an exclusive series for Bizcommunity.com, we interviewed seven creative leaders from around the world. See them in person at the DSTV Seminar of Creativity in Cape Town on 19 September, which forms part of Loeries Creative Week Cape Town.

This week, Rod Baker chats to PJ Pereira, Chief Creative Officer and Co-Founder of Pereira & O'Dell, San Francisco



PJ Pereira

■ ***Last year your first book, The Book of Silence, in a trilogy Deuses de dois Mundos (Gods of Both Worlds) was published, how does a busy ad exec find time to write one book, let alone a whole fantasy-literature series?***

PJ Pereira: Actually this year I published the second book as well. Now I have to find time to do the third one, and support the launch of the series in other countries too! On top of that and the agency I also have my family, that comes first, and my Kung fu training that matters to me quite a lot. Then at some point I may start to work on turning the book into a movie or TV series. The rights have been sold, we are discussing what kind of production it would be. I know this may seem overwhelming, and quite honestly, sometimes it is, but overall it keeps me healthy and happy. I'm no one without my family, I'm grumpy and sick without my Kung fu and I get much sharper and faster when I'm writing. So in the end it all works.

■ ***What other exciting projects have you worked on recently?***

Pereira: On the personal side, there's the third book of my trilogy to finish, which is a lot of fun. On the agency side, we are working on a few global and regional things that will launch next year that are incredibly interesting, mostly on the content part of the business which I believe is the most exciting one right now.

■ ***Can you name a brand or campaign that has inspired you lately, and why?***

Pereira: Honestly, I am a big fan of creative discipline, being able to stick with one idea and still keep it fresh. What Old Spice, Dove and obviously Axe have been doing is great to watch. Then there's Coke that turned its brand around and for the last few years became the kings of that kind of inspiring discipline.

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

Pereira: I don't think it is. Ideas happen in seconds. Sometimes it takes too long for that second to happen of course, but a diverse, curious and excited team can keep things fast. I've had to interact with a bunch of long-form entertainment creatives recently and they also complain about that... The only creatives that have total control over their time-frames are artists that don't operate within an industry. For that, to build big artistic perspectives, you need to detach yourself from deadlines - but for advertising and entertainment, I believe deadlines, exhaustion, and even approval challenges can actually make you better.

■ ***What do you think makes award-winning work?***

Pereira: The discipline of comparing your work with the very best in the world, and the anger and frustration that will come from it.

Don't miss the [DStv Seminar of Creativity](#) at Cape Town City Hall on Friday, 19 September. **PJ Pereira** will be joined by other international leaders including Facebook's Rob Newlan, Unilever's Yaw Nsarkoh, McCann Sydney's Executive Creative Director, Patrick Baron; Arno Lindemann, the Chief Creative Officer of Lukas Lindemann Rosinski; the indomitable Stephen Doyle, Creative Director, Doyle Partners, New York City and Ali Ali the acclaimed commercial's director from Egypt and former Executive Creative Director and Founder of Elephant.

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