

Some delights, some disappointments

With the AdFocus Awards only a few hours away, current chairperson Craig Page-Lee, reflects on the Awards' entries this year.



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Despite a rather limited number of highlights for the 2017 submissions, he says there were most definitely some aspects that stood out and deserved commendation.

The first is the entries for the inaugural independent media agency category. “What delighted me was the effort that the independent agencies put in to their submissions. I am convinced that this category is going to grow from strength-to-strength and hopefully these agencies will continue to give the bigger agencies a good run for their money.”

This is the first year that the media agency category was split to cater for international group-owned agencies and independent owned agencies (those with absolutely zero percentage ownership by an international agency group).

Key highlights and lowlights of 2017

A clear stand-out is in the large and medium-sized advertising agency categories. “With a further highlight being the fact that a once-legendry super-sized agency that almost disappeared off the radar, reappeared with a solid submission and an incredible story to support their new positioning, new wins and commitment to the future of the industry in South Africa.”

While other key highlights of 2017 submissions for him were in the small advertising agency and specialist agency categories, the biggest highlight was the introduction of the transformation award – “soliciting incredible conversation and signaling an important milestone for not only the FM AdFocus Awards programme, but for the industry as a whole.”

When it comes to the lowlights of 2017, he says there was an abundance of ‘more of the same’ submissions in relation to evidence of work submitted by agencies, duplication of awards won (specifically in respect of listing awards that



FMAdFocus Awards' current chairperson Craig Page-Lee.

fell out of the period of evaluation), insincere effort put into genuine transformation (% ownership/shareholding, directorship, senior and junior management) and agencies still looking for the easy way out by refusing to share more accurate details on value of accounts gained, lost or retained.



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Transformation is important

“A clearer demonstration of financial performance can be achieved with narrower revenue bands, without showing one’s hand. Accuracy and honesty in reporting performance needs some serious attention by some agencies.”

Transformation is really important in the industry, so it is really sad that we have to introduce a specific award to drive transformation across the industry. “Especially as we all clearly understand where we have come from, and more-so, clearly understand where we need to be as a society in South Africa. Transformation should therefore be at the epicenter of all we do in the industry, which it unfortunately is not,” he says.

Page-Lee says the panel of 2017 was definitely the most participative, interrogative and contributing group that he has judged with in the past three years. “That said, I cannot discount the single-minded pursuit of establishing a platform for change that the panel of 2016 enabled, emanating in the Transformation Award being introduced this year.”

There was a real representation of the broad spectrum of industry sectors on the 2017 judging panel and this most definitely brought another level of conversation to the table, he adds especially the contribution made by representatives of the PR industry and having a world-class media-mind and digital-mind join the main judging panel this year.

Page-Lee thanked David Furlonger and Jeremy Maggs again for the opportunity of representing the industry the past few years and to thank each jury member for their valued contribution.

The FM AdFocus Awards 2017 takes place this evening, 22 November, at The Empire, Hill on Empire in Johannesburg, Gauteng.

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