

Kilmer & Cruise recognised in 3 categories at World Independent Advertising Awards

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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Just four years since launching, Cape Town-based agency Kilmer & Cruise was the only agency from across the African continent to have been awarded at the World Independent Advertising Awards (Wina) for its work in Content - Digital/Products (Silver), PR - Digital and Social Networks PR (Bronze) and Interactive - Online Video (Honourable Mention).



Co-founders Francois Wessels (ECD) and Danny de Nobrega (MD).

Wina, now also in its fourth year, is the academic response to a growing wave of independent multinational agencies and networks seeking a space that truly represents them in a fair, autonomous and visible way, and the only international festival with free case enrolment – only the winners pay prizewinning rights. (Find out more about it [here](#).)

“Apart from feeling honoured as hell, being awarded on a global level across such a wide mix of categories is really exciting, because it means we get to showcase the range and depth of the work we do at Kilmer & Cruise,” comments creative director Francois Wessels.



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The ceremony was hosted in Bogotá, Colombia on 7 June. Co-founder and MD Danny de Nobrega, adds: “Sitting under the covers watching a live stream at 3am and seeing your work on-screen and your agency awarded on the global stage 10,000km away in Bogota is something special. That and waking up to share that joy with a small but talented team and celebrate with incredible clients who trust you.”

Nobrega attributes this success to the team, their shared approach and the relationships they've built with their clients. Also, he says, "None of our work that won had particularly sizeable budgets but they all had a solid insight and one of those simple but effective big ideas at its core."

He goes on to tell us what it takes to succeed in the areas of content, PR and interactive, and a bit more about the agency...

■ ***What does it take, in your opinion, to succeed in these areas (content, PR and interactive) specifically?***

You've got to say bye to best practice. There's too much siloed thinking out there. We rely on our expertise and creativity and tackle each brief on its own merit. We look for the insight and idea that's going to rock our audience, then we think channel and tactics.

■ ***Tell us more about the agency, it's offering, competitive advantage, etc.***

We're annoyingly proactive. I believe it stems from our passion, curiosity and that we truly care about our clients' businesses and their people.

“ We have this kind of ethos that we call #BuzzTheTower. It's from Top Gun, where Maverick does the flybys of the control towers, which is bold (we equate that to ideas), takes skill and experience (how we produce our work) and it makes one 'helluva' impact (the results we achieve). ”

Also, you'll be hard-pressed to find any wanky jargon or egos when working with us.



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■ ***What barriers have you had to overcome to get to where you are today?***

Together with my co-founder Francois Wessels, we bootstrapped this agency in 2015 and it has been a hard but rewarding ride. As relative unknowns, we have to build the agency's reputation and portfolio bit by bit, every single day. Just being a small business in South Africa can be tough, but we're constantly competing with agencies that are bigger and have more resources. Luckily, we've found incredible team members, partners and clients who buy into our vision.

■ ***Comment on the current state of advertising in SA.***

There's a lot already written about the challenges and wrong-doings we face, as well as our need to evolve our pricing and value proposition models. So, I'll say this: we have incredible talent in this country across all spheres of marketing and advertising and that's something to celebrate and something to build on. To this day we still receive a lot of support, advice and mentoring from our peers and industry legends alike – a camaraderie that we as the next generation of advertising agencies should foster and take forward.



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▣ ***What are you currently working on?***

We're looking to partner with another great client or two in the next six months, particularly hoping to break into the FMCG space (where our senior team has a lot of experience). We've also just moved into our new studio which further extends our production capabilities. Other than that, we're looking forward to this crazy ride called advertising and producing work that makes our moms, clients and South Africa smile.

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