

Industry inconsistency hampers delivery of creative solutions

The advertising industry, like any other, survives by selling its services and products. Word-of-mouth is our strongest marketing tool and, to market the industry, we need to speak to our consumers with consistency and integrity of both our work and its people.

By [Jason Liepner](#) 25 Nov 2003

However, I am finding it increasingly difficult to represent my company and our profession when there are such conflicting internal messages around the standard of our product as a whole and often find myself asking 'How on earth do I justify this?'

Let me explain ...

I work for a Cape Town based agency and my primary responsibility is to create awareness of our company and to grow our client base. We recently submitted a piece of work for the July Creative Director's Forum 'Ad of the Month' and, with a pride that did not touch on arrogance, we waited on favourable recognition.

Our expectations were dashed – we received a second in the newspaper category with a score of a mere 42%. We took the score on the chin, accepting it as the objective and critical opinion of the judging panel, although we were extremely disappointed.

What initiated me questioning those responsible for critiquing our creative product was that the same piece of work was awarded a Bronze at this year's Eagles - a show judged by some of the world's best creatives.

This performance was so out of line with the CDF's judgment - the chairman actually described the category for the month that we entered as 'Very, very weak; maybe we should start thinking about what we enter. We should all know what an Ad of the Month looks like by now'. So an 'Ad of the Month' does not look like a Bronze Eagle?

And any chance of overlooking this incident was made impossible by the fact that this is not the first time such inconsistency has happened. Last year we submitted an ad for 'Ad of the Month' that also received an extremely low score and then proceeded to win a Gold Eagle. I am at a loss and wonder how many other agencies or creative teams have had similar experiences.

In an industry often perceived as one step above that of a used car salesman, we need to drive home a message that reinforces our credibility and professionalism - especially when it comes to assessing and judging our creative work. I am passionate about the industry and my colleague's creative solutions but – given my responsibility is to market the advertising product – what messages am I being given to communicate? What perception are we building of our industry in the minds of the marketers and brand owners that purchase our product. One of the key elements to any successful brand campaign is a cohesive message. Where is ours?

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