

Join the Creative Coalition now!

For the founder of the International Design Indaba, the only brand this industry should be focusing on now, is the uber-brand: South African Incorporated. Speaking at the Financial Mail's Adfocus conference in Sandton this week, Ravi Naidoo, CEO of Interactive Africa, made a rallying call to the industry to unite to grow jobs.

 By [Louise Marsland](#) 12 May 2004

"My focus is on this brand, South Africa Inc. The pressure at present is on its executive team, headed up by CEO Thabo Mbeki, his Financial Director Trevor Manual and the rest of this high profile Board of Directors but the onus is on us, the staff, to make it work."

Naidoo said the brain trust within the industry was remarkable and well placed to play a leading role in the economy and work on a South African solution for joblessness and economic growth. "We cannot just be the cheerleaders... as creatives, it's never been a better time. Thought leaders the world over are talking about the rise of the creative class. We have a primacy and potency that is unrivalled."

He called on the creative industry to raise their game and respond to the 'crisis du jour': job creation. "We need to get up to 6 percent per annum in job creation growth. It's a Herculean task. But this is really the mission critical in this country and Government simply cannot drive it alone. And I have a hunch: that the X factor taking us from 2 percent currently to 6 percent, is creativity and innovation.

Naidoo said the sleeper in the SA economy is the creative industry. "On a social level the best ingredient is our diversity. We are one of the most tolerant and inclusive societies in the world. The phenomenon of the New SA sits more comfortably. Sparks are flying. The real gold scene in Jo'burg is on the streets of Jozi. How can we give impetus to this? I think we need to refocus the economy!"

1. The first thing, Naidoo says, is to introduce the words 'The Creative Industries' into our business lexicon "let's give it currency." This term refers to the following industries: advertising, design, film and video, production, music, new media, publishing, radio, visual arts, architecture and crafts. The definition is any industry which has its origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which has the potential to generate wealth through the exploitation of intellectual capacity. This whole concept of the creative industry is what other major economies are now looking at. In a recent creativity study by the City of London, Creativity was listed as a core business sector and the second largest in the city (worth 21 billion pounds), and one of the fastest in terms of job creation.

2. Get organized: "I think we should organize our creative industry in SA, from a Cinderella to Belle-of-the-ball. How do we reassert ourselves? We need to organize ourselves into a united creative front and move away from looking at ourselves in silos, as The film industry, and The design industry, and The media industry, and so on. The modern creative is a highly mobile individual - the digital platform has liberated us and we need an overarching industry architecture that accommodates us."

3. Formal body: In order to make ourselves over as a prolific industry in this country, we need to get together more, urges Naidoo, and set up a formal body that is at the vanguard of the growth of the creative industries in South Africa, much like the Tourism Indaba is for the Tourism industry.

4. Mapping: in order to effectively create a creative coalition, the size of the industry needs to be mapped properly as this has never been done.

5. Finally, we need to promote awareness of this creative industry and create customer demand. The unheralded jewel in our crown in this country is the creative industry, says Naidoo. He adds that there are issues within the industry which need to be addressed holistically, and this can only be done if we work together in a united front.

ABOUT LOUISE MARS LAND

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