

But... where were the ads?

Net#work BBDO took the honours as top dog at AdFocus and as Mike Schalit, chief creative officer of Net#work, says, "If you do work that's provoking, interesting and fresh, you'll win awards anyway. I'd rather fail spectacularly doing something new than do something boring."

 By [Richard Clarke](#) ⁹ May 2005

Net#work was named AdFocus agency of the year again and Keith Shipley, partner in crime with Mike, was also named Agency leader of the year.

Honours aside there was a definite focus on inclusivity at the awards and the Lifetime achievement went to Nwenkwe Nkomo who still operates as Chief Scout in the South African Scout Association. He did his time on Robben Island and acted as the sentinel, warning guys to stop passing contraband like newspapers between cells, playing different tunes on his saxophone.

When I chatted to Nkwenkwe, he reiterated that the industry is transforming and that it actually has no choice. As deputy chairman of FCB SA, he has a crucial role to play but he also occupies a position as role model which maybe something that the younger generation would do well to follow.

When employed by Len van Zyl at Lindsay Smithers back in the early eighties it was a potentially career dead end for the agency and yet the outcome has been significant. Current agencies should look at the impact of this employment choice when considering their approach to transformation.

As the evening progressed it was marred only by an overall bombastic emphasis on SABC as a sponsor and far too much time spent on marketing the Loeries which takes place this year down in Margate. The advertising industry in South Africa needs to market itself on a level that it would do for a high profile client, rather than expect to receive accolades simply because it is there.

This particular function on the SA ad calendar has had to reinvent itself, but not at the expense of the time that people need at AdFocus, to listen to the winners and watch the ads that won awards. Many people even in the industry do not have time to watch TV and read endless papers and mags. More time should be spent on showcasing the ads that make the shortlist.

ABOUT RICHARD CLARKE

Richard Clarke founded Just Ideas, an ideas factory and implementation unit. He specialises in spotting opportunities, building ideas and watching them fly. Richard is also a freelance writer.
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