

#inspo that'll ignite your creative fire (and keep it burning)

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New year, new creative energy... but how to keep it alive once the holiday glow wears off and deadlines and the daily grind set back in? Exciting things are happening on the creative front with DAN Zambia and DAN Mozambique, so we turned to John Mwanza and Mitchell Collinson for some insight and inspiration.



“I like to define creativity, and by extension, the creative process, as the exploration of possibilities that help solve problems,” says John Mwanza, managing director at DAN Zambia. “Especially in a media environment, this requires thinking outside the proverbial box. But what does this actually mean for DAN as we find ourselves in an ever-changing media landscape, with constant innovation in the way that brands connect with people?”

It means educating clients

“As the old adage goes, ‘he who pays the piper calls the tune’. One of the biggest challenges faced by creative teams is educating the client and getting them on board with creative solutions that, when done right, will often defy the industry norm. If we are to be a creative force to be reckoned with, we need to get our clients to support and enable our pursuit for the unconventional,” says John.

It means surprising consumers

“In Zambia, we have seen an evolution in purchase influence,” says John. “Gone are the days when consumer decisions were easily influenced by a catchy radio jingle or attention-grabbing TV ad. Today, varied and complex stimulation is needed to communicate ideas and values in a way that is unexpected, fun and relevant. Think, multiple lightbulb moments throughout the consumer’s day and in the most unexpected of time and places.”

It means inclusive creative processes

So, how to foster creativity within organisations and teams? John’s approach is based on daily team rituals including brainstorming sessions, inclusive ideation processes and the constant questioning of how an idea or campaign could’ve been done better. “Previously, such exercises were restricted to creative teams, but I believe a creative process that involves the whole office breeds a true company culture of exploration and innovation. We’ve had some brilliant ideas from our accountant, media director and our office cleaner. This inclusive approach enables teams to value the necessity of viewing things in new ways or from a different perspective, and this, in turn, creates an atmosphere that encourages the

generation of new possibilities or alternatives to the norm.”

It means being playful

Mitchell Collinson, creative director at DAN Mozambique, takes a similar approach to the team in Zambia and believes we need to “rescue that kid inside of us playing with Lego” if we want to overcome barriers to creativity.

“We have a weekly ‘Beers and Ideas’ session,” says Mitchell. “We watch or listen to the latest ad campaigns and case studies from around the globe to keep us up to speed with current trends and spark discussion. We also invite guests from the creative world outside of our own – artists, film directors, fashion designers – to talk to us about what inspires them.”

It means getting out of the office!

“As creatives, we are asked to come up with ideas every single day. We need to be inspired, not by ideas, but by life itself,” says Mitchell. “That inspiration can only come to us if we truly live. We need to have fun, to travel, to talk to new people, to put ourselves in new situations, to see the world through different eyes. What we do outside the office is very important for creative thinking. From quality time with family and friends to simple things like watching movies, or even cooking, I think it’s essential for creative professionals to have personal projects that bring joy and a sense of accomplishment, and are judged by no one but ourselves.”

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