

# The Loeries 2012: Everyone's a winner

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Everyone's a winner or that seems to be the case with most awards. Categories have increased, divisions have been included, people with or without merit have been pulled in, measurements are obscured and the celebration remains largely hollow. Awards, love them or loathe them, have dictated so many facets of our lives: the Oscars, the Nobel Prize, the Cannes Lions, even the daytime Emmy. But how can they be of consequence in the greater scheme of things?

Awards have tried to convince us that creativity can be measured, somewhat contained and objectively assessed and credited by a panel of judges where as real creativity, in the words of Maya Angelou, "You can't use up." Alongside creativity is the business side of every industry: so where do these elements align and include the very thing that makes awards possible - the consumer.

Awards are about popularity. Optional extras are The Press Release, the Twitterati's cheers

and the free (cheap) food and drink at the worship ceremony. Awards are also about talent, vanity and self-promotion; a chowder of 'right now' as longevity or resilience cannot be accounted for. So why do we need awards if advertising has evolved so compellingly towards mingling with the true nature of business?

"I have no problem with rewarding good work, but I have a problem with rewarding work that is only good in the eyes of a completely biased beholder with absolutely no proof whatsoever that it is indeed good," said Chris Moerdyk, marketing analyst and chairman of www.bizcommunity.com. The Stella Award in Norway attempts to credit more than creativity and aims to credit 'efficient advertising' but the criteria is as subjective as that of creativity.

"Creative Awards in the ad industry lack true accountability, credibility and fail to prove they have provided any success in the media or placement for which they were intended," said Steve Parker, Co-Founder of Levelwing, in his letter to the industry. Parker said a perfect example of the industry failing itself is last year's Kia ad that won a Silver Press Lion at Cannes and was subsequently attacked for promoting paedophilia. Kia reportedly said they did not approve the ad.

"Creativity thrives on renewal,



imagination and change. Awards shows' revenue models is built on entry volumes and sponsorships; their solution to the changing communication environment is simply to add more categories," said Herman Manson, founding editor of MarkLives.com. He believes that in the past awards shows grew the creative industry but now the creative industry has outgrown award shows. This, in the light that Manson was denied media access to the Loeries, again, and thinks often media accreditation is based on 'sunshine journalism.'

"The only possible value the Loeries could have, at a stretch, is as a motivational tool for advertising creatives: nothing else," said Moerdyk. He further said that since peers award the Loeries it doesn't consider what consumers think or whether the ad is actually successful.

The Loeries pride themselves on the fact that in the judging procedure all entries are 'anonymous' and that the results are 'independently audited and certified'. This is yet to be challenged by consumers and I assume that since the Loeries has these claims and also to be 'internationally recognised' interesting elements like how, in the Live Events category, Atmosphere/Hammer's ghd Revelations campaign (ghd stylers in night clubs) and VWV Group's 2010 Fifa World Cup Closing Ceremony can be judged in the same category or that statistics or critique on Loeries (advertising council and media necessary here) are unpublished or that with so many categories and special awards no-one leaves without a golden star on their forehead.

"When Budweiser won the top award at Cannes some years ago (for its 'Wassup' campaign) it was found a year later that the campaign was a failure with Bud dropping sales," said Moerdyk who thinks the advertising industry should be playing a bigger role in convincing consumers that they play an active role in the economy.

But not everyone agrees, like Chris Gotz,



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executive creative director at Ogilvy Cape Town and part of the judging panel at the awards, who said “The Loeries is attended by over 5 000 clients and agency people every year. It is recognised globally as the single benchmark for SA commercial creative.” He believes that the Loeries reflect the growth of innovation in the advertising industry in SA and it is honourably and honestly dedicated to finding breakthrough creativity in all disciplines.

Another believer is Chris Rawlinson, head of group digital innovations at Ogilvy South Africa, who said, “It’s not perfect by any means but it’s good to see there is a positive correlation between wins in the Loeries and wins in the APEX effectiveness awards and other international advertising awards (Cannes/D&AD, Clios etc.)” Rawlinson thinks on the digital side SA is ahead of Cannes as the digital awards count stronger towards agency of the year. Ogilvy SA won four gold, eight silver and 11 bronze in 2010, and in 2011 Ogilvy Cape Town were third best individual agency overall and number one large agency where as Ogilvy SA were the second best agency group.

“Panels are made up of people who have no idea of what advertising is,” said Balki R. Balakrishnan, executive creative director at Lowe India to *Afaqs* magazine online 10 years ago. He agrees

with Anand Halve, a partner at chlorophyll in India, that advertising awards are directly linked to currency and a currency is only meaningful as long as people buy into its value and authority. So who believes in the currency and who is trailing with the authority?

So the awarded agencies believe in the Loeries, but what about the rest of the industry: Mike Sharman (owner at Retroviral), Andrew Ross (joint MD at Maverick) and Richard Mulholland (owner at Missing Link) collude that “The Loeries need measurement of creativity as well as business objectives.” Gareth Cliff said, “Ad agencies were better when they were high in the 80s.” Oliver Hermanus (director of “Skoonheid”) said, “Advertising is filled with marketers who incorrectly refer to themselves as filmmakers.” Dean Falcke (marketing manager at SecureLab) thinks that, “It’s dubious to have to pay to enter awards”.

Advertising guru Bill Bernbach famously said, “Properly practiced creativity can make one ad do the work of ten. Because it’s not just what you say that stirs people. It’s the way you say it. You can say the right thing about a product and nobody will listen. You’ve got to say it in such a way that people will feel it in their gut, because if they don’t feel it, nothing will happen.”

My feeling: The solutions could be rather simple. Scrap the whole awards thing and let advertising become about educating people that they don’t need more necessarily but just enough; that clients who want consumers to ‘engage’ need to take that gun upon themselves; that no-one needs to belong to a prescribed set of values set by a few elites, or that any brand can represent your identity. Most importantly let advertising be about playing a role as an activist in society, a solution giver to problems and an inspiring beacon of taking back what has been taken from the consumer, and that’s our voice, our opinion.

# More than just a party...

The Loeries has changed enormously since the days of Sun City. It’s not a party nor is it an event especially for junior creatives. As we all know the advertising industry is extremely hardworking and the Loeries is a culmination of the year’s work but it is also fun. *Danette Breitenbach* spoke to Andrew Human, CEO of the Loeries



is putting value to ideas and innovation. As such we should not be devaluing the creative idea, but recognising what a good idea is worth. The Loerie Awards represents creative excellence, and the first criterion of the judging process that must be met, (and this is emphasised to the judges), is that the work must be fresh and innovative.

**Q: The statement has been made that: “The Loeries needs measurement of creativity as well as business objectives”. How is a Loerie selected?**

**A:** We also have the most credible judging processes when it comes to Awards. (See judging process pg 36)

**Q: How do you provide media coverage for the Loeries?**

**A:** We have over 80 accredited journalists, including international journalists from Holland, Kenya and the UK. Because we receive many applications, accreditation is through a standard process and the final decision is based on the coverage given to Loeries in the run up to the event, as well as coverage that will be given during and post the event. This determines the level of accreditation given. There are various levels of accreditation provided, depending on each applicant’s requirements. So of these 80 journalists, some have full accreditation and some have limited accreditation.

**Q: How would you define the Loeries?**

**A:** The Loeries is much more than access to the Sunday night party; it is about promoting the industry and the creative economy. For example the Student Portfolio Day is in its third year this year. We invite institutions to send their top two students and their work is exhibited in the registration hall. It is speed dating for the students and agencies.

**Q: The Loeries are recognised globally as the single benchmark for SA commercial creative. What is the value of a Loerie?**

**A:** We need to have a better understanding of the creative economy and to recognise its value. We want SA brands to be premium brands globally. Underlying the creative economy is innovation. ‘Innovative’ is where your creative economy