

# Building an EMPIRE

 By [Beverley Klein](#)

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Innovation is all about change, which is why Lucy Worsley and her company, EMPIRE, are at the forefront of innovation in the SA advertising industry, having recently become the first African-owned Innovations Agency.

I found out from Worsley what this means for her and the industry.



***Give us some background about Empire and explain the new features you'll be offering...***

**Worsley:** EMPIRE, which remains South Africa's first and only black female driven experiential marketing agency started in July 2015. EMPIRE has now taken the leap and expanded into the first African owned Innovations Agency. What that means is that EMPIRE is more than just an advertising agency, it's an innovation platform, 'For the people, by the people'. Part agency, part consultancy and part business developers.

We are the modern age of advertising that will be on hand to innovate brands in an ever-changing world. Everything we do, we believe in challenging the status quo. We think differently, we act differently and we create innovative and unique solutions that change mindsets.

The "new" EMPIRE will have three key functionalities that will add further value to existing clients, potential new clients, and the advertising industry:

1. EMPIRE Innovations agency – Brands that are looking to innovate through insight in an ever-changing world.
2. EMPIRE Creative consultants – Strategic consultants for creatives & entrepreneurs looking to innovate their brands.
3. EMPIRE Business developers – a comprehensive and experiential curated networking platform for creatives and entrepreneurs to take their EMPIRE to

the next level.

EMPIRE has had the privilege on working with internationally recognised brands such as, G.H.MUMM Champagne, Martell Cognac, Chivas Regal, Red Bull and Malibu Rum.

## ***What was the thought process behind changing your business model?***

**Worsley:** To be frankly honest, the current state of the advertising industry in Africa has lead to this change and revolution. The advertising industry in South Africa, generally does perpetuate stereotypes to certain classes and a lot of people will say that it is an "All white male club". South African agencies are based on traditional structures, where everyone works in silos.

The EMPIRE business model is a collaboration and combination of different people from a variety of backgrounds, each with their own expertise and insights to leverage off. Creating a "we culture", instead of a "me culture" inspired from our unique South African identity.

## ***What does innovation mean to you?***

**Worsley:** Innovation is the core of our business. Whenever people say innovation they often think of technology, but actually the core definition is "revolution and transformation". It's about creating something new and a new way of working in a constantly evolving world. This is why diversity is essential, because in order to keep this revolution going, we need

different views to challenge our own perspectives



Lusanda Worsley

### ▣ ***How important is innovation for businesses today?***

**Worsley:** Innovation in advertising has transformed drastically because of how quickly we evolve as human beings. Take for instance from an old school advert on television, radio or newspaper print, to influencers “promoting” a certain product or service in their Snapchat and Instagram feeds, which fits in with their lifestyle and doesn’t even come across as advertising.

This is why I feel the need to address the essential power and effect of diversity within the advertising industry. If I can sum it down to one simple word, INSIGHTS!

Innovators need to know:

- Who their audience is
- What their audience wants
- What their audience needs
  
- Most importantly, how their audience lives.

### ▣ ***Tell us a bit about the TVC for Empire and your message***

**Worsley:** I wanted to launch the new EMPIRE by doing something captivating and rather unusual, so I pulled my innovators together and we conceptualised, produced and directed an EMPIRE commercial.

The concept was to create something visually appealing that represented EMPIRE in a unique and innovative way. A piece to launch the new EMPIRE and crush all the stereotypes of what EMPIRE was labeled as.

All the visual representations are powerful, real, raw, rich elements that act as a metaphor for what we are and what we stand for, the new faces of the advertising, and a revolution of our own.

“I stand as one but come as ten thousand.”

Watch the EMPIRE TVC below:

[EMPIRE I Innovations Agency](#) from [Lucy Worsley](#) on [Vimeo](#).

## ABOUT BEVERLEY KLEIN

Beverley Klein is the editor of the Marketing Media South Africa section on [Bizcommunity.com](#). With a background in journalism and historical studies, she's dived into the world of industry news, curating content, writing and interviewing thought leaders. She's often spotted in a forest on the weekend and rarely seen without a camera. Follow [@BevCPT](#).

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