

Maybe we should try 'fun' this year

By  Damon Stapleton

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Last year was a very serious year. People were very serious. They were serious about where advertising is going.



Picture taken at Yayoi Kusama exhibition © – [Damon's Brain](#).

There were lots of serious conversations about the new models of advertising. There were serious predictions about the industry ending. Even the work seemed to be about very serious things.

I had reached December 2017 and my overwhelming feeling was the business had become a bit strange. A lot of doom and gloom. A lack of confidence. Perhaps I had read too many blogs and articles, but you could feel people trying to come up with processes and models to solve the issue of where advertising was going.

Nobody mentioned the word 'fun' in any of these articles.

Now, a lot of this has to do with money.

“ As an old friend of mine used to say, advertising isn't rocket science, but a lot of people make money pretending it is.

And, as Mae West once said, the last word in showbusiness is 'business'. Trust me, I get it. ”

However, we only get money if we have creativity to give. That's why I would like to talk about creativity and how to protect it. In this instance, creativity is more important than money, because creativity is the solution. And many forget, without creativity, there is nothing at the heart of our business. In fact, there is no business.

Perhaps, all the things I have mentioned have created a certain amount of fear in our industry. The fear of making a mistake. What if I do something wrong. Now, if there is one thing I know it is that fear and creativity cannot live in the same place. And making mistakes is part of the creative process. Tricky.

So, the danger that exists in our business is the possibility that as we try to eradicate mistakes and create more efficient, streamlined perfect processes, we start to embrace formulas instead of discovery. We start to make the same work over and over. Something that I believe is already happening on a massive scale. We are finding it harder to try new things. We don't make mistakes, but we don't get it right, either. We become boring, at a time when it has never more important to be un-boring.

You may have heard the saying, you cannot cut your way to growth.

I think many in our business are doing this. It is a short-term solution. And, it might not be a solution at all.

The only way to grow is to have new ideas. And for that you need creativity.

And that is the one thing we have.

So, my fervent prayer for 2018 is we remember this fact. We replace the word 'fear' with 'fun'. Because, although this might seem counter-intuitive, enjoying what you do is the way you get to better ideas.

Better ideas, bigger ideas and ideas that change everything is what we need.

To get them, there are certain ingredients that are required. They have never changed and never will:

1. You need smart, talented people who care.
2. You need the right amount of time.
3. Lastly, the third and most vital ingredient: No matter how stressful it all is, you should laugh your ass off together. It should be fun.

What many don't understand is that without fun, you will never have the first two ingredients. Ever. Creativity in your business will slowly die. The one thing your business needs to exist.

Fun is not a nice to have. It is the oxygen creativity needs. It is what creates our confidence. It is something we take for granted. We shouldn't.

I hope 2018 is the year we as an industry realise that we will never defend our way to victory. We need to laugh again. It is how we will grow.

"I have a fun clause in my contract. If I'm not having fun I can leave." – James Burrows

ABOUT DAMON STAPLETON

Damon is regional chief creative officer for DDB in New Zealand and Australia. Before that, ECD at Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, before that, group ECD of TBWA Hunt Lascaris and global ECD of Standard Bank. He has won over 500 awards internationally, including a D&AD Black Pencil, Cannes Grand Prix, Grand Clio, ADC Black Cube and most effective ad in the world by Warc 100. Damon is now regional chief creative officer for DDB in New Zealand and Australia...

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