

#LoeriesRankings with MullenLowe

 By Leigh Andrews

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Just when you thought the Loeries buzz was over, the Loeries' rankings are in! I chatted to some of this year's top ranked creatives post-celebrations. Here MullenLowe's CCO Kirk Gainsford and creative director Joanina Pastoll share their views.



Gainsford says, "While the agencies celebrate the marketers don't care, what is wrong with this picture and who is guilty?"

Kirk Gainsford, chief creative officer or CCO of MullenLowe based in Cape Town, spoke [before Loeries 2016](#) about the "great divide" related to how clients and agencies perceive award-winning work, despite the overwhelming evidence that winning at South Africa's most prestigious awards show creates significantly more momentum and exposure for the brand, the client and the agency. Now, as we gear up for 2017, Gainsford elaborates, "Marketing and advertising can either be seen as an expense to business, or as an investment. But, no CEO or CMO worth their pay cheque and shareholders support would deny that creativity is the greatest advantage they have against their competition. The argument against creativity is out of touch, tired and has long been discredited. Then it comes as no surprise that, when the Loeries' results and rankings come out, all of the country's leading execs sit up and take notice. That doesn't really happen, does it?"

"Agency celebrations are like teenage parties on Instagram"

So, he adds, "Agency celebrations are like teenage parties on Instagram, 'make them look good and hope somebody likes them', but who really cares that MullenLowe, a small agency, up against more than 640 agencies (some 5 times our size) came 7th in SA, and although we lost our 2-year hold on first place for small agencies to another great little agency in SA, we featured right at the top again this year. Who cares that the work was all real work, with 7 birds across design, direct, TV and effectiveness. Woohoo, pour the Cap Classic. If anybody outside of young creatives and our 2 offices care, they will share and like. Sure, agencies are full of young wild types and in most cases also full of big egos, so self-congratulatory parties can go over the top, besides, you're only really successful when you are successful consistently. Many marketing departments take one look at the celebrations and roll their eyes."

But, Gainsford asks, "what if you were a CMO that believed that investing great creativity would give you the edge, better packaging, better TV communications or events or a different approach to talking to customers could really propel you forward? Then these scores need to be seriously considered. The same way investors study the financials and share prices of potential investments. And although you certainly don't invest only on the merits of a share price, other factors like leadership, experience, resilience, energy, track record and passion will absolutely be part of the equation, you should be aware of their value. Who is consistently doing work I take notice of? Who really seems to find new ways of compelling customers to act? Who can do great things with smaller budgets? Who makes great radio, websites, posters or apps?"

"Unless you are a marketer or CEO that believes the marketing budget only appears on the income statement and conceptually could never be on the balance sheet, then rather don't spend the money, because your agency or design studio will never add real value. They will always be an unwelcome expense. We continue to say that we want to work with the world's best marketers, because then we will invest more, try more, sometimes fail more, but always achieve more. Great marketers – not just great agencies – do great work," he concludes.

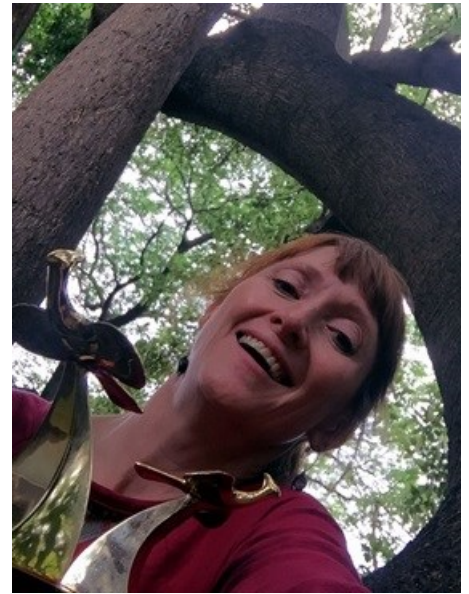
What's a title? Mull(-ing) MullenLowe's Loeries 2016 success

MullenLowe's certainly putting that into practice. As a result of the '[seven birds](#)' Gainsford referenced, this year's agency rankings saw MullenLowe ranked seventh for SA as well as overall agency, eighth by regional agency group, third for communication design and third for medium-sized (41 to 99 employees) agency for the year. Gainsford himself also features eighth in the 'chief creative officer 2016' table.

Joanina Pastoll from MullenLowe's Johannesburg office, builds on Gainsford's points below. Known for her 18 years at Cross Colours, which merged with MullenLowe 3 years ago, she asks, "What's a title?" That's because despite her business card stating she's a creative director, she loves bringing projects to life and making things so refers to herself as an "-ing" – "Working, playing, making, gazing, thinking, flowing, inventing, styling, baking, realising, traveling, wondering, reading, emailing, researching, hanging chairing (my hobby) and other ing, ing, ing things." In addition to "working on the 'ing'", she's also focused on pitches, the next Connect project, some dreaming and blue skies.

Here, Pastoll further shares how the group feel about their wins, as well as plans to extend their winning streak next year and who they admire most in the industry...

1. Share your top emotions linked to your Loeries' wins and 2016 rankings.



Pastoll with some the Loeries in the trees in Jozi.

Pastoll: We were *thrilled* to win some Loeries. And it's a great feeling to know we are up there with the other talented creatives in the country; it's great for the peeps working on the projects and for the agency overall.

2. How do you plan on keeping – if not bettering – your rankings next year?

Pastoll: We always try to do work that is "interesting, conceptual, beautifully crafted and that has an impact in its environment," so it's not a plan for awards or for ranking, really – we do what we do – and if we end up high up in the rankings, it's part of that philosophy, this journey. It's not really planned for how we rank.

3. Where are you displaying your Loeries? How does this year's flock differ from your haul last year?

Pastoll: I like displaying my Loeries in my garden in the trees, ideas should be set free, no? The awards are in the agency awards' cabinet somewhere, and in places like the team's Instagram accounts. This year's haul was really nice as there were quite a few!

4. Tell us who you personally admire in the industry – both an established mentor figure as well as a newcomer making waves.

Pastoll: I am inspired by Rolf Fehlbaum, the chairman emeritus and active member of the board of directors of Vitra, a family-owned furniture company with headquarters in Birsfelden, Switzerland, for his vision, youthfulness, making commercial items including aesthetics, embracing different people and their talent, commissioning interesting and beautiful buildings and for collecting tin robots! As for newcomers, Kirsten Muldoon isn't such a newcomer but she's newly back in SA from the Netherlands and I love her new initiative, [Makers of Things](#) – South Africa can do with peeps like her!

Here's to looking forward to seeing what 2017 holds! [Click through](#) to our Loeries' special section for more, [here](#) for more on MullenLowe, the ultimate challenger brand, and be sure to follow MullenLowe on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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