

TBWA: proving to be a master of all at the *FM* AdFocus Awards 2022

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

1 Dec 2022

Last night the *FM* AdFocus Awards 2022 winners were announced, and the evening belonged to TBWA, named the AdFocus Awards Agency of the Year, also winning four category awards: Large Agency of the Year, Partnership of the Year, as well as the inaugural Group Agency of the Year.



TBWA was named overall Agency of the Year at the AdFocus Awards 2022

Luca Gallarelli, Group CEO of TBWA SA says the agency was already excited to be named finalists across many categories. "When you come to this event with as many finalists as we had, your first emotion is excitement because you think okay, we have done well as a group across multiple categories which is always our ambition."

He explains that each of their agencies wants to be the best in their field. "We don't want to be jack of all trades and master of none but rather jack of all trades and master of all. So, the excitement very quickly this morning turned into anxiety because you set yourself up for immense disappointment by rocking up with so many finalists and not winning anything."



2022 FM AdFocus Award winners announced!

30 Nov 2022



A deliberate organisation

Looking at the achievements of the agency he says that going into and through Covid and then coming out of Covid, the agency was very deliberate on how it organised itself in South Africa.

“We have been very deliberate on how we have chosen to manage ourselves and our talent, and how we have faced the market and engaged with our clients,” he says.

But, he adds, to say that it is the culmination of three years of hard work or four or five years, would be disingenuous because it would betray all the work that came before.

“It is wonderful to be acknowledged objectively by your peers. I hoped for two or three awards but did not expect it; I am not arrogant enough to ever expect these kinds of things, so I am genuinely a bit speechless,” says Gallarelli.



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Appreciating business results

Grid Worldwide was named Medium Agency of the Year. Nathan Reddy, chief creative officer and founder says the award is special. “The combination of so many different criteria, together with the idea of the resilience of business savvy and doing great work and then to be judged by a jury of your peers means winning this award very special.”

He says the award tells you something about the calibre of an agency. “I am a creative, but I am also a businessperson. I know creativity is great, but I also understand the world of business. So, for a business to be thriving over the past three years and to win a business award says a lot to our clients who appreciate business awards.”

Alongside 'the best of the best'

Winning the Small Agency of the Year means a great deal to the Rapt Creative team

“On the one hand, the validation from our peers is highly valued - and here I include the AdFocus judges, whose approach and due diligence to their task was nothing short of world-class.

“On the other, it's a welcome reminder in a very tough trading environment that we are doing things right and our plans are firmly on the right track,” says CEO Garreth van Vuuren.



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Emily Stander 6 Jul 2022



But he says the most rewarding is that the Rapt name has now been mentioned alongside 'the best of the best'; a major achievement for what many would still describe as a start-up.

“I think this award came to us because we've championed diversity and inclusion from the get-go, remained committed to

delivering a quality product to our client partners no matter how tough doing business got, and proven to be highly adaptable in shifting the business to conquer the challenges thrown up by the ever-shifting global crisis while capitalising on consumer trends,” says van Vuuren.

Showing business value

Razor PR added to its impressive collection of awards this year, taking home the Public Relations Agency of the Year for the second time in consecutive years.

Christopher Lazley, partner and ECD at the agency says the award is a validation not only of the agency but of the changes they would like to see in the public relations industry.

“Our goal has not just been for ourselves, we really want the category to go forward by being deliberate about things such as the measurement of PR so that it is not fluffy but something you can show as business value,” he says.



Razor revolutionises PR with global first in measurement

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For him, the success of the agency stems from doing amazing work for great clients. “It is about being that runway of trust with our clients. The ability to get clients to be brave and not just to de-risk everything takes time. Once they trust you, then they will stand for something and have an opinion and then they really have a table stake in the market.”

The other success factor is its people. “We have a senior team deliberately by design. We have also worked extremely hard on guarding our culture. As we have scaled and become bigger, we realised that it is quite easy for your culture to get lost. We want people who are kind and who are human, so our orientation is always kindness first and it has served us,” he explains.

Giving back to the industry

For Fran Luckin, Grey Africa’s chief creative officer, named Industry Leader of the Year this award is meaningful because it is not a creative award.

“When they were reading out the characteristics of the person who won this award before they announce it, I automatically thought the person is a CEO, and was trying to think who this person could be. And it was me,” she says.

“It is great to be honoured as an industry leader when I always think of myself as the creative person who runs the studio. It’s an honour to be given this award because I don’t always think about my industry impact, I just think about what I must do today in my agency.”

But Luckin has worked widely in industry, she was Loeries Chair and is the current Creative Circle vice-chair, amongst others but she says for her that is just giving back, and she believes people need to give back. “As the Creative Circle we are about transformation, and we are actively looking at ways to bring more young people into the industry.”

When she was young, advertising was glamorous. “I am not sure it is viewed that way now. So, it’s important to get young people into the industry and get them hooked on the glamour and how great it is to earn a living from creative services, and this is all part of our roles as creatives,” says Luckin.

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A unique award

Speaking at the event, the 2022 AdFocus Awards chairperson, Faheem Chaudhry, partner and MD, M&C Saatchi Abel, emphasised the uniqueness of the AdFocus Awards in the industry.

“The jury discussions looked beyond the surface of the entries and into the real detail and substance that underpins them. To be named an agency of the year, all facets of the entry need to be firing on all cylinders. It was not enough, although still commendable to be a growing business.

“Is the product and the output that the agency produces of outstanding quality? Does it create flourishing and sustainable client relations? Does the agency recognise its responsibility in driving diversity, inclusivity, transformation, training, and development and does it do this critically in a way that is authentic behaviour vs box ticking? Does the agency contribute to the industry and to our country?

“All these factors combined are a formidable ask of a business and those that scored highest really demonstrated excellence across all the criteria,” says Chaudhry.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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