

Hey presto! Incorporate the art of magic and wonder into your business, whatever the industry

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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Marcel Oudejans is a creative jack of all trades. Among them, he's a corporate magician, keynote speaker and complete conference MC, as producer/founder of Cape Town Magic and executive producer of Magic Africa Productions. He also spoke on the theme of "Wonder" at last week's Creative Mornings Cape Town event, without a PowerPoint presentation - here's what you missed.



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If you're not sure what's going on here don't worry it's just a touch of Marketing magic which @ramblinglitchi123, Bizcommunity's Marketing &Media Editor-in-Chief Leigh Andrews, attended as part of the latest monthly #CreativeMornings @capetown_cm talk at @aaaschoolsa. Read about how corporate magician #MarcelOudejans @marcel_perform suggested incorporating the art of magic and wonder into your business, whatever the industry, without a PowerPoint presentation. Watch out for coverage soon... #bizcommunity #corporatemagic #corporatemagician #magicmornings #intellectualcapital #africanbusinessmedia #corporatepublishing #contentmarketing #contentpartners #contentdistribution #B2Bpublishing #brandcontent #industryevent

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Presenting a live stage performance that didn't involve a PowerPoint presentation, Oudejans kept attendees of the June edition of Creative Mornings Cape Town at the AAA School of Advertising, enthralled.

In telling his story, Oudejans said 'wonder is the code for tapping into our most creative selves as it helps us expand our horizons and encounter parallel universes as yet unexplored'. Who doesn't want to add a bit of that magic to their everyday business dealings? (Clearly, you do, or you wouldn't be reading this)...

With 'magician' listed as his day job, Oudejans is a chief of wonder, though he says the audience expectations have changed from the early days, where simply flicking a lighter on and off hinted at the power of fire – you have to do something different, like have that lighter turn into a soft ball as sleight of hand.

Oudejans did just this with AAA School's creative faculty dean [Karen Pienaar](#), and commented that the surprise on her face is the best way to demonstrate wonder.

Remember the first time...

Oudejans says to think back to the first time you saw a fireworks display. The audience going, 'Ooh, aah...' He plays in those moments of wonder and finds commercial uses for it.

You had to keep an eye on Oudejans throughout the session as he pulled a far-too-big-to-have-really-been-there rock from his shoe while speaking of the wonder he imagines cavemen felt when first tricked by a "now you see it, now you don't" rock in the hand trick.

There's no denying the world has a different perspective today and almost anything is possible given the ever-snowballing progress of technology. That's why Oudejans works to find the unexpected, as our brains are finely tuned to recognise patterns and solve problems.

Demonstrating the impossible made possible, he spoke of how the founder of Amway had a heart transplant and got to have dinner with the person who donated the heart. She wasn't a ghost, she had undergone a heart-lung transplant and so received a new heart herself in the process.



That's why he said, "What we call impossible is possibly quite possible. Our brains are designed to find the pattern but we often use the rule incorrectly and make mistakes, often when we're missing important details like this."

To prove the fallacy of routine, Oudejans showed alternating black and white sheets of paper, asking the audience to call out the colour. We got so used to this that despite knowing the answer to "What do cows drink" is "water", most of the group quickly shouted out "milk" as we'd been programmed into thinking in terms of 'black and white' – literally.

Oudejans said this shows how our brains are just not suited for bombardment. Magicians make good use of this.

In telling a series of jokes about how you know there's an elephant in the fridge ([click here](#) if you've not heard this joke thread before), Oudejans showed that that initial joke set up is something most people understand, but the magician or conversation master then takes the flow in a different direction and shows how oddly the set-up meets up with the unexpected.

“ The giraffe, the elephant and the fridge. 🐘 🐘 🐘 🐘 🐘

You can't see the elephant, he's in the fridge [#DerbyUniFoL19 pic.twitter.com/oPLWdReLFe](#)— Dr Louise Robinson (@Doc_R_) [July 1, 2019](#) ”

That's what results in laughter.

Internally, the process is equally magical as a sheath grows over the neural network as something becomes more concrete as a pathway after having thought or done it a few times.

So when people laugh before the punchline, they've made the connection before you. When that's about what we think to be impossible, we're inspired to look for more of that in future.

Creating an atmosphere of magic

Explaining what makes magic work, Oudejans spoke of what he's learned in finding a home for his Monday night Cape Town Magic Club over the years.

“ It's been everywhere from a dingy bar with a pop-up removable theatre to an underground bank vault and a classy champagne bar. The most effective venue saw the audience enter through a bookcase in a gentlemen's club – no longer in existence – as this created a moment where people were excited for the magic to come. It added to the wonder of the experience. ”

When the audience first had to battle to find parking outside, then entered a vast building without smoke machines, that

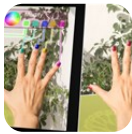
moment of wonder only really kicked in with the first trick performed, which meant they were more critical of the magic itself.

Oudejans spoke of the importance of just this: Your audience must be in the right frame of mind before you share the magic, whatever your industry.

How to make magic

The technique of the magic is the same as with any hobby or sport – practice repeatedly, until you can do it in your sleep.

Oudejans says he got into magic the usual way – most see a magician perform a show and get hold of a kit. His mom took him to the library during the winter school holidays, took out a book of magic, taught herself a simple trick with ropes and performed it for him. His mind was blown as this wasn't a magician performing a trick, this was his mom.



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She told him to read the book and teach himself, so he did - the rest is history.

Interestingly, Oudejans said that of the 50 professional magicians in Africa, roughly 40 are in South Africa and as many as 35 of those are in Cape Town.

Oudejans realised that this meant we see more magic here than anywhere else in Africa. He then started up Magic Africa Productions, to help others on the continent. It's not all the swoosh of a scarf here and shake of a wand there, though.

Make your audience expect the unexpected

You can spend months learning the intricacies of a specific magic trick but no one teaches you how to make a poster or market yourself on social media, and much of the job is based on sending emails and scheduling events in calendars.

Oudejans has realised he needs to do that part well in order to focus on what he's most passionate about – the wonder of magic.

Explaining this, Oudejans said that most of the clients he works for have audiences familiar with magic, expecting him to know such greats as Chris Angel and Dynamo as their TV shows are global. Now, Oudejans wants to take the world-class Africa, talent in magic and inspire other young people to get involved.



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It's about using illusion as a way to find out how people see the world and is often used at weddings, corporate events and product launches. Oudejans said this is especially effective when speaking of the 'wow factor' in customer service.

It's all about the moment of wonder and what that creates.

From a marketing perspective, the brand creates a moment that others feel compelled to talk about.

A word on the wonder of smartphones

Ultimately, you don't need to learn how to perform magic tricks to create that moment of wonder. Oudejans said that it's all part of playing to your passion for something. If you're inspired by what looks impossible, pursue it. If you create that magic of wonder for others, they will talk about it.

Oudejans said that smartphones should be seen in a new light – this device that lets us connect to the world should be constantly evoking wonder in terms of what it can do, but we forget the wonder as we see it in action almost 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



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Don't let that happen to the magic of your work.

Oudejans added that most people will be fooled most of the time by most things. Some will figure out how it works, which is why you need to constantly hone your craft and add something new to your offering.

As with most things, if you take the time to carefully read the instructions you can teach yourself how to do it. If you want to learn how to do something, Google it. Chances are someone has written down or videoed the steps.

When giving presentations, he said PowerPoint is the most used format. Rather incorporate something you're good at that's not related to your work but shows the context of your work. Play a song, do a handstand, paint a picture – anything that brings a fresh perspective.

Be excited and interested in your topic and show your audience something interesting.

In closing, Oudejans said if you can demonstrate a story rather than just telling it, do so. Find a fun way to get your point across – that's the wonder of magic.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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