

# Taking advertising to the moon and back

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Going to space is how Fran Luckin, chief creative officer of Grey South Africa, describes the advertising industry.



Supplied. This year Fran Luckin will be a Cannes Lions Festival jury member for the sixth time

“I read they are building a new rocket to go back to the Moon with engines that are twice as powerful as any engine before it, but this will require enormous amounts of fuel.

“It made me think... Everyone wants to go to space. It’s exciting and an adventure. But it’s going to be difficult, and you will have to work your ass off. There might not be a lot of oxygen at times!

“But it will be amazing, and you will be the envy of everyone, and everyone will talk about it - like when you do a great piece of work!”

She says while advertising is a fun way to earn a living, it is hard. “But it is relevant, and it is not going to go away anytime soon.

“We contribute an enormous amount to the economy, but I don’t think we get the respect. It’s not anyone’s fault, we need to promote space, aka the industry, for people to want to go there.”

## Learning from listening

Not quite space, this month Luckin will be attending the Cannes Lions Festival in France. As a jury member for the second year in a row - and her sixth tour of jury duty (yes, you read that right!) - this year she is judging in the Film category.



### Fran Luckin judges her 6th Cannes Lion

Grey Africa 13 May 2022



What she loves about being on a jury is talking about ideas. “Being on a jury like Cannes, you have some of the smartest and most accomplished people in the room discussing ideas. You learn by listening to what other people think,” she says.

She adds: “Sometimes there is a piece you didn’t think was that great and then you listen to someone who sees it in a different way and it makes you change your mind.”

## Supporting transgender

Luckin says there are definite trends from the entries she has viewed so far.

“There is a lot of awareness in the work - some of it very moving - of gender identity and transgender and support for it. Globally, many brands are taking a stand and supporting the transgender community.”

The trend of doing good continues. “There is a lot of social consciousness in what I have seen. But, as always, there is quite a lot of work that tells you what to think.”

## Superb production quality

What has stood out for her is the superb production quality overall. “The work has been produced with an extremely high degree of production polish, from music and casting to cinematography.

“I judged Film in 2010 and there was a large amount of work which you wondered why and how they entered based on their production quality,” she says.

## The talent drain

Back to South Africa and Luckin says the industry is struggling a little due to a loss of talent.

“Many people have or are immigrating, which isn’t necessarily a train smash because we have always exported great talent. But while this is a feather in our cap, it does leave a gap,” she says.

This gap is specifically on the experienced senior level.

“If they haven’t left the country, many seasoned creatives are working from home as they are enjoying the freedom and flexibility it offers. Another trend is to freelance for overseas companies from here.”



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## Doing art is not a profession

The good news is that we have lots of juniors in the industry. But, she says, the bad news is that we need to do more to reach young people - especially at school level.

"There is still a lack of understanding of what a career in advertising is. Parents tell their kids doing art is not a profession. It is up to us to explain that advertising is a viable career."

Take a problem area that has been a point of concern over the past few years, copywriters.

For Luckin, the problem lies in the lack of clarity about what a copywriter is and does.

"There are plenty of young people going into social media, working as community and social media managers and even content creators. That's kind of the same as a copywriter."

Copywriting is also a relatively easy career to get into, she says. "I have hired people who studied philosophy or journalism.

"To be a graphic designer you must know the software and design principles; to be a writer you don't need to know any software, you don't even need to have a Mac."



Roanna Williams, the first woman to chair the Creative Circle

11 Mar 2022



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## Boosting the industry

Speaking as deputy chair of the Creative Circle, she says they are working through their education committee and the Blackboard organisation which aims to attract underprivileged high school students to the industry.

"But no one knows about it," she says.

"Most of the Creative Circle's presence in social media has historically been about awards, and awards are an important part of the industry, but we feel that we need to be more about thought leadership as well.

"So that when something happens in the industry, there could be an intelligent point of view from the Creative Circle."

Both Luckin and Creative Circle chairperson, Roanna Williams, feel that the Creative Circle should have a far louder and more serious voice to elevate the image of the communications and marketing industry.

At the same time, she says they acknowledge that everyone on the Creative Circle exco already has a job, running agencies or heading up creative departments, so it's a tricky one.

"As the official voice of the industry, we would like to focus a bit more on growing the brand of the industry, she adds.

## 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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