

# Creativity's 'curse'



By Louise Marsland

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There's a social media meme that likens the brain of a creative person to having 100 tabs open all at once. How to harness the creativity inherent in people with intricate imaginations and ideas for work, depends a lot on what they also do after hours.

Our friends think we have ADD since we talk and think so fast, jumping from one topic to another and I've heard lots of creative people say they battle to turn their brains off, because the ideas keep zinging around.



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The trend in the creative industries is to hire creative people who are 'all-rounders', meaning that they are creative at work and outside of work. This is essential to creating the right diversity inside agencies to deliver a range of work to clients.

At the excellent Loeries' international judges seminar this year, billed as the DStv Seminar of Creativity, PJ Pereira, chief creative officer and co-founder of Pereira and O'Dell, San Francisco, stressed to the assembled local industry that in order to deliver on a range of ideas and understand various consumer segments, agencies themselves had to employ a diverse group of people - from different socio-economic backgrounds, gender, race, ages and interests.

And because the industry is high performing and stressful with no limit on working hours sometimes, Pereira said it was very important that the new breed of creative people being employed were as interesting after hours: "We work in a very tense industry. I'm interested in the things people do outside of work. Those experiences are the material [that lead to] great stories."

## Creative life

A recent report in *Fast Company* USA 'My Creative Life' series, suggest that creative types who get distracted by too many ideas and feel that their imaginations are restricted by projects at work, need to be creative in other spheres of their lives in order to keep being high performers at work. Having other creative outlets keeps them sane and high functioning.

In an article entitled '[How creative projects at home jumpstart creativity at work](#)', *Fast Company* quotes Lyft creative director Jesse McMillin as saying that sometimes his work puts limits on his imagination: "I'm one of those people who it's hard to turn my brain off-it's constantly going with a million ideas. All of those can't be used in the specific projects that you might have for a commercial purpose. Those types of projects are very restrictive." So McMillin also does abstract oil painting in the evenings. Some of his abstract concepts have also found their way into his design work.

Even those in more 'traditional' career paths like engineering who also pursue creative pursuits, can add value to not only their work-life balance, but also bring their creative sides to problem solving and entrepreneurial needs within their own organisations, as *Fast Company* reports in '[How to integrate your creative double life with your career](#)'.

Much has been written in past and modern literature (and now blogs) about 'the curse of creativity', which in today's world is being seen more as a panacea to solving the world's ills, since creative people are natural problem solvers.

There's a lovely blog on '[The Necessity of Madness: Creativity's Curse](#)', which quotes Nietzsche as saying: "You must have chaos within you to give birth to a dancing star." Beautiful.

It is that urge to create, the life experience that comes with many different experiences that gives birth to great stories and

bodes well for the industry. Storytelling is the big trend in marketing right now in order to connect with people - the customers of the brands you represent - as a wonderful and colourful narrative moves people.

## ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMOG Files newsletter. Web: [www.sourceagency.co.za](http://www.sourceagency.co.za).

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