

The four legs of a chair - why partnership is the future

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June/July in ad-land means one thing and one thing only: Cannes. Yes, that time of year where the global advertising and marketing industry descend on beautiful Cannes in the south of France for suntanning, midnight parties on the beach, and a spot of advertising.

This year the media category was won by Sheba Cat foods. A brilliant campaign where the advertiser launched a 3-year project to rebuild coral reefs in areas around the world where reefs were devastated by overfishing. The campaign was genius. It spelled the word 'hope' in coral that can be seen from space. The brand partnered with Google and even made the patch of ocean 'dive-able' with Streetview. It raised money for more reef development, shone a spotlight on an important topic, and promoted a brand in a healthy, sustainable way.

The beauty of the campaign is, however, in who owns it. Well, everyone really.

The idea was conceptualised by AMV BBDO in London and built out with the help of the media agency, Google and the client. It involved the community, governmental institutions and many more stakeholders. It was a case study of the importance of partnership in getting big, dial shifting campaigns off the ground.

Of the 9 Golden Lions awarded in the media category, almost all of them had these themes in common. The theme of **partnership**. All partners need to be equally strong, equally empowered, and equally informed. Like four legs of a chair, you need everyone playing their part.

1. A close collaboration between the creative agency and the media agency

Not one of the Golden Lions was awarded to a pureplay media agency. The media and creative agency worked super closely together to achieve magic. All too often in South Africa, this isn't something we see enough of. Creative and media agencies don't see each other as partners with different skills, working together to solve a common problem. All too often we get caught up in wranglings about money, about ideologies and about deadlines, instead of truly seeing each other as partners.

If the advertising and media agency world wants to see a future of growth and prosperity, we need to tighten our relationships and fight for partnership. Place our own agendas on the back burner.

2. A close collaboration between media and tech companies

Five of the campaigns that won at Cannes in the media category involved a tech partner supporting the campaign. From Google with Hope Reef, ChatPat in India, and Polycam and 'Back up Ukraine'. Media and tech need to work closer together. The old adage of 'the medium is the message' has never been truer. Now, one could argue that the 'tech platform is the message'.

Does your media agency treat the major tech giants like suppliers? Not going to work.

3. A close collaboration between the agencies, the tech company, and the client

For years now, clients cannot sit back in their boardroom chair and wait for the agencies to waltz in and wow them with their clever thinking. Successful clients are involved in the campaign, from conceptualisation.

The product might have to change around the campaign idea. The agency, or tech partner might need the client to adapt to

a new direction. This can however only happen when all four partners – like four legs of a chair – are working together optimally.

The future belongs to those brands and businesses that know when, how and who to partner with.

Contributed by The AMF Board.

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