

#BehindtheLoeries with... Gaby de Abreu

You know him as ECD of Switch and from Brand Council South Africa (BCSA), but Gaby de Abreu is also a member of the Loeries Committee.

What you may not know is that De Abreu joined the first university of branding in this country, KSDP Pentagraph, where he started off making tea. There, he was introduced to the world of brands, learning a lot from many talented individuals around him at the time. He eventually became creative director there, and after a few years decided to go on his own and co-founded Switch.

From this, he's been privileged to have travelled the world on many high-profile branding projects, for clients such as Investec, Coca-Cola, Famous Brands, Four Seasons hotels and FIFA. Of those, he lists his absolute highlights so far as designing the 2010 FIFA World Cup identity and branding programme, being nominated to represent Africa on the board of the International Council of Design, and being on the jury at Cannes.

It's quite the impressive creative resume. Here, De Abreu takes us further behind the scenes of his daily work life...



Couldn't do it without my peeps!

1. Where do you live, work and play?

De Abreu: I live in Emmarentia, play in Joburg and work in Bryanston.

2. What's your claim to fame?

De Abreu: At the age of 14, I played football against a Soweto XI in the main curtain raiser between Orlando Pirates and Moroka Swallows. It was the 1982 Mainstay Cup Final at Orlando Stadium, and I was then featured in the *Bona* magazine!

3. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

De Abreu: Creative review, Tasha's breakfasts, the occasional cigar, white-powder beaches, London, La Liga, non-fiction

and Instagram.

4. What do you love about your industry?

De Abreu: The diversity and the buzz, brand identity design today, packaging tomorrow. Working with young people. Being exposed to different industry sectors and multidisciplinary design platforms... oh, and who can forget all the bullsh*t that comes along with it.

5. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

De Abreu: My morning begins with JHB traffic planning that doesn't include speedbumps. I check diaries and then the day fast-forwards from morning school runs to creative dry runs interspersed with copious amounts of coffee. I attend client meetings, design meetings, meetings about meetings, views and reviews and, when the dust finally settles at the end of the day, go home to enter into negotiations/celebrations with my teenage daughters and amazing wife. I finally end the evening with some non-fiction media to make me go to sleep.

6. What are the tools of your trade?

De Abreu: iPhone, clutch pencil and note pad.

7. Who is getting it right in your industry?

De Abreu: King James and Nathan Reddy.

8. What are you working on right now?

De Abreu: Designers' nerves and craft beer labels.

9. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.

De Abreu: I can't stand industry buzzwords. I wish we could come up with new words for narrative, engagement, sustainability etc. The problem is that whenever new buzzwords come into the industry, they hang around for a long time.

The latest buzz expressions seem to be 'big data', 'seamless' and 'programmatic buying'.

10. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

De Abreu: When I'm active – on long runs, in shopping aisles or in the traffic.

11. What's your secret talent/party trick?

De Abreu: Never losing the ability to juggle a ball from my football-playing days.

12. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

De Abreu: All I can say is that I'm happy that the head of IT sits in the office opposite me!

13. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

De Abreu: Lots of connections.

14. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?

De Abreu: Generate fresh ideas, give more than expected, surprise everyone that you work with and watch how people will notice.

Simple as that. You can read more about De Abreu by [clicking here](#).

Also remember to visit the [Loeries website](#) and our [special section](#) to keep your finger on that creative pulse if you just can't wait for Loeries® Creative Week™ Durban, from taking place 15 to 21 August 2016.

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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