

Follow-up on Cannes with Rob Newlan



By [Pasqua Heard](#)

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Rob Newlan, London-based head of Facebook Creative Shop in the EMEA region, returns from Cannes and his most recent trip to South Africa last week overflowing with creative news. We had a brief chat with him to keep up with his latest insights.

Highlights from Cannes

“It was amazing seeing the talent and purpose-driven work at Cannes. However, there’s a challenge growing around the world to make sure that digital categories in award shows move from novelty to celebrating true, high quality craft.”



Rob Newlan

Newlan spoke about his top three most memorable campaigns, two of which formed part of the Mobile category, at Cannes:

- The Spanish Christmas Lottery Campaign featuring Justino, a thoughtful janitor of a mannequin factory, which won a Cyber Grand Prix at Cannes – “This campaign showed the quality of mobile creativity. It was well-written and showed humanity. It also showed how people use various platforms.”
- Straight Outta Somewhere Campaign created to promote the film, *Straight Outta Compton* – “People have often spoken about user-generated content and this campaign achieved that so well. It had simple, great utility as well as lightweight and strong mobile executions.”
- “The SAB Spike Detector was a great mix of brand, utility and purpose.”

SA’s creativity reviewed

Newlan was impressed with the South African creative industry’s potential and spoke highly of Ogilvy & Mather’s work, especially with regard to their multiple wins at Cannes this year.

“I love coming to South Africa. On my most recent trip, I was excited to see the marriage between traditional creative departments and digital teams. There’s huge talent in South Africa and the SA industry is in a strong place.”

Newlan explained the mobile context in South Africa, saying there are 14 million monthly active users on Facebook in SA, of which 90% use mobile and commented on how this has encouraged an evolution to mobile creativity. “I noticed there’s a general appreciation of building work on mobile platforms in the way that people are using the whole frame of the phone, as well as focusing on video and film for mobile.”

“As for the annual Loeries Awards, I know we’ll be seeing high quality, driven craft and we’ll be investing hugely in the awards.”

Creativity propels technology

“We [at Facebook Creative Shop] believe creativity unlocks technology. There are multiple opportunities for us and we’re looking at how we can work with the community and produce solutions for everybody.”

While Newlan advocates for all the recent [Facebook solutions announced at Cannes](#), he showed particular enthusiasm about the following three:

- “API (audience) insights which base all our work in strong, powerful insights. These provide us with great, human-rich understanding.”
- “Live is an executional app that is phenomenally exciting. It allows for connective work and maintains brands’ authenticity.”
- “The [Slideshow](#) unit, which is 15 times as light in video delivery, offers a film-like experience in low bandwidth areas. This allows us to produce service for everybody.”

Technology changes education as we know it

In the spirit of #MandelaMonth, we enquired as to what solutions Newlan believed technology could provide for greater global good. Newlan expressed excitement towards the benefits of “technology and all kinds of metrics in the world” that will transform education in our lifetime.

“The potential for greater connection opens up bigger solutions for the world. It also opens up more diverse and divergent thinking. In terms of education, it creates opportunities for people to have greater access to different paths of education, which they are able to choose for themselves. It enables them to learn from the best and brightest minds in the world regardless of geography or location.”

Read more of Rob Newlan's insights, [here](#).

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