

Storytelling via social engagement a strong trend

By [Hando Sinisalu](#) and [Maarja Laasu](#)

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Simon Schwaighofer is the Creative Director at Red Bull Creative, the brand's in-house agency in Salzburg. He has been responsible for corporate projects around the energy drink for the last seven years. He also gives lectures on creativity at universities and advertising festivals. On 13-14 August, he will visit SA to speak at [The Best of Global Digital Marketing](#) conference.



Q: You were a jury member at Cannes Lions this year - what were the trends you spotted there? What is the top level in digital marketing in 2014?

Simon Schwaighofer: Overall, it was good to see that you don't feel or see the technical side anymore - everything is much smoother and more fluent now than it was before. So it's now more about the creation itself, not the technology behind it. Even if the back end of the website is very complicated, you feel it's very simple, everything is perfectly crafted and perfectly running.

Another thing I noticed is that brands tell stories via social engagement - this was a very strong trend. There were many cases there, for example the campaigns for Intel + Toshiba and Skype. Several big brands used social engagement as their brand stories.

Also, I saw many campaigns that became the product. It means that at the end of the campaign you will have a product that you can sell. For example, the Killing Kennedy website for the National Geographic channel that was done to promote a TV program, but in the end the website itself was so good that they now use it in schools. And I would buy it if it wouldn't be for free on the internet. Blackberry, Canadian Mint and some other brands also had similar campaigns.

And of course social campaigns were very strong this year. For example the well-known Sweetie case. For me it was the

strongest piece of digital work in Cannes. I will analyse all these campaigns in more detail at The Best of Global Digital Marketing roadshow in South Africa.

Q: Red Bull is famous for marketing via events, for example, the one with Felix Baumgartner's jump, but one may wonder that there's really no direct call to action or sales push included. What's your view on this? It's all about awareness and branding but how does it affect the sales?

Schwaighofer: We get this question a lot. To be honest, it is really not connected to the sales basically. The aim of such campaigns is to connect different people with the brand. That's the strategy behind it. To get through to the consumers. And then we hope they will love the brand and also start to buy it, so the sales will follow.

Q: It was written in one business magazine that Red Bull is not a drink company that makes entertainment, but it's an entertainment company that makes drinks. Is that the real positioning of your company?

Schwaighofer: It works in both ways. You can't put the can aside, but the brand definitely has to be creative and open-minded. Surprising ideas keep the brand alive. With some events, you can really say that Red Bull is an entertainment company, but then there are also lots of projects which really push the drink forward. So it's a mix, I would say.

You have to drive image and vision and at the end of the day, you also have to drive the sales.

Q: What kind of projects you work with at the Red Bull Creative?

Schwaighofer: I work with some projects, which connect analogue and digital. For example the [Red Bull Doodle Art](#) - a global art project in universities where students are challenged to create their best doodles during the lessons. These drawings are really inspiring. Later the doodles are collected and put into a web gallery and at the end, they pick the best ones. There are also real exhibitions around the world. It's an analogue project that actively spreads within digital and social platforms. In fact, at the end of this year the big event of finals and a great exhibition will take place in Cape Town.

I like ideas that grow bigger from year to year because they seem to work. And Red Bull Doodle Art is a good example here. I will present some additional interesting Red Bull projects at the conferences in Cape Town and Johannesburg in August.

In general, it is very challenging to work mainly for one client because you help to build up a whole world, which has many facets from art exhibitions to extreme sports.

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