

Cannes Lions case studies or how not to make rubbish advertising

 By [Terry Levin](#), issued by [Bizcommunity.com](#)

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[Cinemark](#), the official South African [Cannes Lions](#) representatives, in partnership with Bizcommunity, hosted the annual Insights and Trends from Cannes Lions sessions, which took place in Johannesburg on Wednesday, 29 August, and in Cape Town on Friday, 31 August 2018.



The sold out sessions, driven by industry champion Ann Nurock were intended to unpack Cannes Lions award-winning creative thinking for corporate, business and industry guests.

From case studies presented at the Cape Town event by speakers Nurock, CCO of VML Ryan McManus, and CCO and Founder of King James Digital Matt Ross, an overriding zeitgeist of Cannes Lions 2018 emerges that as people increasingly lose faith in governments and political leaders to provide moral compass for global citizens, many brands are stepping into the breach, using creativity and influence for positive social outcomes. It also emerges that to have any hope of winning at Cannes, ads must capture public imagination and disrupt in key areas such as:

- **The environment**
- **Social activism**
- **Diversity**
- **Health innovation**
- **Be loved by the internet**
- **Be authentic**
- **Reinforce a collective humanity**

As a subtext, new AR (augmented reality), VR, Virtual Reality, data and machine learning capabilities are real and there's never been a more important time to be a creative, not only to reinforce our humanity "to do what machines cannot do", but to literally augment with machine learning that will allow it to do what humans cannot.

Here are just some of the creative case studies presented that help illustrate not only contemporary best practice creative thinking, but breakthrough brand awareness and returns on investment.

Disrupting the environment - or how not to make rubbish advertising

The Trash Isles: Winner of a PR Grand Prix 2018 is campaign by publisher LADBible, which puts the conversation about plastic in the oceans at the top of a global agenda. Naming of the Pacific Ocean's trash patch, which is the size of France, as the Trash Isles - and submission to the United Nations to recognise it's status as a country, thereby forcing the UN Environmental Charters to acknowledge its existence and clean it up, is a stroke of genius which has so far seen 250,000 people, including the likes of Al Gore and Dame Judy Dench, apply for citizenship of the the "world's 196th country", which comes complete with its own currency, passport and flag. Sign the UN petition or start your own [here](#).

The Palau Pledge: A double Grand Prix-winning creative idea born out of the need to protect the pristine tropical island of Palau from the ravages of tourism, comes in the form of a rubber stamp! The medium - passports of all tourists arriving at customs who are required to sign the official Palau pledge, not to damage or exploit natural resources such as coral reefs during their stay. A big idea that puts a small island on the map!

Disrupting activism - Create acts not ads *Marc Tutsell*

Bordeaux 2050 - the taste of global warming: Falling squarely under the above "make acts not ads" exhortation is this case study. Born of data from UN Climate Change Conference of Paris (COP21) showing that by 2050 France's famed Bordeaux wine region will suffer climate conditions such as a temperature increases of 2° to 4°, inspired the creation of *Bordeaux 2050* a simulated wine with tagline *The Wine from The Future That Tastes Like Global Warming*.

The fact that there is even a Cannes award category entitled Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Lion ensures winning one is really win-win for brands.

"How to be more human" - Ryan McManus

Presenter Ryan McManus, the Chief Creative officer of VML SA, pointed out that "marketing and making ads are a reflection of the world we live in". Topics such as Brexit, Cambridge Analytica, decrees and refugees have ordinary people standing up and taking action and successful brands moving from monolithic towards the noble pursuits of shared collective human values.

Soccer Song for Change: A local example of a social activism which scooped a Cannes Lions Grand Prix for Ogilvy Cape Town, changed the lyrics of a well-known South African football anthem to tell the story of a woman being abused by her partner when he comes home under the influence from a soccer match. Sung live by a female choir at the 85,000-seater stadium and televised on SABC and Supersport, the brave campaign again shows the potential influence of a brand

manning up to social issues and using public spaces such as football stadia and shebeens as interfaces.

Disrupting authenticity

Macy's Vs Apple: In his presentation Matt Ross used Apple as a case study to illustrate the all-important authenticity factor for brands. For example, efforts to encourage foot traffic to the world's largest store, Macy's, such as yoga classes, fashion immersions, petting zoo experiences etc, still saw the retail giant close 40 stores, yet a similar strategy saw Apple's 500+ stores offering daily classes, such as photography, coding and music labs turning store interfaces into popular and relevant "townsquare" style community hubs.

Apple won a Grand Prix in the new Brand Experience and Activation category by using the already inspirational Apple store destinations as educational resource centres. This is a textbook case for the potential for brands to influence behaviour by being true to their values and one that could perhaps have worked for ToysRUs, FAO Schwartz or in a South African retail/educational context.

Disrupting health

Health and Wellness Lions are where many award-winning criteria such as humanity, activism, augmentation, machine learning etc intersect.

Project Revoice: The voice of Pat Quinn, co-founder of the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, which captured public imagination in 2015, has succumbed to the ALS/MNS disease, but award-winning technology has used footage from his previous talks and interviews to create the algorithms that have digitally "cloned" his voice.

A form of computerised speech was possible for ALS sufferers before, but people said they were embarrassed at their computer sounding voices. The campaign encourages people who have been diagnosed with the condition to record their voice before its inevitable loss, in an initiative known as "voice banking" and moving demonstration of machine learning which, combined with the eye reader assistive technology enables speech without any of traditional facial word formation actions. A taste of what the meeting of human, AR and machine learning may bring in the future.

Disruption, discrimination, diversity

That Coke is a Fanta? In Brazil, apparently "That Coke is a Fanta" is a common homophobic slur. To celebrate International LGBT+ Pride Day, Coca-Cola launched a limited edition Coke can with actual Fanta inside and a message: "This Coke is a Fanta, so what?" thus flipping a derogatory expression into a symbol of pride, which captured the public

and social media imagination to massive brand awareness, engagement and goodwill.

Gender lyrics: The fact that a playlist of pronouns are seldom relevant for same-sex couples, inspired MGM's Universal Love campaign which commissioned top music artists such as Bob Dylan and Kesha to repurpose classic love songs with same-sex lyrics, turning the tables on romantic and wedding standard cover versions forever to take home a Gold Lion.

Disrupt the internet

If you're asking yourself what happened to good old fashioned well-crafted, humorous commercials and clever media buying on traditional broadcast media channels, here's two great examples:

#Tideads: Procter & Gamble Co's Grand Prix winning Tide campaign will restore your faith in advertising. The range of "fake" commercials were produced as a spoof of stereotypical Superbowl advertising categories in the style of a car ad, a beer ad, a deodorant ad and others, before revealing that you've been pranked and every look-alike spot is actually a laundry ad. #Tideads caught on during the game, becoming a great big inside joke, which has been absorbed into popular culture as an internet and social media meme.

Budweiser Vintage Tag Words: Another example of the use of traditional media is Print and Publishing Lion Grand Prix winner, Budweiser's Vintage Tag Words campaign. The campaign used the medium of out-of-home billboards to

encourage people to search the internet for terms that take them to historical images of people holding Bud cans or bottles.

For example, a Google search for "1969 musicians sessions Budweiser" reveals images of the Rolling Stones' Mick Jagger and Keith Richards holding cans of Bud, and a search for "1987 California hip-hop Budweiser" photos of the Beastie Boys' on stage with the brand. This offers a clever way of fusing old and new media to reinforce the brand's rockstar cred while avoiding any copyright or permission liability.

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