

A sound client-agency partnership results in impressive wins for UJ's 4IR campaign

Issued by [HKLM](#)

18 Aug 2022

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) was recently awarded the International Association of Business Communicator's (IABC) International Gold Quill Excellence Award for its 4IR website as well as an IABC Africa Silver Quill Excellence Award for its 'The future belongs to those who reimagine it' campaign, and an IABC International Gold Quill Merit Award for the university's *Beyond Imagining* ezine series. The integrated communications campaign, including the website and ezine, was developed, conceptualised and managed by lead brand agency HKLM, UJ's Marketing and Brand Management Unit and Twisted Toast Digital.



The IABC Awards recognise excellence in strategic communication globally. The judges said UJ's entry was "world-class" and "shows the use of the global standard in action. It was a brilliant entry to review, and we commend the team for their innovation, implementation and strategic results."

For the past four years UJ's Marketing and Brand Management Unit, in close collaboration with lead brand agency HKLM has been working to position the university as a leading voice in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR).

What gave this campaign the winning edge, reveals Tracy McCoy, client executive at HKLM, is that it was based on a very sound strategic intent and total alignment on the part of both the client and agencies.

"The brief to UJ's Marketing and Brand Management Unit from Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Tshilidzi Marwala was very clear: To communicate the message that the university belongs to those who truly imagine it," she explains.

The UJ team, together with HKLM developed a single-minded and clear positioning for the campaign. This was followed by a solid strategy underpinned by research and clearly defined target audiences. "Because the positioning, strategy and target audiences were deeply embedded in the campaign from the outset, the integrated communications across the different channels were able to work seamlessly together," says McCoy.

UJ's 4IR communication campaign incorporated the award-winning bespoke 4IR website which hosts its online magazine, the *Beyond Imagining* ezine, accompanied by an integrated advertising campaign.

McCoy explains that the campaign was tailored to be applicable to different target audiences with a nuanced message to 'imagine that' to undergraduates, and a slightly adapted message of 'the future belongs to those who reimagine it' for more mature audiences. Each target audience was further differentiated with its own visual language. Underpinning the entire campaign was a consolidated and seamless vision and intent.

Both client and agency were totally aligned on the messaging and had a good understanding of the objectives of what the campaign was trying to achieve, she adds.

"We each played to our specific strengths. Together with HKLM, UJ's Marketing and Brand Management Unit, drove the positioning and strategic intent. In addition, HKLM controlled all the creative and communication elements of the campaign, while at the same time ensuring that all the content going out was creatively aligned with a consistent look and feel."

A media strategy that was planned and approved early in the year allowed the team to craft and develop the various creative elements upfront with a consistent theme and messaging.

A long-standing relationship has allowed UJ and HKLM to develop a significant degree of trust. "This is an agency-client relationship that very successfully epitomises a true partnership," reveals McCoy. "The longevity of the relationship means we really understand the brand, while the trust inherent in the relationship means that UJ is able to give HKLM the creative licence to do what we do best."

Senior manager for marketing and brand management at UJ, Lesmarie Bentley-Steyn, says the campaign has been an exciting – albeit challenging – project which provided the team with a steep learning curve. "Ultimately, it exceeded both our objectives and expectations and has successfully raised UJ's 4IR profile with a palpable return on investment," she concludes.

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" **HKLM appoints Catherine Kruger executive creative director** 31 Aug 2022

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