

# Tough times make for big winners

By  Danette Breitenbach

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The Financial Mail (FM) AdFocus Agency of the Year 2016 is PhD Media SA. The Agency, which also won the FM AdFocus Media Agency Award, boasted top scores across each category. "Winning is not an easy thing so it feels amazing to have won," says Wayne Bishop, managing director (JHB).

Any agency that is showing growth in the current climate is a winner so to come on top is very special, he adds. "Winning at FM AdFocus as a media agency, demonstrates the importance of media agencies in the business today, especially media agencies that have strategy sitting at their core."



Medium Agency of the Year - AVATAR

He was not the only one to describe 2016 as a tough year. Winner of the Large Agency category, which was very competitive this year, and Industry Leader 2016, FCB's group chief executive officer, Brett Morris, says this has been a tough year with clients who are either flat or cutting back. "To get through bad times and deliver good results takes talented people, clients that allow you to do great work, and partnerships."

On being named Industry Leader 2016, Morris paid tribute to the FCB employees. "This Award belongs to the 6,000-plus FCB employees." The group's Hellocomputer also took home the FM AdFocus Digital Agency of the Year.

Both the winners of the FM AdFocus African Network of the Year and the Partnership of the Year, Burson-Marsteller Africa

and The Hardy Boys respectively reiterated the need for good partnerships. "Brave and generous clients encourage you to do more, especially in the tough times," adds Dale Tomlinson – CEO and EXCO, The Hardy Boys.

The inaugural FM AdFocus PR Award was won by Ogilvy PR Johannesburg. A beaming Joanna Oosthuizen, national managing director of Ogilvy PR, says it is important that PR and what is today is recognised. "CEOs and company leaders are demanding effective ways to meaningfully impact how people think about and engage their organisations and products. This is why PR matters and underpins how our work has evolved well beyond just the press release."

Commenting on their win, FM AdFocus Specialist Agency, Grid Worldwide's MD & partner, Adam Byars, says: "The world does not need another brand. #MakeItMeanSomething. We give brands meaning to ensure they remain relevant in the 21st century."

Openco won FM AdFocus Small Agency. This was the third year that the FM AdFocus Student Award was sponsored by Nedbank, which was won by Carina Bonse from the Red & Yellow School in Cape Town.

Upon receiving the FM AdFocus Lifetime Achievement Award, Happy Ntshingila says the industry must continue to transform. "First we formed the Herdbuoys and made a difference to the industry. The recognition of Avatar this evening as Medium Agency is an indication that there is transformation and this transformation needs to continue if we are to continue doing what do well."



Happy Ntshingila

The FM AdFocus Awards process and results are audited by Deloitte, who have a representative that sits in on all the jury sessions. Craig Page-Lee, AdFocus jury chairperson and founder of d-cifr, explained the process of how the jury gets to the winners. Page-Lee and AdFocus deputy-chairperson, and group CEO, The Jupiter Drawing Room - South East Africa, both expressed the disappointment in the lack of entries in the category FM AdFocus New Broom, which, as a result, was not awarded this year. "This Award is about new talent coming into the industry so it is disappointing that there was a lack of nominations. We want to encourage the industry to enter into this category next year and to keep in mind that it is not only about individuals, but also about groups of individuals."

The two also highlighted the importance of filling in the FM AdFocus questionnaire properly as it has been proven time and time, and over and over that the questionnaires that have been filled in more diligently and are well written come out tops.

A moment's silence was held to pay tribute to the late Gordon Patterson.

[View all the FM AdFocus Awards 2016 winners](#), as well as the [Award's gallery](#).

## ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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