

Creative hour with... Suhana Gordhan

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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The Loeries recently launched a new series of webinars called Creative Hour, whereby new Loeries CEO, Preetesh Sewraj hosts industry leaders from across the region, raising industry-related topics that would typically be discussed in private at the close of business.

Starting out on his Loeries stint just before the lockdown was announced, Sewraj had plans to meet industry leaders across Africa and the Middle East, but has since had to rethink how he goes about this, and so, the Loeries Creative Hour was born.



Exclusive podcast interview with new Loeries wingman, Preetesh Sewraj

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In the opening episode, on Thursday, 30 April, Sewraj interviewed Suhana Gordhan, ECD at FCB Johannesburg.

Something that stood out to me and particularly relevant to our #YouthMonth content feature, was when Sewraj mentioned the confusion around the various positions in advertising. Comparing advertising to the medical profession, he said that people know the difference between a GP, a physician and a specialist, but that he finds that few understand what an ECD does, for example.

“ People do not know the difference between an ECD and an art director. It's like apples and oranges in our world. ”

Gordhan knows what he means and thinks that not only does this need to be addressed at an educational level, but that these titles are outdated and need to evolve. “We have different names for things as well, like writers are called copywriters, and people often think that has something to do with copyright law, and there are directors in so many words, and I guess it's just the inside track of advertising.



Suhana Gordhan, ECD at FCB Johannesburg.

"There's not enough education around it and I think part of it is that we should evolve it anyway because the delegations are not that tight anymore. It's not like, 'Oh, you're only ever a writer, you're only ever an art director.' Today people are a bit of everything, so I think we need to evolve some of the language but also to start educating on what the job actually entails, right from high school level and then obviously when you get into the advertising schools, to really start to understand what each role entails."

“ Often we get students who come in from ad school who are not really sure themselves what they want to be, because they have a strategic slant, because they have a design slant or also maybe they're photographers. So there is, I think, a newlook or a newapproach in terms of creativity, in that we're not that siloed anymore, and why you still need to have your core discipline, that you love and can hone in on. It is broader than what it used to be, so maybe that's part of the problem, is our titles are a little outdated and our hierarchy is quite short, you know, you're like a group head, CD, ECD, ECO and then what? ”

Sewraj agreed that we need to somehow get younger kids who want to get into the industry to understand the hierarchical nature of our industry, how they can join, how they can grow and where the opportunities are. "I think that's one of the challenges, they just don't know what that entry level position is anymore."



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Then in terms of achieving transformation goals that a lot of organisations had set for the year, Gordhan believes that we need to keep growing and nurturing talent and offering opportunity and inspiration and then making sure we retain that talent.

One of the key challenges, Sewraj agreed, is how do we retain and attract talent. "How do we get people excited about a role in advertising, because I think there's almost a disconnect. Sometimes there's this desire to get into advertising, but they don't understand what's that bridge. 'How do I actually make that transition from where I am right now, to which school do I go to, how do I go through this process?'"

Gordhan concluded that a career in advertising is not seen as a viable opportunity. "It's not seen as a career in the same way that medicine or law or accounting is seen, and I think we need to shift that focus and show the potential of our industry... Having more female and leaders of colour speaking to younger people would make a difference... What's great about this generation is there's an openness, an access and technology is different, so the ability to speak to senior leadership is all there, we just need people to invest in each other."

#Loeries2017: Open Chair starts a movement amongst women in advertising



Jessica Tennant 10 Aug 2017



Watch the opening episode of Loeries Creative Hour here:

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