

Don't confuse desktop research with inspiration

By  David Limbert

11 Oct 2019

There's a wonderful world out there beyond our screens, and it's our role as creatives to get out there and explore it.



Image credit: Kristopher Roller on Unsplash.

The trouble is, almost without exception, the first thing that anyone, in any job, does as soon as they start a project is to go to their desks to click, surf and bookmark.

Our digital world has its benefits, it helps us to learn, explore and connect true inspiration comes from beyond the desktop.



What do we do outside of work and how does it enable us to do great work?

Marisa Louw 28 Aug 2019



Stop and smell the roses

Moments of inspiration happen at the most unlikely of times – when you least expect it. A visit to a gallery, watching a bee collect pollen from a flower, your four-year-old's artistic impression of you: moments when you absorb the world.

And they all more than likely happen when you're not sat at your desk, staring into your screen hoping inspiration will strike.

“ normal life pic.twitter.com/jC6nPIY7js — 방탄소년단 (@BTS_twt) [24 September 2019](#) ”

At the recent Exporters Awards at the Boardwalk International Convention Centre in Port Elizabeth, my team and I were tasked with designing the set and bringing their theme to life.

I drive past the city's port daily, and it was the shapes the cranes made, the clanging of containers and the industrial nature of the economic hub of the city that inspired the set design.

My team and I did away with the corporate white set, the typical two screens and a stage; and embraced scaffolding and creatively enhanced the design though decorative panels and static and roving lighting to create a mood of celebration and exclusivity.



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Leadership expert, Robin Sharma, is an advocate of nature walks to break free of the chains of “normal thinking”, and going deep into the loftiest realms of creativity, introspection and uncommon insight.

And don’t take his word for it, science backs up the benefits of solitude and time away from the desk. When you get out “into the wild”, your brain waves slow down from beta to alpha. And when you do this in solitude, the part of your brain responsible for self-criticism, mental chatter and constant worry shuts down.

A flow state of mind

This silencing of the prefrontal cortex happens temporarily and is known as transient hypofrontality. With the prefrontal cortex temporarily quieten, you enter the flow state. When you’re in flow, your neurochemistry is altered.

Dopamine (the neurochemical of inspiration) gets released, along with anandamide (the neurochemical of bliss) and serotonin (the neurochemical of pleasure). When you’re in this place, you get your best ideas.

Your creativity makes explosive gains. You begin to see around corners and over hurdles and can solve problems you might not ordinarily be able to solve.

My point is, it’s a wonderful world that we live and work in and, sometimes, it’s good to take the blinkers off and take a look around.

And for us creatives, do we get enough time to take part in wide-open thinking at the start of projects? To go out ‘into the field’ to get involved in immersive research that happens in any discovery phase of a project.



Spring beam

Howard Feldman 14 Aug 2019



The answer is yes, we should. But I think it’s also our job as teams to simply take the time to step back. Chat more. Visit

that gallery or just go for that walk.

The inspiration is out there. Somewhere. You just need to tap into your mind.

ABOUT DAVID LIMBERT

David Limbert heads up the creative services department at Magnetic Storm and has a solid background in theatre. Following his studies at the Guildford School of Acting and qualifying as a stage manager, he cemented his reputation for excellence in the UK theatre world and worked at the Rep Theatre, the London City Ballet, and the world-famous, West End theatres.

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