

# Gavin Rooke



By [Louise Marsland](#)

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It's rare these days that new agencies are launched, but veteran marketer Gavin Rooke has launched The New Order, an agency designed for innovation, which intends to lead change in marketing.

Rooke firmly believes that agencies have to be design-led and stand for more than just pushing product at consumers.

"I feel it is important to be clear about what one believes in as a business. If you're able to articulate your beliefs you will attract people and clients who share your beliefs. For me, great people don't work for money; they work for businesses that they believe in and resonate with. Only then do they apply their hearts and invest their souls - because they are effectively investing in their own beliefs."



## ABOUT GAVIN ROOKE

Gavin Rooke is Founder and Managing Director of The New Order. He founded multidisciplinary digital agency Trigger in South Africa in 1999, which was acquired by Aegis PLC Group in 2007 to form part of the Isobar Global network. He was Global Executive Officer of Isobar (Dentsu Aegis network) from 2011 to 2013. He is also the founder of the Rooke Gallery and Dutchmann.

### **Q: What is the "new order of things" at ad agencies today?**

**A:** The incumbent agency model is one that unsuccessfully attempts to integrate fundamentally silo-ed agency divisions split by distinct media types (digital, ATL, BTL). The result is a fragmented consumer experience, agency department infighting and invariably a compromised creative product. This model is fundamentally flawed as consumers don't navigate media independently from each other. A meaningful brand experience is holistic and seamless across multiple channels and interfaces.

The 'new order' of agencies will be those that understand and cater for these phenomena. Our view is that the answer lies in deeply understanding interfaces and leveraging the role of design (in the broadest sense) to create compelling, seamless consumer experiences across those interfaces.

### **Q: Why do you describe yourselves as "design-led"?**

**A:** A design-led business is one that places design at the core of all strategic decisions taken by the business. These include more than creative decisions - they stretch to financial decisions, human resource decisions, product decisions and so forth. We are design-led in terms of how we run as an organisation and in terms of how we conceive and develop solutions for our clients.

We focus on the end-result and design a solution to get us/our client there. Apple is a good (if not obvious) example of a design-led business. Its design team sits at the core of the organisation and fundamentally shapes its brand, its products, its consumer experiences and, to a great extent, its future. It is not a department that takes instruction from a higher source - it decides what needs to be instructed.

**Q: What is your first order of business?**

**A:** We make it our business to accelerate consumer adoption of new and innovative products and services. We live for that. We apply proven marketing practice to understand, attract, inspire and motivate people to adopt 'the New' and we do this using decades of global marketing experience, strategic business thinking and creativity.

**Q: What is your core strategy?**

**A:** For our clients - we focus heavily on understanding how innovation diffuses across consumer segments. Our strategy is to get their new products seen and adopted. Our strategy as an agency is to make totally awesome sh\*t. Whilst we are very clear in our beliefs, our strategic approach and the likes of the people we hire - it is the work we do that is the ultimate test of everything. Strategy lays the foundation for the great work. Great work lays the foundation for great clients. And great clients lay the foundation of a sustainable business.

**Q: Define the 'future of marketing'?**

**A:** Greater breadth of skills mixed with the need for more seamless integration across diverse media will continue to challenge classic agency network models. Classic agencies and the network model will be forced to change. It simply has to. Design's importance will rise rapidly as a means to solve aspects of this challenge. If agencies don't offer the solution, clients will in-source these skills. This is already happening.

Further, the concept of 'advertising' will become more ingrained into what we now understand as 'consumer experience'. Advertising will (in its current form) play a decreasing role in the marketing mix as consumers reprioritise its relevance, and brands realise that 'messages' yield less return than 'experience'. And 'experience' will occur at every single touch point. That's where we'll be.

**Q: Most important attribute needed to do your job?**

**A:** Creative logic. Logic is fundamentally 'solution-focused', where the end-result is the only concern. Creative logic is a process of applying logic in unexpected and innovative ways. I'd like to think my most important attribute is the ability to think inside a box.

**Q: What is the legacy you want to leave?**

**A:** Many innovative products fail before reaching sustainable market share. As consumers, we lose out when great products are badly marketed. I'd love to think the legacy of our agency will be one of assisting great, innovative brands to become sustainable.

**Q: What inspires you?**

**A:** I am inspired by (and purposefully take a genuine interest in) all the details of daily life - that is what good design is about.

**Q: Tell us something about yourself not generally known?**

**A:** I love South Africa. I was given the opportunity to relocate our family to London to run a multinational organisation. This to many is seen as a dream come true, but to me it was simply unthinkable...

**Q: At the top of my 'bucket list' is...**

**A:** See the Polar caps. North and South. Not much time left.

## ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer.

She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMOG Files newsletter. Web: [www.sourceagency.co.za](http://www.sourceagency.co.za).

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