

Who moved my lobster thermidor?

 By [Dylan Balkind](#)

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"One day, if you play your cards right (or perhaps wrong) you might be a creative director. It is the most thankless, trying and difficult task you'll ever undertake in your creative career." - Sir John Hegarty.

Experts are kept very busy theorising on Generation X and Y - and no doubt the (sometimes) Zealots that have to coordinate us all. It's this mish-mash of leadership styles that are really worth the marvel. I was fortunate enough to attend the Heavy Chef event with Michael Jordaan (Wednesday, 22 August) and listened as he welcomed us into his mind for almost an hour. A few basic sums will deduce that the man is no Generation-Y, but has an invested understanding into what makes them tick. And why shouldn't he? It is the very driving force of the organisation he helms. He is a passionate advocate of the collective spirit of good ideas and their prowess for the benefit of companies, individuals and the world we live in.

Jordaan says corporates still see change as antibodies and that if yours has a culture where the people at the top don't recognise how little they know, you'll have no hope of inspiring innovation. Innovation doesn't live within an autocratic culture. Still, it wouldn't be fair to blame business owners and managers alone about everything wrong in the organisation.

Recognition is defined by how you approach what you do everyday - all up and down the 'chain of command'. And no matter how easygoing you think you are, we are all averse to change - just ask the IT guy to trade his metal for Madonna and watch him squirm.

The difference between nagging and power

I know I am not alone when I admit I've spent several hours (maybe more) hammering my gavel about recognition and engraved statues. It's part of my immature charm and what makes me such a champ to have around - that, my knack for brutal honesty on what you're wearing and perhaps just one or two other redeeming qualities. But now consider the men and women who have to manage dozens of different personalities like this, under one roof.

In my working life (*rubs chin as eyes glaze over of memories past*), I have been told: *We don't do increases or bonuses, you can leave if you want to and will easily be replaced*; and I've been told not to overestimate my value or believe that I am more than I am. But I've also been rewarded for my hard work and my spirit, and I've been offered jobs on numerous occasions while still in one. I've had some leaders leave me wondering what Darwin Award candidate put them in charge and others who I consider an absolute privilege to have known and learned from. Regardless of my reasons for moving on, it is these I am still in touch with today. You decide whether you're going to be a good part of the process.

Quality versus quantity

I've said this before and will say it again: good copywriters are a dying breed. I can say this because I have faced the challenge of adding new ones to teams, and although I can't speak for other professions, from what I hear things aren't always sunny for other roles either. There's this constant pressure to grab the best of the crop because there are so few of them and so many of the average kind. In a world where Kim Kardashian is the benchmark for success, it is this vapid self-belief that trumps drive in the person who wants it all for nothing. Where's the innovation in that?

It's far too easy to take a job, start the job, start looking for another job and all the while deliver some tepid version of what you were hired to do. I once had a client (senior brand manager) ask me where the storyboard for her radio script was. Mmm... yes... you can't tell me she wakes up everyday, flings herself out of bed and yells to the Universe: "Today I am going to be the best me I can be." Dealing with quality like this is what Hegarty must mean to be them trying and difficult tasks. And let me tell you something for free, that pretty petal will (somehow) own her own something-or-other one day and will be the person who says to her young assets: *"We don't do increases or bonuses. You can leave if you don't like it and will easily be replaced."**

Like Michael Jordaan taught, no one is smarter than everyone, so if you want to be a creative director, best you direct yourself far away from people and places like that.

Be it cheese, lamb or lobster thermidor, it's going to move, you're going to have to chase it and if along the way, you have any hope of actually eating any, you have to exert a little patience. Don't take any advice from me on this one because, as a weapon of mass consumption, I want everything immediately - if not sooner. You can tell how well this has worked for me because I have my own show on Oprah's network that's about to take the world by storm. But before that kicks off, I am in full support of each-one-teach-one and think that we should be doing more for advertising and marketing our advertising and marketing industry to kids who are proud to live in the galaxy of their daydreams; people who subscribe to Jordaan's model of thinking differently and who will take risks and make mistakes. It will take a little sweat, passion and commitment, but so what? Who wants Kim Kardashian's life anyway?

**If you find that moved lobster thermidor, please slap her with it.*

ABOUT DYLAN BALKIND

Even the person who can sell ice to Eskimos needs have a way of letting the world know. Words. They're wonderful warriors with the potential for worry. Use a writer who takes his passion seriously. Here's more about me and mine: <http://goo.gl/68Rsse> | Twitter @DylanBalkind

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