

How to build great global brands

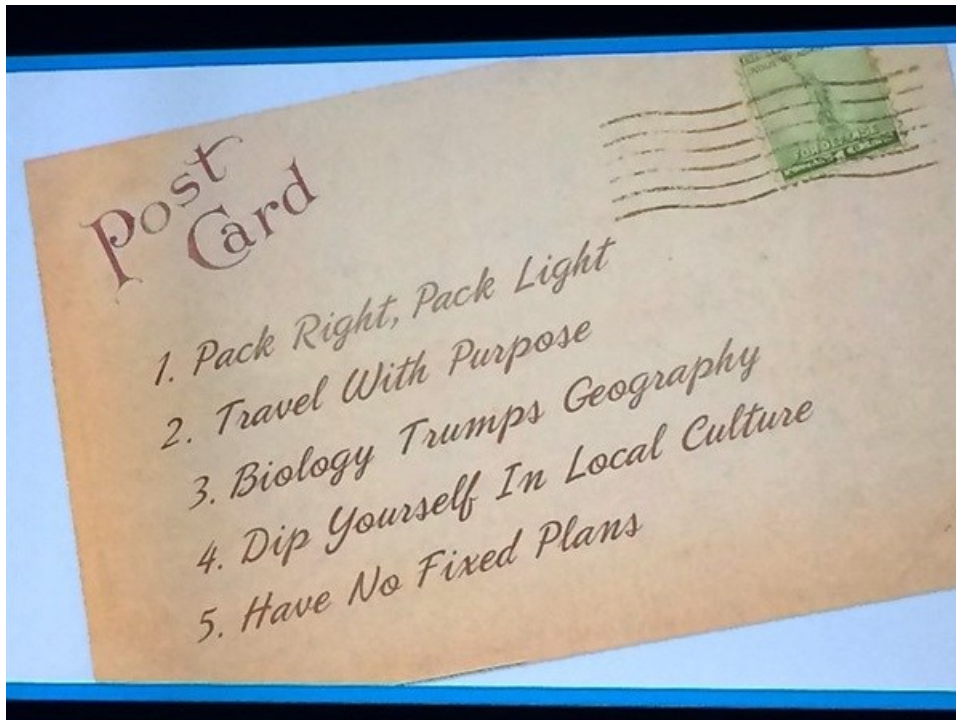
By  Ann Nurock

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In a debate-styled Cannes Lions seminar titled 'Have idea, will travel', Co-founder of Net#work BBDO and BBDO South Africa CCO Mike Schalit; as well as Diageo CMO Syl Saller, and Chris Curtin, Chief Brand & Innovation Marketing Officer at Visa Inc discussed how you make a great global campaign that the world will love...

Before you get started, you need to know what elements go into making it great and where marketers go wrong. As the only South African speaker on the Cannes Lions seminar program, Schalit discussed the pitfalls, pratfalls and wherewithal of developing successful global campaigns with the CMOs of two brands well-used to the challenges - Diageo and Visa.

Schalit himself began his career by failing as a rock musician and co-founding Net#Work on the eve of SA's first democratic election in April 1994. He went on to win a host of top calibre titles such as most awarded SA creative, Advertising Person of the Year and Achiever of the Decade, so was a worthy spokesperson on the topic.



The talk kicked off with a discussion on global campaigns as a major opportunity, especially if you have a global brand, as today's world is more connected than ever before.

But there's no silver bullet approach to getting it right - we need to recognise that getting a Cannes Lion is difficult, and that there are real consumer differences in these markets, which every company handles differently. The important thing is collaboration.

Five tips on building up a winning global brand:

1. Pack right, pack light

The most important thing is identifying your strongest brand assets. Nike use their "swish" and so does [Airbnb](#). This even extends to Apple, which doesn't have a traditional creative idea but instead a look and feel. Advice to creatives is not to "throw every message every brand wants to, as you'll just end up with a mess."

What really make a difference is going beyond a transactional message and looking at the higher order brands can play - all based on the concept of purpose.

2. Travel with purpose

Linked to this, Diageo believes that consumers are looking for transparency and authenticity, as they're very discerning about what they buy. It's about thinking about the brand purpose. Johnnie Walker, for example, is rooted in people wanting to progress. It's messaging therefore ties in with this purpose of making progress via the "Keep Walking" slogan, and agency Bartle Bogle Hegarty (BBH) London moved from other 15 campaigns to the newest work, all rooted in progress.

But what is a great purpose? The speaker agree it must tap into a higher order benefit, but not in a lofty one. A good example would be the way Dove has always been about real beauty and self-esteem. Your brand's purpose needs to be clear, which in turn will make it clear why you need to champion the specific purpose. It has to be inspiring.

Think of the Guinness purpose in its global "[Made of more...](#)" campaign. It's about inspiring people to make great choices.

This leads to the most important thing about working on a global brand - the execution has to be different across different markets. Simply stick to the insights as it's not about rolling out a single execution, but rather about maintaining a consistent creative platform.

3. Biology trumps geography - humans are global and have emotions

That's why it's important to create great storytelling and focus on the power of the visual, as evident in the success of '[The First kiss](#)', the most viewed video ad campaign for 2014, which garnered over 100 million views.

Stick to easy-to-grasp themes, as highlighted in the [Visa Checkout](#).

Saller asked: "If they can be done, why are people not doing them?" The simple answer is that you need to be smart and ensure the message is relevant to the geography.

Curtin added that you can open source creative - Google does it through an executorial template, which is how Google taps into local markets. Also refine your focus from the global leaders as some of the best work comes from the smaller markets, such as Pedigree's Lost Dog Alert app that uses Google - [click here](#) for a preview.

4. Dip yourself in local culture

Don't get stuck in a rut - look for something interesting in unexpected places. For example, the [Dove Real Beauty Sketches](#) campaign came from Brazil. If it came from New York or London, it wouldn't have been the same.

5. Have no fixed plan

This tip may seem illogical, but there's method to the madness. Put it online and see what happens. People who are travelling want to seep in the local culture and not be treated as a tourist, such as Ecuador's global tourism campaign titled [All You Need is Ecuador](#).

For more inspiration, click below to watch Schalit talk with Cannes Lions TV about the opportunities and risks associated with global campaigns and the benefit of having a great rapport with your client.

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