

Grey wins Medium Advertising Agency of the Year at 2021 Financial Mail AdFocus Awards

By  Evan-Lee Courie

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The winners of the 2021 *Financial Mail* AdFocus Awards were announced on 24 November 2021, during an event in Johannesburg that streamed online - celebrating advertising's game-changers. Grey Advertising was named Medium Advertising Agency of the Year. Paul Jackson, CEO of Grey Advertising, chats to us about the win



The Grey wolf pack: L to R Devashnie Singh, chief people officer; Louise Johnston, managing director; Fran Luckin, chief creative officer and Paul Jackson, CEO.

■ ***Congratulations on winning 2021 AdFocus Agency of the Year in the mid-size category! How are you feeling about the win? How's the team celebrating this win?***

Thank you. The team is overjoyed. It is wonderful recognition for the incredibly talented team of creative people (across all our departments) that we have been building for some years. Like all big wins at the agency, we will be celebrating together with lots of champagne (socially distanced of course).

■ ***What does this mean for Grey Advertising as a whole?***

Recognition by our industry peers is really important to us.

“ We're a small industry and we like to see each other succeed and it's wonderful that this year, it's our turn to celebrate. ”

For the agency team, the past year and a half has been one hell of a ride, with many ups and downs, and to end an _____
inc _____ successful 2021 on such a high is amazing.

All the 2021 *Financial Mail* AdFocus award winners!



24 Nov 2021



■ ***This past year was a bit of a rollercoaster ride with Grey winning several awards. What do you think is the winning recipe?***

That's easy. Our smart, brilliant, caring, intelligent, excellent creative family. We call it the Grey wolf pack because we're a tightly-knit team that truly care for one another.

“ When the team are happy, making great work is so much easier, and it is reflected in the amazing run of creative and effectiveness awards we have been recognised with in 2021. ”



Grey and WPP Liquid on a winning streak

Grey Africa 1 Oct 2021



Loeries 2021 Young Creatives Awards for two Grey rising stars

Grey Africa 22 Oct 2021



■ ***Client relationships have been tested throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. What do you think sets you apart from the rest?***

Grey has a reputation of strong client relationships, with an average client tenure of seven years (against an industry average of four years), with some of our local locally being with us for more than 25 years. Again, this is a testament to our people and the long tenure of our staff who really aim to become business partners with our clients, working hard to learn and understand their business and industries so that we can continue to add value to them. When they're successful through our famously effective brand of creativity, we know we will be too.

■ ***What was your most awarded campaign this year and why do you think it did so well?***

Savanna Decolonise Autocorrect. It won at almost every major international and local awards show including receiving South Africa's first Bronze Digital Craft Award at Cannes Lions.



South Africa's first Digital Craft Lion awarded to Grey Africa

Grey Africa 25 Jun 2021



Savanna Cider's witty commentary on the ironies of South African life declared "We're tired of ducking Autocorrect forcing South Africans to speak English", and set out to liberate people's phones through a simple hack that made sure words in our official languages were no longer autocorrected. It was such a clever yet simple idea that got everybody talking.

■ ***Could you comment on the state of the industry and what direction do you see the industry going in the new year?***

The past 600-odd days have emphasized, more than ever, that it's people and their talent that make the industry. It doesn't matter how many fancy tools, templates or processes you may have, they're only as good as the people using them. The agencies that nurture and protect that talent, and that means more than just throwing money around, will be the agencies we're talking about this time next year.

■ ***What's next for Grey Advertising?***

A few bottles of champagne. And probably a good couple of headaches. The kind of headaches that, for once, are quite welcome.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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