

How Jigsaw is boldly revolutionising the below-the-line space

 By Leigh Andrews

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Dane Prinsloo, director of marketing and sponsorship at Jigsaw Agency, explains the power of choosing to do the right thing every single day and the importance of building trust with clients so they take the leap with unconventional event experiences.

Prinsloo describes his workplace, at the intersection of bringing brands to life for consumers by building event experiences with the necessary corporate sponsorship to add impact, as: “a marketing think tank that assists brands in adapting to their consumer and industry changes.”

Here, he explains how they make sponsorship easy, what goes into convincing that client to go with unconventional work as opposed to ‘the boring stuff you see over and over again’...



Dane Prinsloo of Jigsaw Agency.

Let us in on the context of how, why, where and when you started Jigsaw in 2014, and how it ties in with your partner agency Bold Agency.

Well, Jigsaw Agency itself wasn't started in 2014 – that's when I started a sponsorship agency called Goldcore International. Based on the numbers in the words it was meant to be lucky but sadly the name just didn't prove memorable, so I changed it two years ago. What didn't change was the reason I started Jigsaw Agency – even at a young age, I knew that I didn't want to spend the rest of my life in a corporate environment, trading time for money and working for someone else.

So I hopped through a number of different jobs, predominantly sales and some marketing, and eventually resigned, saying, “I don't want to do this anymore, I've had enough.”

After a stint of helping my father with sales and marketing for an NGO, I branched out with just R10k in my pocket and using the sales skills I'd accumulated over the past 11 years, and the marketing techniques I learned through my degree, finally started my own business focused on my passion; the music, sporting and lifestyle events space.

When I renamed the business it seemed fitting as we're not your typical structured business. We approach a client, find out what their goals and objectives are, and do what we can to plug our concepts into those holes – so we're a jigsaw puzzle as we fit in where needs be, assisting and adding value.



A Bold-Jigsaw team photo.

Bold Agency was started by my business partner, Simeon Trew. After he successfully conceptualised and put together a Soviet campaign, I realised he was someone I'd like to work with. Now we work together conceptualising campaigns. I predominantly generate new business sales and bring in new clients, Trew puts the document together to pitch to the client, and once the client signs off, Bold Agency executes – sometimes with our help, but mainly on their own.

I prefer what I do, he prefers what he does, and by doing that, we've worked as a cohesive and eco-friendly ecosystem. We partner together well because we do the jobs that the other person doesn't want to. As a result, we're flexible as a smaller agency so can adapt very quickly. That also takes some of the stress off of running a full below-the-line agency yourself – instead, we each just plug in where needs be.

■ **Clever! How are Jigsaw and Bold Agency revolutionising the below-the-line space?**

Technology has truly changed the ways of engaging with consumers. Back in the day you'd put up banners and set up a little station with brand ambassadors taking down details and engaging.

With all the different social media platforms at our disposal today, the trend is for people to not just offer an experience but to let them get absorbed into a different reality.

That's why there's a massive push towards VR at the moment, especially with Facebook branching out that way with their 'secretive 'Building 8' plans.

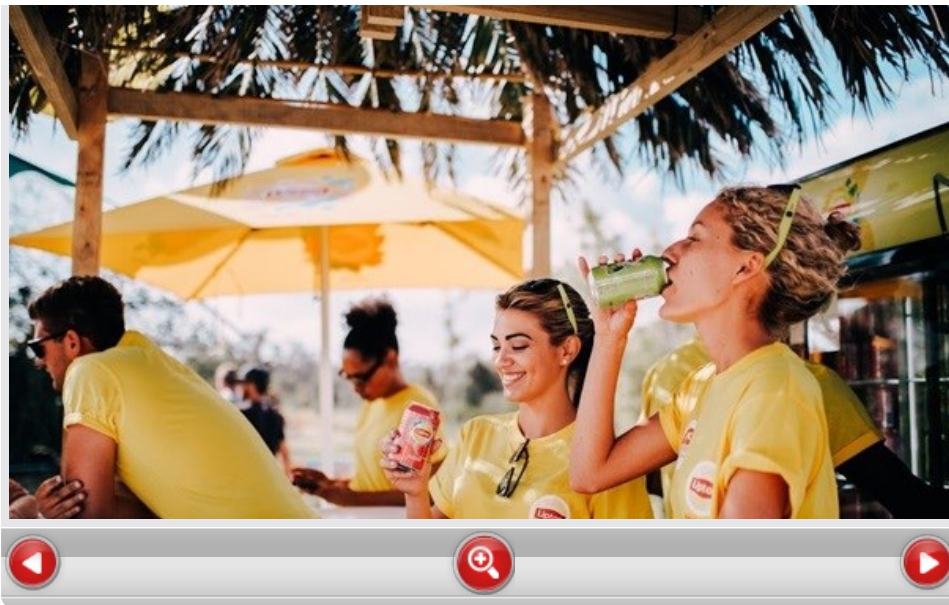
That's what people want to experience at events too, and the only way to ensure a brand has an impact with consumers is to do something different – not necessarily in an expensive way, but in a creative, fun and engaging way.

“ We're revolutionising the below-the-line space by creating more Matrix-style interaction and tying in environmental marketing by offering aspects of smell, touch, taste, colour and sound as part of a full story you can take consumers through, instead of just putting it up on a screen. ”

■ **Excellent. How do you then make it easier for brands to get sponsorship to pull off immersive events like this?**

The biggest benefit to brands is that we have such good relationships with the events. Both Sim and I have been in the events industry from the age of 16, selling tickets at Plett Rage. We understand the event space and we've got connections with the DJs and event organisers, so we've branched out that way and built relationships with them.





As a result, we often get brands to sponsor the event at a preferential rate. Then, because the brands have invested the least amount they need to, they can take the rest of the budget and create something really cool and creative that people walk away from going, “Wow that was awesome!”

■ ***That really is awesome. Share a few of your favourite moments and biggest challenges faced over the years.***

Taking that initial step and starting the business is both a favourite moment and biggest challenge. It's truly scary, and while I don't know what it's like to raise a kid, I'd imagine it's pretty similar.

Every day you're learning something, so it's scary, challenging and rewarding to say: “I'm going to do this, I'm going to take whatever savings I have left and give it my best shot, and if it doesn't work out, well at least I've tried.”

Once things start running fairly smoothly – there's always something that comes up – the next best thing we quietly fist-pump over is when you pitch something you've worked very hard on to a client and they say: “We like that, let's run with it.”

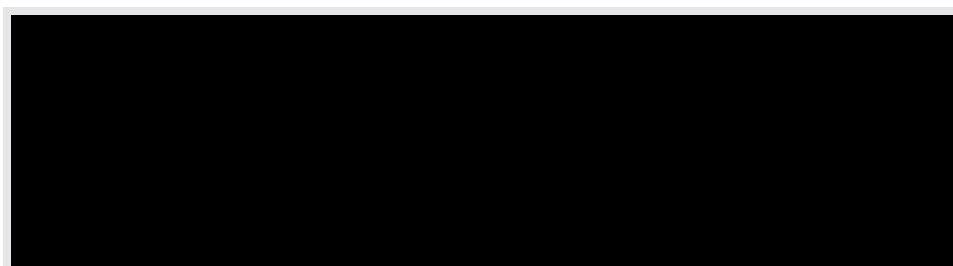
It's the big wins and the little wins alike that are memorable moments. It's seeing the entire production play from your head work out smoothly, and then seeing the smile on your client's face because it's so amazing, that's what you want to achieve again. No matter what mud and dirt I have to crawl through today, if I can land one of those it makes it all worth the while.

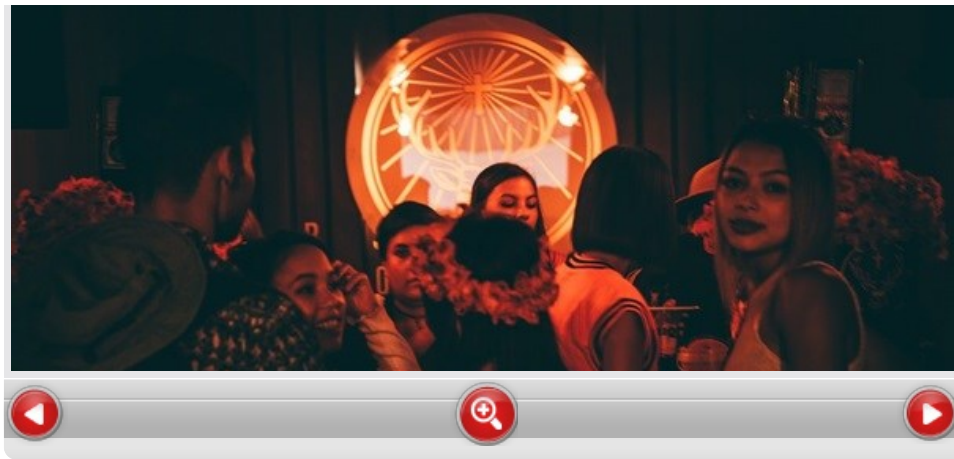
■ ***Still on the topic of bravery, what goes into convincing that client to go with unconventional work as opposed to the 'boring same-old stuff' in the event experiences you devise?***

A lot of the time it's just about building the trust. If you can get the person at the opposite end of the table to like you and trust you, I think 70% of the work is done. From there, the most vital part of convincing a client lies in listening to them.

Clients have needs, wants and desires; they've got pressures they're facing at home and in the office, problems with their boss or team and goals and objectives they need to achieve.

So you've got to sit with them, listen to what they want and realise that's not always the same as what you want, and that sometimes they don't even know what they want.





If you listen to them, you can answer each of their questions throughout the sponsorship and campaign storyline you build with them. That builds more trust, and they then go to different stakeholders within and outside the organisation and tell them:

“ These guys not only listened to us but also answered our questions in a really cool and creative way that didn’t cost us tens of millions! ”

- **Sounds like a win. What makes for a successful consumer event in the local lifestyle, music or sport space?**
It’s about doing the best you can with the resources you have to build something that has international look and feel and appeal but still caters to the local audience.

Some of the local stuff like Rocking the Daisies and the guys from We Love Summer are doing a phenomenal job in terms of immersing their consumers in an environment they haven’t seen or experienced before. You can see they’ve put their heart and soul into detail.

I’d also like to get to AfrikaBurn because I hear it’s unbelievable and once you go, you’re hooked!

- **We all get stuck in a creative rut sometimes. What inspires you and gets you thinking more creatively?**
I don’t really think about life as other people do. I spend a lot of quiet time conceptualising ideas, which helps me come up with crazy ideas to bounce off of people I trust. As we discuss the idea and do more research, reading about the industry to pick up little nuggets and come up with more creative stuff – that’s when the idea unfolds into something exciting.

I’m also inspired by the ability to understand consumer and their consumer truths and influence them to get your client results. That may sound sinister but it’s not if everybody engages with the story you’ve controlled, like a small army, it’s fun.

So it’s those creative moments and that feeling of putting something really amazing and creative together that went to plan that makes it all worthwhile.

- **Share some advice to anyone – especially youngsters – looking to run with a new business idea but afraid to take that first step.**

This may sound super clichéd, but it really is about taking that first step. You don’t have to start the entire business on day dot but take that first step. Create something, design something.

“ Every day, do one thing after the next until you’ve established your business, because it doesn’t happen overnight. ”

Even after four years, I sometimes have doubts this will work and that we’ll make it to next year and want to give it all in for

something safer; but I get pulled off that ledge by my business partner.

It really is just about putting one step in front of another. And even if you don't believe in religion, you have to have faith that tomorrow's going to be a better day. Not just better for you, but better for others, too. Because the more people that start small businesses and enterprises that potentially grow into something amazing, the more those people create opportunities for others.

We need more people thinking outside the box and doing, instead of falling into line. If we can do that, we're ultimately creating a better work environment for everyone.

That may seem a bit grandiose and even impossible to achieve, but every day when you get up, you have the opportunity to do right or wrong. So sure, you may not be an Elon Musk, but if you choose to do the right thing every day, that's all you really need to do to make a difference in this world. So go out there and do and do and do, whatever you can.

Excellent advice to inspire you this #YouthMonth. Contact Prinsloo and Jigsaw Agency on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Facebook](#) for their latest updates.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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