

Behind-the-scenes judging insights from the jury chairs

By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

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The IAB Bookmark Awards, an IAB SA initiative, celebrates its 12th year of rewarding excellence in digital and recognising the powerful impact interactive has on the overall marketing mix. The Bookmark Awards sets the benchmark for tech, digital and leading-edge innovation. The award-winning work inspires and educates the industry about the power to build brands through creative and high-impact digital executions that deliver measurable results.



2020 Bookmark jury chairs.

Heading up the Bookmark categories during this year's judging process are:

- Marketing panel – *Molefi Thulo, ECD, Ogilvy South Africa*
- Builders panel – *Robyn Campbell, MD, HelloFCB+*
- Publisher panel – *Chris Louw, head of content, Hive Digital*
- Performance marketing panel – *Clare Trafankowska, head of digital, Absa South Africa from Carat South Africa*
- Gamers panel – *Gabriel Ramokotjo, CEO, Ekasi Esports*
- Social, community and digital influencer marketing panel – *Kalliebree Keynerd, head of social, Joe Public Connect*
- Special honours panel – *Charlene Beukes, GM, 24.com*
- Innovative engineers panel – *Dee Chetty, lead: Accenture Interactive - Africa*

Here, they share with us some behind-the-scenes judging insights leading up to the 2020 Bookmark Awards with round one judging in play and round two commencing on 28 February.

■ Congratulations on being selected as one of the 2020 Bookmarks jury chairs. What does this recognition and opportunity mean to you?

Thulo: It means a great deal indeed. As an industry we are always striving for more innovative work, and the opportunity to be part of one of the award shows that are pushing the digital agenda is great. Outstanding work deserves to be recognised and I'm proud to be on a panel that's entrusted with that task. This is also a chance to engage in constructive debates on how we can make more effective work for all our clients, where the results are measurable.



Campbell: Thank you! I've always been a big advocate of the Bookmarks and how this awards platform has driven more progressive work in our industry. Being given the opportunity to chair the jury allows me to drive more in-depth and challenging dialogue around the work being judged. It's rare to have so many bright minds in one room, so I'm planning on really getting into the work with them and judging how well the industry is solving business problems by building the right solutions.

Louw: It truly is a special privilege to be part of the Bookmarks for the third year in a row. Every year the standards improve vastly. Tracking this progress has been encouraging and the constant innovation in the digital sphere is exceptionally exciting.

Trafankowska: Thank you for affording me this prestigious opportunity for a second year running. It truly is an honour as it enables me to participate in an elevated level of discussion with a panel of peers that I deeply respect. It is also a privilege to be entrusted with the responsibility of guiding the Performance Panel and ensuring a fair yet favourable result.

Ramokotjo: This recognition and opportunity affords me a huge opportunity to learn and grow. Also, I am really excited to share a panel with leaders in the creative industry.

Keynerd: I am honoured and excited to have the opportunity to take part in the Bookmarks judging process. To be on the first-ever Social, Community and Digital Influencer Marketing Panel really is the cherry on top.

“ From very early on in my career I saw the Bookmarks as the premiere body setting the standard for digital excellence in South Africa and one of the most important acknowledgements within our local industry. Being offered this opportunity was very unexpected and quite serendipitous. ”

So, needless to say, when I saw the email come into my inbox I didn't believe it! I called my bestie immediately and we celebrated over the phone. It didn't take me long to reply with an over-eager “YES!!! When do we start!”. I'm looking forward to playing my part along with my fellow judges in shaping the standard on how we judge social media-specific work.

Beukes: I feel so grateful to be part of such a collaborative and creative process. We really produce world-class work in South Africa.

📌 **Comment on the importance of celebrating digital creative work in 2020.**

Thulo: This is where it's all heading. We all need to embrace digital, especially mobile marketing. There was once a fear of digital, but the more we celebrate the great work that's coming out, the more people see the possibilities that come from

doing digital work – digital allows us to give consumers a personalised experience with a brand.

Campbell: Over the years we've been watching digital creative mature into the rich, diverse landscape we now see every day on our watches, laptops and phones. By raising the bar year on year, we can celebrate the work that works.

This will allow us to drive more effective digital creative that not only delivers to consumers' needs but that will also provide a return on investment for brands and publishers.

“ With our global and local economy struggling, our duty is to drive and celebrate a thriving digital economy. If we can succeed at that, it will allow for so many opportunities to grow businesses, jobs, skills development and talent retention in South Africa. ”



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Louw: The constantly changing digital landscape can often be hard to pin down, in terms of quality and excellence. The South African landscape is still young and innovative ideas are all around us. Celebrating the organisations and people that continue to create innovative, groundbreaking work is more important now than ever. As the digital industry grows, the excellence in our industry not only lays a foundation for future digital innovators and creators but also grows our industry and inspires future generations to be part of this exciting time in media.



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Trafankowska: Award such as these expose a broader audience to the quality of work being produced, as well as provide the industry with an opportunity to benchmark themselves and their own work against this as a standard. It drives competitive innovation as well as sets the tone for future innovation and effectiveness.

Discussions around awards entries provide for open and honest conversations, as well as some healthy debate around the various merits (or not) of each entry. It is also an opportunity for us to take a step back and critically analyse the momentum gained over the last 12 months and with the hopes of seeing improvements in how we are validating the work that we're putting out.

Ramokotjo: Personally, I believe that more than ever digital work that breaks the creative boundaries has to be celebrated and the Bookmarks provides such a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the hard work of individuals and organisations that continuously create digital campaigns that connect emotionally with their consumers.

Keynerd:

“ The digital industry has come so far. Remember when we used to say that digital marketing was the future. Well, the future is now and it literally is all eyes and all budget (if you're forward-thinking) on us. Now, more than ever, our industry is being called upon to solve and inform business problems and not just to create ads to sell stuff. ”

Beukes: It is creativity that will move the digital industry forward. Creativity in strategy, media, design and thinking.

■ **Share some pointers on your personal judging process and what you're looking for from your jury panel.**

Thulo: Of course originality is vital and should always come first. But another thing that I look out for is how that work makes me feel as a judge – does that work 'leap' from the page or screen and cause a reaction? Before getting into the technical stuff, the work needs to resonate first. I would also encourage the panel to look for work that truly honours the category it has been entered into.



2020 Bookmark Awards judges are announced

IAB South Africa 14 Nov 2019



Campbell:

“ Understanding the objectives or business problems in the work is key to really weighing up the purpose and success of that build or piece of creative. I'm big on high craft as well as smart, efficient experiences that make me question, “Why didn't I think of that?”. I'll be leaning on the Jury Panel to bring their expertise, experience and industry nous to really dig into the entries and celebrate those winning gems. ”

Louw: Judges look at hundreds of entries. Keep your information short, to the point, and ensure that you always follow the brief closely. Entries are quickly discarded when the brief has not been met and too much needless information is included. Triple check every detail. Mistakes happen, but entrants need to make sure every effort has been made to hand in great work.

Trafankowska: I will be focusing on those entries where incremental gains to business results are clearly linked to media outputs, as well as the campaign efficacy. I am going to rely on the jury panel being more critical of results achieved, especially with the creative work. After all, without proof, who's to say it was effective?



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With such a diverse panel, I expect there to be some healthy debate around the perception of performance and results. With broad category coverage amongst the jury, I suspect that each will have an alternate take on the definition of success.

Ramokotjo: What strikes me most when applying my process, when given the opportunity to judge, are entries that exhibit a combination of innovation, creativity, execution, but also, importantly, that showcase sustainable business models. From the panel, I am looking for fairness, integrity in the judging process and that which eliminates any bias from the judging process.

Keynerd: My fellow judges are all people I've admired and learned from throughout the course of my career. I'm looking forward to hearing everyone's perspective while wrestling with what is the best decision. I thrive on collaboration and healthy debate and that is what I'm hoping for.

Proactive listening, respectful communication, constructive disagreements, inclusive thinking/behaviour, and please can we have some fun!

Beukes: For me, it's about the brief, the objectives of the campaign and how the entrants worked towards that in a way that pushes the boundaries, but still talks to the end goal.

■ **Tell us a bit more about the categories your panel is judging and what is important to look at when judging these**

entries.

Thulo: Our panel will be responsible for awarding excellence in categories such as Innovative Use of Media, Digital Strategy, Campaign Microsites, Mobile, Direct & Inbound Marketing, Craft Excellence, Online Video, Podcasts & Audio Streaming, Integrated Mixed Media, Digital Integrated Campaigns and Native Advertising, etc. As you can tell from the list, it will be quite an exciting challenge. We will be searching for interesting use of the mediums to tell compelling stories, where the digital elements aren't an afterthought.

Campbell: Our Builders Panel will judge a number of categories this year, ranging from E-Commerce Sites, Interface Design, UX Craft and Customer Experience Design, all the way through to Online Video Series. It's an exciting space that has shown rapid growth and improvement during the last few years in South Africa.

Our focus will be around the user experience and how technology has been harnessed to make every online interaction a pleasure for consumers. We will interrogate how strategic the choices have been and how effortless is it for the consumer to engage and ultimately meet the objectives set out for the piece of technology.



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Robyn Campbell, HelloFCB 16 Aug 2017



Louw: The Publisher Category takes a broad look at all aspects of publishers in SA. The judging panel will look at publisher websites, as well as specially created sites for news events, such as Elections. Other categories also include Mobile Content, which takes a close look at content created specifically for mobiles, which is very relevant in our current market. Furthermore, the panel will also judge awards related to newsletters, online news video and data stories. We are very excited about the spectrum of entries we have received in the various categories.

Trafankowska: Performance criteria on within our categories is critical as well as the definition of each. Brilliant basics whilst vital are not a true reflection of superior performance.

Ramokotjo: Our panel will be judging the Gaming Category and we understand that the Bookmarks are about recognising creative brilliance. As such, our entries will be judged on fundamentals of a successful product design, i.e. creativity, innovation, user experience, adoption and scalability. Also products that connect and inspire with its targeted consumers. As Maya Angelou said: 'People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel'.

Keynerd: These are some of the questions I will be asking in relation to the categories I will be judging:

- Was it effective in achieving a meaningful objective for the business?
- Did it connect with the consumer in an emotional way to elicit an authentic and proactive engagement on the part of the consumer or public?
- Did the campaign have a broader purpose than just driving profits, did it also solve or put the spotlight on a legitimate problem or social issue?
- From a social communities and community management perspective, has the brand allowed the community to flourish organically and have direct community insights been used to foster two-way communication?
- Does the community reflect the personality and values of the brand beyond a customer care centre?
- When it comes to Influencer Marketing Category, were your influencers advocates or was it quite obvious they were paid to punt a product?
- Is it a long-term relationship that tells a story or once-off?



Kalliebre Keynerd 16 Jan 2019



Beukes: I am part of the special honours panel and will focus on business impact and creativity.

▀ **What are you most looking forward to?**

Thulo: South African creativity is up there with the best in the world. So every time I am given the privilege of judging, I always look forward to being inspired and I'm never disappointed. I also look forward to seeing how we are using digital to tell new, riveting narratives for brands.

Campbell: The inspiration. Seeing all the incredible work that our industry is producing and allowing myself to be swept away by the possibilities to create better, smarter and more innovative solutions myself.

Louw: I am most looking forward to seeing newer and smaller entrants, as well as the ongoing improvements in entries year on year.

Trafankowska: Personally, I am hoping to see a broader spectrum of entrants. This is applicable not only to the brands involved but more so to the agencies that are entering the awards. Some players have greater capacity and capability when it comes to the entries process, having geared up from creative inception. I would love to see a greater number of bespoke agencies demonstrating the brilliant work being developed, as I truly believe that 'nobody knows you're doing great work until you tell me'. That truly is the benefit of awards platforms. Bring creative and performance excellence to the forefront again.

Ramokotjo: I am really looking forward to the exchange of ideas and meeting some of the people who work in this industry.

Keynerd:

“ Getting dressed up and having champagne of course! But seriously, I'm looking forward to reviewing all the work and awarding the best of the best for the first-ever panel on Social, Community and Digital Influencer Marketing. I can't wait to see pride and delight on people's faces as they are rewarded for a job well done. It's such a privilege to have a hand in that process of recognising and building others in the industry. ”

Beukes: Proving to ourselves once again that we are just as good if not better than the rest of the world.



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ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

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