

Right the Ratio of global C-Suite creative diversity

By Leigh Andrews

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Last week saw The One Club for Creativity's first-ever Right The Ratio Summit, held in New York on 23 and 24 January, aimed at advancing workplace equality and fostering a more gender-balanced environment for agency decision-makers, from the corner office all the way to the intern pool. I found out more from gender equality program manager Kasia Karolak and CEO Kevin Swanepoel.



The One Club for Creativity's 'Right the Ratio' aims to advance equality and foster a gender-balanced industry.

Karolak was promoted to the position of gender equality program manager at The One Club for Creativity "last summer" — that's our winter — while Swanepoel, originally from South Africa, has long been a supporter of using the non-profit organisation as a platform to promote true diversity, especially among top levels in the creative industry.



The One Club appoints a gender equality program manager

12 Aug 2019



As the aim of the initiative is balance, they took special care to highlight that this was not a 'women only' event when promoting the summit to potential attendees — it's on all of us to work together to right the ratio.

Here, Karolak and Swanepoel share insights into how Right the Ratio came about, as well as why it's crucial to go beyond offering lip service to equality issues and make actual, concrete strides...

What does Right The Ratio stand for? What did attendees experience?

Karolak: The name is related to the ratio of men to women in the industry, particularly at the senior level.

“There's historically been a much higher ratio of men in advertising leadership positions, and The One Club wants to play a role in advancing gender equality to change — or right — that ratio more towards 50-50.”

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Leigh Andrews 8 Jul 2019





— This inaugural two-day gathering was aimed at decision makers with the authority to advance workplace equality and foster a better, more gender-balanced environment at their agencies.

It was a closed-door summit, meaning conversation was not be videotaped and details were not shared on social media, so attendees felt comfortable in discussing sensitive issues.



#OneShow2019: Double diversity, diversity of skill and diversity of self

Ann Nurock 13 May 2019



Its mission is to share ideas, insights, and solutions that can then be acted upon, from the corner office all the way to the intern pool.

With sessions led by highly respected business leaders, Right The Ratio aims to help agencies make the necessary adjustments and about-faces that will lead to a better workplace.

■ Explain the context of how it came about.

Swanepoel: Last year, The One Club for Creativity sent a survey to more than 300 industry women within our community, in the hope of learning their most pressing concerns as it relates to their creative careers.

“ What we received was a truly eye-opening collection of passionate responses from women still fighting to be seen as equals, in an industry caught somewhere between offering lip service to equality issues and making actual, concrete strides. ”



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— Issues brought to light in the survey responses included receiving equal pay, being overlooked for leadership roles, navigating a sexist culture, fighting bias, returning after maternity leave, attaining the ever-elusive work-life balance, mentoring, nurturing, and retaining talent, and being heard.

We realised the only way these issues could be confronted was to address the top of the power structure.



Right The Ratio Summit launched by The One Club

26 Nov 2019



And so Right The Ratio was born, with a mission to bring together industry executives and decision-makers — those in a position to not just advocate for, but to implement change.

These women and men will share ideas, insights, real-world experiences and solutions to help our agencies and companies create a gender-balanced industry infused with dignity and empowerment.



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Ann Nurock 7 May 2019



Karolak: The One Club welcomes open and honest conversation among all in attendance. Speakers are not here to preach, but instead to share their learnings and hear from others.

We encourage everyone to participate, share their stories and offer their perspectives. By the end of the summit, we hope everyone returned to their offices with actionable goals to improve their workplaces for all.

❏ **Love that. Are we at risk of taking things too far in the opposite direction, with all-female panels, instead of aiming for a balance?**

Karolak: Balance is indeed the goal of Right The Ratio.



#FairnessFirst: "Diversity and inclusion are the future of creativity" - Susan Credle

Leigh Andrews 28 May 2018



For example, the club aimed for a 50-50 mix of speakers and came close in this first year: 14 women and 10 men. In promoting the summit to potential attendees, we made special note to highlight how this is not a “women-only” event.

❏ **So important. Lastly, what are the implications of Right the Ratio that would filter through to South Africa?**

Swanepoel: We believe gender equality is a universal concern, and the issues and potential solutions for agencies are global in nature.



SA expat wins The One Club 3% Movement's Next Creative Leaders award

3 Nov 2017



Attendees at this first New York event from global agencies could share learnings and ideas internally to offices throughout their network, including those in South Africa.

In the years to come, Right The Ratio could even become a global event, with future summits held in different countries

around the world to best address local issues.



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Here's hoping! Follow all the action through the One Club's social media feeds:

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ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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