

# Grey gets Luck(in)!



By Leigh Andrews

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Grey Africa appointed Fran Luckin as its chief creative officer as of 1 February 2016. In this exclusive interview, Luckin shares some of the exciting plans she intends bringing to life once she's settled into the agency.



Grey Africa is on a winning streak of late. If you read through its [trends predictions for 2016](#), you'll know the agency definitely has a finger on the pulse of the industry.

Now it's set to further expand on this with the appointment of Luckin, known as one of SA's top creatives based on being an industry 'triple threat' due to her extensive experience and long list of awards won; having judged at every major marquee award festival, globally and locally; as well as for the famous groundbreaking campaigns she's led, mainly in the realm of integrated communications.

Luckin lets us in on her career highlights, as well as how the rest of Africa fares on the global advertising scale.

## 1. Let us in on your creative career so far, spanning positions held, awards won and international judging experience.

**Luckin:** I started at the Jupiter Drawing Room as an apprentice copywriter, then moved to TBWA Hunt Lascaris, where I became a Creative Director in 2000. In 2003, I joined Ogilvy & Mather Johannesburg as a creative director and became executive creative director in 2008. I moved to Quirk in 2013 as ECD of Quirk Jozi, and now I'm taking up the position of chief creative officer of Grey Africa. I've had the good fortune to have judged at all the big international awards shows - D&AD, The Cannes Lions, the One Show, the New York Festivals, and the Loeries. I've won my fair share of awards. Some of my awards highlights would be the Cannes Film Gold for the Topsy Foundation, the two D&AD pencils for Ogilvy's "MK" campaign, and seeing Quirk win its first ever Cannes shortlist last year, for our "Orange Babies" TV ad. But, you know, an award is already in the past the minute you've won it. It's always about the next year. I'm really looking forward to doing great work with Grey.

## 2. Let us in on some of those plans.

**Luckin:** There's a very clearly defined Grey culture and ambition globally, and what I really want to do is go in with humility

and an open mind, and work with the leadership team to see how best we can create a structure and a culture in the agency that enables us to achieve that ambition. They've already put into place quite a few of the structural and organisational changes that I believe agencies need to make - things like getting rid of the internal siloes. Donald Rumsfeld (quoting someone from NASA, actually) said that the things that cause you the most difficulty are the things you didn't know you didn't know. So my goal for the next little bit is less about executing specific plans, and more about really understanding the business and its challenges, and getting to know its people, and working from there. I might introduce 'No Pants Fridays' right from the start though... Kidding!

### 3. Now that would be an interesting change! How will your appointment switch things up at Grey Africa?

**Luckin:** Grey has a very clear vision of the kind of work they want to do: work that makes brands famous and brings business results; solutions that don't necessarily look like advertising; stories that are so magnetic that they become part of popular culture; ideas that solve problems. That's exactly the kind of work I believe in and want to do, and my hope and vision is that this new partnership will help us both do famously effective, category-breaking work for great brands.

### 4. Where does the SA advertising industry excel and what does it still need to work on to be seen as a par globally?

**Luckin:** I'm not sure if we're really excelling at all in any field globally, to be brutally honest. I'm missing the powerful storytelling in a lot of South African work: a lot of our digital work feels quite serious and a bit dry: on the whole it seems to lack sense of humour. And our film at the moment seems to swing between bloated big-budget, concept-free epics on the one hand, and reductive little gags with no meaningful human insight on the other. I think South Africa is lagging behind when it comes to exploiting the power of digital media and technology to create truly immersive stories.

### 5. Lastly, how does SA advertising compare to that of the rest of the continent?

**Luckin:** Very interesting question, given the surprise everyone had at the 2015 Loeries when agencies outside of South Africa scooped up so many awards. Places like Tunisia are doing some interesting things in mobile and social: things like "[The Return of Dictator Ben Ali](#)" and "The Twelfth Man." Egypt is producing some very bold and quirky work, and they don't necessarily have big budgets. They don't seem to be afraid to be a bit scrappy and to make fun of their culture. And maybe because some of those societies have more infrastructural challenges than ours, a lot of the ideas coming out of them - like Vodafone's "[Fakka](#)," and the aforementioned "Twelfth Man" really come across as ideas that were successful and practical solutions to genuine "rough edges" in society.

Wishing Luckin and Grey Africa every success. For more on Grey Africa, visit their [press office](#), and [click here](#) for more on Luckin.

## 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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