

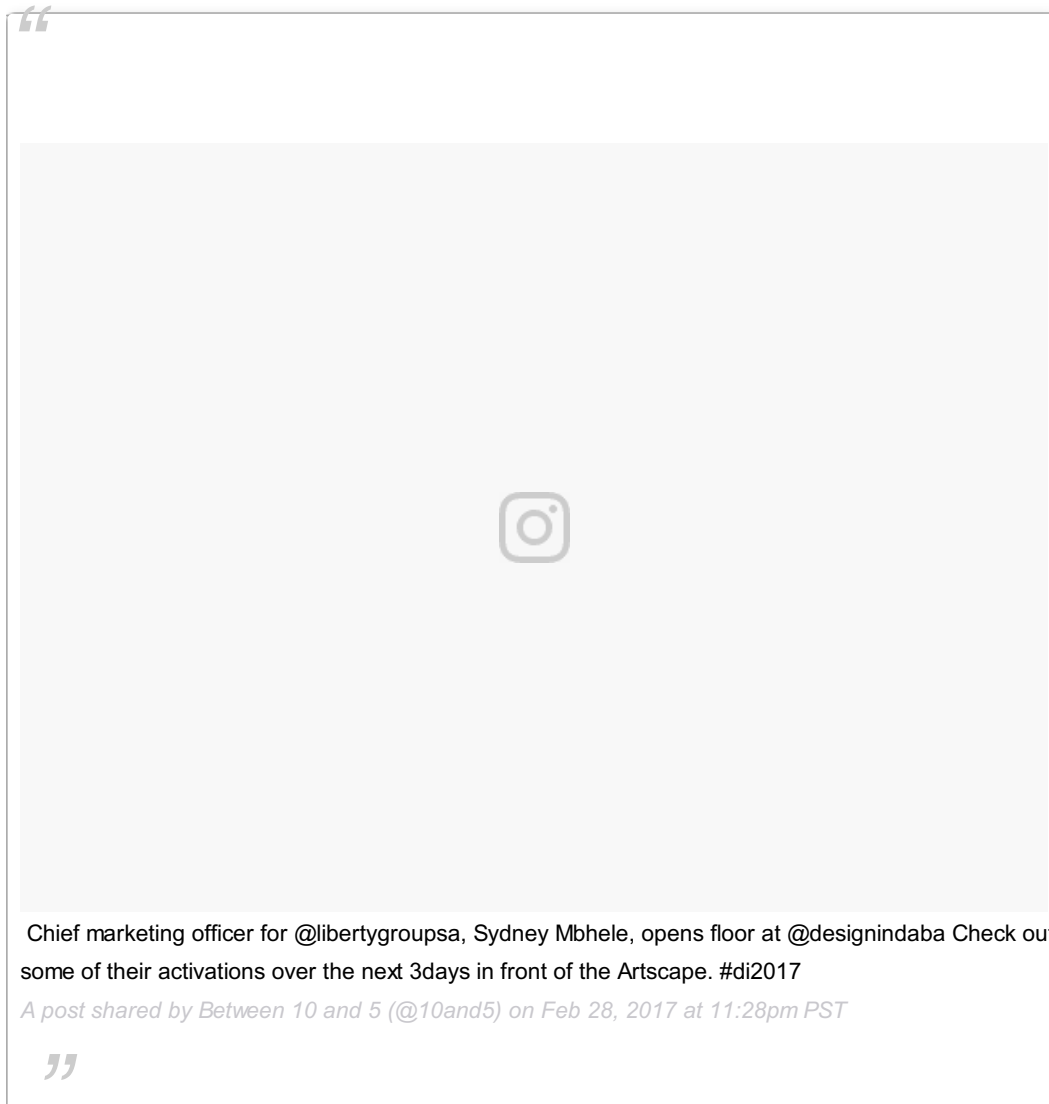
The innovative Liberty of sponsorship

 By Leigh Andrews

3 Mar 2017

Sydney Mbhele, chief marketing officer of Liberty, used his Design Indaba 2017 opening address to welcome the creative juggernauts, dreamers and doers, in his rich voice calling the 22nd rendition of Design Indaba the global zeitgeist from the frontlines of design, creativity and innovation across the globe.

Of the 54-odd speakers present, it's Mbhele's message that stood out most for me, as it was all-encompassing and set the scene for the three days of mind-blowing inspiration to come. He said knowledge on its own is useless, but its application can change our realities, that this year's mantra is "Design Indaba made me do it," and that we can make the world a better place through creativity.



Chief marketing officer for @libertygroupsa, Sydney Mbhele, opens floor at @designindaba Check out some of their activations over the next 3days in front of the Artscape. #di2017

A post shared by Between 10 and 5 (@10and5) on Feb 28, 2017 at 11:28pm PST

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Liberty is a proud sponsor of The Design Indaba Festival as innovation is entrenched in our organisational DNA and is demonstrated in the way we engage with our customers, business partners and stakeholders.”

That's a powerful and perhaps surprising message for those who wonder about the relevance of a conference like Design Indaba to those in the non-creative industries. I caught up with him later in the conference to find out about the impact and importance of creativity and design in a South African context, no matter your business specialisation...

“We all know that innovation changes the world – and this is why we partnered with the Design Indaba as a sponsor. For well over 20 years, the Design Indaba has been inspiring and empowering people to create a better future through

creativity, says Mbhele. That aligns with Liberty's own philosophy to **move at the speed of culture** and help all South Africans reach their financial freedom. The partnership also affords Liberty the opportunity to use design as a catalyst for social transformation as they truly believe that through design and creativity, we will be one step closer to becoming a transformed society.

As the premier platform of finding solutions through creativity, we believe that the Design Indaba is the logical next step for us to find ground-breaking financial freedom solutions. Creativity plays such an important role in business today, helping us keep up with the fast-paced world we find ourselves part of.

Creatively responding to customers' needs

On the importance of design for any industry, Mbhele said, "Look at the world today, what gives the power of the full exploitation of opportunities is when industries collide." Brands and businesses today have a real challenge keeping up with their clients' needs, because they change so quickly – what is interesting, though, is the growing recognition of the role that creativity plays in allowing brands to address those challenges and achieve business success by responding to customer needs.



Mbhele

Creativity is a driving force of the business world as we know – so it is critical that we all learn to embrace it. We have to open ourselves up to the opportunities creativity presents, even if we see ourselves more as businesspeople. We all have the power to be creative, so if we take up the baton and unleash our creative potential, who knows the heights we can reach in creating a better future.

He adds that design is merely an element of creativity and looking for the best answers. It's about going all out to make something look better, or perform with more efficiency. That's why banks are now hiring chemical engineers and [attending design conferences](#). Design either enhances or completely drives efficiency in the organisation.

Mbhele says this is part of the reason why Liberty chooses to sponsor initiatives like Design Indaba – it gives them a platform to demonstrate what they stand for. Their business is rooted on a purpose, and **purpose-filled businesses** do better than those that are not, because if you go after targets alone, you'll lose the plot. "If it's purposeful in terms of reaching a targeted audience, it's a no brainer," says Mbhele. You don't need to do much to convince people as they already see the value. For example, Liberty's purpose as an organisation is to pioneer financial freedom. Their picture of success is when they've achieved that goal: when people have enough money saved to retire comfortably and send their children off to further their studies at university, when they've provided sufficiently for those rainy days of uncertainty, that's what makes the difference.

Financial freedom is about truly giving people the power to live better lives in the future, and Design Indaba is a platform for solutions that have that impact while also supporting the creative economy that has a positive effect on our society. Mbhele calls it, "a rallying call to action for all of us to use the knowledge we have to make a difference to ordinary people."

That's how we can all work together to design a better future.

Be sure to follow [Liberty](#) on Twitter and visit Bizcommunity's [Design Indaba special section](#) for all the latest coverage!

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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