

Creative conversations with Susan Credle

 By Leigh Andrews

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Jury panel leader for the Loeries' TV, video and radio category for 2016, Susan Credle shares her views on gender equality in advertising as well as a few life hacks and her best ways to get out of a creativity rut.

This year's Loeries jury presidents are highly influential, as they get to steer the jury and have the final say in those highly anticipated final announcements. Susan Credle, heading up the TV, video and radio category rounds off my Creative Conversations series with this year's international jury presidents by talking us through all things creativity-related as [creativity unites](#), especially with this year's female-strong jury president panel for Loeries 2016.



She layers fishnet stockings over coloured tights, uses shower gaskets to hold bunches of lavender together, covers cheap photo albums with pillow fabric from the living room sofa, is using a lead crystal carafe to hold layers of sand from around the world, and has decided she needs to purposefully create more life-hacks after sharing these examples with me!

It's little surprise she's such a creative inspiration when you consider Credle began her career at BBDO NY in 1985 by filling in for receptionists during their bathroom breaks. Just a year later, after a brief stop in the secretarial pool, she became a junior copywriter and has blazed through the ranks since then, with gender equality a core focus. For example, one of the first commercials she wrote was for Pizza Hut. "The brief was simple. As a sponsor of NCAA basketball, Pizza Hut wanted to salute the game. There were a lot of teams trying to crack the brief. Our spot made it through the gauntlet. I have always believed that writing a spot about basketball early in my career helped break down some of the stereotypical perceptions of which briefs are appropriate for female creatives," she explains. Today she's on to the next chapter of her career at FCB as global chief creative officer, where part of her first six months were spent working on the FCB brand. She elaborates: "It has been fascinating to sit with the global leadership team and write our story. The title is 'Never Finished' and we're just getting started"...

1. What's your view of the Loeries, as 'an outsider'?

Credle : I'm a big fan of geographically diverse award shows. Although the internet has made advertising around the world more accessible, I still believe in the value of getting together to discuss and celebrate the work. The Loeries brings together a very strong creative community that, in turn, keeps that community strong.

2. Gender equality is a hot topic in our creative industry at the moment. What can be done to tip the scales and help females shatter through the industry's glass ceiling globally?

Credle: Equal representation on juries and panels [like the Loeries] and in editorial is a critical catalyst for addressing the diversity issue. Women also need to take that next job. Too often, we wait to be asked, or convince ourselves we're not ready. It's also important to believe this industry wants women to succeed, because it does. In fact, this industry needs women to succeed. [*The Art of Possibility*](#), by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander, makes a powerful case for positive attitudes leading to positive outcomes.

3. Speaking of positive outcomes, how does African and Middle Eastern advertising compare on a global level?

Credle: Throughout my career, I've looked to this region of the world for inspiration, and to get a glimpse of where we might be headed in the future. It was work from South Africa years ago that enlightened me to the good we could do through advertising for brands.

The work from this region often feels very personal, human. When I see work from our FCB agencies in this part of the world, the advertising feels respectful and thoughtful. There seems to be a genuine love for the business of creating advertising. As an industry, we tend to look at our work one idea at a time, instead of having a clear vision for what all of these ideas will add up to in the future. We could all do a better job of building lasting love for brands.

4. Leaping in and focusing on creativity then: What's the best way to get out of a creativity rut?

Credle: Start writing or drawing. Just start. Try 'stream of consciousness'. Don't overthink it. Write whatever comes to mind. Even if you're writing and you don't have any ideas and are frustrated, just keep writing the brief and enjoy the archaeological dig through the gray matter of the brain and, eventually, you'll discover something in the words. A 30-minute walk to a specific destination works for me. 'Specific' is important, because you want to put your mind on automatic pilot. This is why so many ideas happen in the shower. Not many of us get into the shower thinking, "I wonder how I will soap up today?" So your mind is free to be creative. I'd also suggest talking to someone – ideally that someone is another human being in the same room, whose talent you respect.

5. Sounds good. Closing off then, what does creativity mean to you personally, especially with the word 'creative' as part of your daily duties?

Credle: I hold the word "creativity" in high regard. As my first boss always told me, we can take a \$5 pad of paper, and on a good day, with creativity, we can turn that pad of paper into a \$5 million idea. Creative ideas can be valuable. They can be damaging. Or they can be invisible. Every chance we get to create something for brands is an opportunity to make a

difference in this world. Don't waste it.

Colour me creatively inspired. [Click here](#) for more on Credle, remember to follow [her](#) and [FCB Global's Twitter stream](#) and [click here](#) to find out more about the Loeries' 2016 jury presidents.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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