

2014 - No awards necessary to have a Halo of a good year!

 By Leigh Andrews

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Don't write off non-traditional BTL agency Halo just because their name didn't appear at any of this year's award shows - Dean Oelschig, Halo director, says to keep an eye out for them on next year's awards circuit, as the work they created this year should see them walk away with their fair share...



With the *Cannes Lions* having just introduced a [category](#) for the 2015 festival that caters for the 'combined power of data and ideas', Oelschig says this will be the 'indie' agency's focus going forward.

But before we skip ahead to next year's successes, let's find out more about how Halo works...

■ **What's the strategy like at Halo, as an indie, non-traditional, below-the-line agency?**

Oelschig: We're at 15 people now. I think the economy of scale says we need to get to about 25 to 30. So we're still trying to grow yet remain agile. We've shifted our focus in terms of the kind of work we want to do and the types of clients we want to work with. Our long-term goal is to be the most creative below-the-line, non-traditional agency, and we are trying to find the right type of brave, creative people to work with us; both as clients and staff.

We've found most of our recent success in design, digital, activation and experiential; essentially the overall direct space, and it's a really exciting, targeted area. There's less red tape and more space to play. Off this basis, we've begun doing quite a bit of work - probably half our business - as a plug-in creative resource for other agencies, and this has worked well for us so far.



Halo team photo - Oelschig is bottom-right.

■ **List any exciting new developments in the team that have enhanced Halo's overall skill set.**

Oelschig: We have had a massive change in staff this year, mostly by design. We wanted to incorporate more design thinking in the team, and that has happened. It allows us to focus a lot more on the communication design aspect, and make beautiful products and pieces of work.

■ **Tell us about key account wins this year that have made an impact on your portfolio...**

Oelschig: Most of our recent business has been focused through other agencies and helping them creatively. For Halo, we've been working on the new Westcliff relaunch as a Four Seasons property, which has been incredibly exciting to be involved in and to see the progress, for the hotel, new restaurants and other properties within it. It's going to do a great job for Johannesburg as a city. We've also started doing some interesting projects in Zimbabwe and Kenya.



CBA Be More Youth Account, university poster and print campaign in Kenya

■ **What's the basic workflow or creative process in the agency?**

Oelschig: It's quite traditional yet flexible. We use the trusted process of account management, traffic and creative, however we prefer to collaborate closer with clients to cut out some of the layered parts of the traditional process. Ideally, we identify the problem we need to tackle and whether what our client is asking for is the best way to approach it. We also include the creative person from the outset to avoid misconstrued information along the way, and make sure the briefs are exceptionally tight and insightful. The more insights upfront, the clearer the brief and the better (and faster) the output.



GHD Print campaign.

■ **Share your thoughts on the local advertising awards industry.**

Oelschig: As we haven't entered anything this year due to our shift in focus and strategy. The work we've created this year

should see us enter our fair share next year though - I think the pieces of work being awarded deserve the acclaim. As an industry, we still seem much better at producing traditional radio/film work than the rest.

■ **What's next for Halo?**

Oelschig: We're going to keep finding the right kinds of people and the right kinds of clients who want to do brave and creative, non-traditional work.



Flames – the new artisan braai restaurant at the Four Seasons Westcliff. Logo, CI and website design

■ **What trends do you see as the biggest to come in 2015?**

Oelschig: We've played a lot recently with the combined power of data and ideas, and it's a world we want to play in. We believe we have the edge and hope a lot of clients see the potential of this in 2015. It's redefining targeted and direct communication, eliminating wastage and seeing returns that marketers could only dream of five years ago.

Seems we'll need to keep an eye out for Halo's work in the new year as they continue their quest to make brands memorable. For now, you can follow their progress through [Oelschig's account on Twitter](#).

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