

2014: The year Joe Public grew greatly in more ways than one

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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On Friday, 31 October the Joe Public team [moved into new premises](#) on Main Road, Bryanston. But that's not the only great growth the agency's seen this year...

Joe Public agency has been racking up awards internationally as well locally over the past few months, such as with its recent spate of Loeries, Apex and [Pendoring Awards](#). The agency believes this outer glowing success is but a sign of its well-oiled inner workings. And with Gareth Leck, agency CEO and Pepe Marais, Chief Creative Officer, named as AdFocus Agency Leaders of the Year 2013, it's clearly got this strategy down pat, as seen in this official AdFocus video...

I spoke to Leck and Marais to find out more.

■ *Let's get started with an understanding of Joe Public's strategy*

Joe Public: Joe Public is very clear on our purpose as an agency. We exist to serve the growth of our clients, which feeds the growth of our people, and ultimately the growth of our country. Our long-term vision is to create an organisation that inspires greatness.

■ *So it's all about greatness and growth. Building on that, what makes the agency tick in terms of work flow?*

Joe Public: Yes, Joe Public is led by greatness and driven by growth. Because of this belief, each brief is generated by our strategic and media planning unit - Think Joe Public, seeking insights and marketing approaches that will deliver on the growth objectives of our clients. These briefs are then fed into our creative department in order to generate big ideas that can be implemented across various channels.

■ *Moving on from big ideas, wax lyrical on awards you've won...*

Joe Public: Just like money, we believe awards are a by-product of excellence. Simple. Because of that, we don't wax

lyrical about them. What we do believe, however, is that work that wins awards wins market share. And we have quite a bit of that. For example, Joe Public won two Gold Pencils at this year's One Show Awards, ranking Joe Public in the top 50 globally for that show.



Joe Public

growthⁿ

Then Joe Public, including Shift Joe Public and Ignite Joe Public, also won 6 Gold, 6 Silver and 6 Bronze awards, as well as two Craft Certificates at this year's Loeries Awards ceremony. Added to this, Shift Joe Public is currently ranked as the Top Brand Communications Agency according to the 2014 Loeries ranking tables.

We were also recognised as the AdReview Agency Group of the Year 2014, took home a Bronze Apex for client Nedbank after only one year in partnership together, and the local Pendering Awards saw Joe Public still ranked as the most awarded agency at the award show this year.

■ ***Still on the topic of awards, let's talk about the state of the local advertising awards industry...***

Joe Public: The South African advertising industry is rated as one of the best in the world. The amount of South Africans in top global positions stands testament to this fact. That said, there are far too few big and bold campaigns in our market place of late, which could be indicative of a very challenging trading environment that historically creates fear and an apprehension around doing big, bold work...

■ ***Sounds like 2014's been a great year. What's next for Joe Public?***

Joe Public: The agency's relocation to our bespoke 3000m², three-story office on Main Road, Bryanston is a key moment for us, especially if we think back to how we started off in a tiny diner on Loop Street in Cape Town. Here we are 16 years later putting down new roots for our group in a beautiful and inspiring new space that represents our entire offering. It really is a proud moment. The purpose of our new space is to inspire us to create greater and greater work - work that is powered by our growth purpose and that strives to deliver on our vision of greatness.

“ The ribbon is cut! #Growth #JoePublicUnited pic.twitter.com/dHfcZ1JVqM - Joe Public (@joepublicagency) November

We believe that great creativity comes from great inspiration. Creative people love beautiful spaces and we truly believe your work space needs to be both highly functional and highly inspirational if you want to deliver great work for your clients.

Other developments include relocating our digital offering from Cape Town to Johannesburg. It will be headed up by Dylan McLean as the executive creative director and managing partner. With 19 years' experience under his belt, we are very excited to have him on board.

Based on our clients growing needs and African aspirations, we've also established a number of key African partnerships and now have a presence or partnership in 10 African countries.

■ ***Africa's definitely top-of-mind for the South African advertising industry. Tell us about key account wins this year that have made an impact on your portfolio...***

Joe Public: Ignite Joe Public, our below-the-line agency, recently picked up Knorr Soup as an account, which is testament to the great work the team is doing after only opening their doors two years ago.



The Joe Public executive committee, "ExecJoe", from left: Pepe Marais, Xolisa Dyeshana (seated), Neil van der Weele, Lebo Masilela, Laurent Marty, Gareth Leck and Dave McCullough.

Engage Joe Public, our public relations agency, have also been hard at work establishing a strong African support network to service PR and communications needs across the continent for clients. When they are not working on the ground themselves, such as in Botswana, they now have a go-to team in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia, with more to be announced shortly. This is not only to service local clients expanding into Africa, but also global clients wanting support and on-the ground counsel, especially around reputation management issues. The expansion of an African network has been absolutely key for us and the impact it has on the Joe Public business.

Other new account gains for the group across our various divisions include: SAICA, Glenmark Pharmaceutical, Times Media, Mandela International Film Festival and Hippo.co.za, among others.

■ ***Great growth indeed. Tell us about the exciting team developments at Joe Public this year and how you're helping to build the future.***

Joe Public: Joe Public is always on the lookout for new talent to bring diversity and creative energy to the fore for our clients. We recently brought on board young talent, Titus Bogatsu, who is a multimedia designer. We also employ creative directors and copywriters that come from different backgrounds in order to service our clients. In addition, we recently developed an annual intern strategy and we currently have 10 interns on a 12-month contract working within our various departments, with the view to appoint as many as possible. We have also appointed a number of school graduates from Forte High in Soweto and Itirele Zensele School in Diepsloot - these are the two schools we work with through our own NGO, One School at a Time.

▣ ***Lastly, what trends do you see as the biggest to come in 2015?***

Joe Public: Content creation and big data are the two biggest trends. The truth is, we believe that our real focus needs to be on creative excellence and big ideas for our clients. Big data should be there to provide the relevant inputs for big ideas and content creation is merely another way of executing the creative. This means the real energy needs to remain on creative excellence.

Great advice for the industry as a whole. You can find out more about Joe Public by [clicking here](#).

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