

How Rightford, Searle-Tripp & Makin gave SA advertising a *Wallop!*

 By Leigh Andrews

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What better way to celebrate Ogilvy's current successes than by hosting the book launch about the men who started off father agency Rightford, Searle-Tripp & Makin...

On Tuesday, 18 November, Toni Younghusband's book, titled *Wallop! An advertising phenomenon called Rightford, Searle-Tripp & Makin*, was launched by Ogilvy & Mather Cape Town and Tafelberg Publishers.



Rightford, Searle-Tripp and Makin signing *Wallop!* copies for book launch attendees

Curious about the title? The book's outer jacket explains: "At Rightford, Searle-Tripp & Makin, our creative work was always the most important force in our ad agency. So our original idea was to call this book *The work, the work, the work*. Unfortunately this 'original idea' turned out to be not so original after all, as we belatedly discovered that another ad agency had already appropriated it as their mantra. So we've rectified this unlucky coincidence, and our book is now titled *Wallop!*"

If you're now wondering why they went for *Wallop?* instead, the book's inner jacket lists a number of definitions for the term, with the most relevant being the noun: "The capacity to create a forceful impact".

“ [#WallopRSTM](https://twitter.com/Xbcp4ZWH7d) what an honour to be in the company of legends - a childhood built on iconic ads & a sense of family
:) pic.twitter.com/Xbcp4ZWH7d - Tarryn Josias (@TarrynJo) [November 18, 2014](#) ”

Forceful impact indeed. The launch was held on the fifth floor of the astounding Ogilvy building in Woodstock, with its clear view of Table Mountain and levels of connected staircases running down the centre. With so much space to fill, there were almost too many people in attendance, with radio personality Mike Wills almost causing a riot when he announced that he was cutting the book signing short in order to begin the formal discussion with Bob Rightford, Brian Searle-Tripp and Roger Makin. Wills announced, "That does involve stopping talking, I know it's difficult for advertising people."

Wills dubbed it a very special event to celebrate the three men who founded the agency from which the current Ogilvy agency grew, adding how nice it was to have so many people from the agency's past in attendance. He then introduced Luca Gallarelli, Ogilvy's current managing director, who said it was unbelievably intimidating to stand in front of so many unbelievable people and a privilege to be hosting the book launch at the agency with "the guys who set the template for what it would be today".

“ Our very own [@Gallarelli](#) introducing Brian, Roger, and Bob, the founders of our original agency RSTM [#WallopRSTM pic.twitter.com/7THtk06pbQ](#)- Ogilvy Cape Town (@OgilvyCT) [November 18, 2014](#) ”

Looking to the Rightford, Searle-Tripp & Makin past to prepare for a better Ogilvy future

Gallarelli added that he shows all agency 'newbies' the AV they put together to sell the book to the publishers Tafelberg, as it's a true peek into the agency's soul and spirit, and a true legacy to protect. Gallarelli himself read through the book in just two nights, and says it's fascinating as it tells the story through the eyes of people who actually worked there, ringing with the pride among those who have and still do work at the agency.

Next Wills spoke to each of the 'legends' in turn. Makin said coming into the agency that morning - in itself nothing new as he pops in regularly - was like a blast from the past as the building had been specially branded with the original agency name in honour of the book launch.

“ Excited for tonight's [#WallopRSTM](#) book launch [@OgilvyCT](#)! And so privileged to know the amazing Mr [@MakinRoger](#)! [pic.twitter.com/ANUuMgZPLB](#)- Tanya de Jongh (@tanyadejongh) [November 18, 2014](#) ”

Wills interjected that anyone who works in advertising would say to be in conversation with Makin, Searle-Tripp and Rightford is equivalent to talking to The Beatles if not better, as "these were the original artists".

How and why the book came about...

Rightford said the book came about as he wanted to leave something behind "for the family", so he wrote to all the agency alumni in 2007 asking for a few comments and says the correspondence was overwhelming, with almost all stating that "those were the best years of their lives as they had so much fun and did so much terrific work."

In April last year, they met with roughly 80 folk who had worked at the agency, and author Toni Younghusband, who couldn't attend the launch herself due to ill health, put it all together in a wonderful way.

Wills then asked Makin why he didn't write the book as he's often been lauded as one of country's best copywriters, to which Makin replied, "I'm a sprinter, not a marathon runner".

And when Wills asked Searle-Tripp if there were any disagreements between the three about who did what, he replied "There has never been anything but great friendship between us," to which Wills scoffed "From the outside, we'd never have known."

Looks like you'll have to read the book to find out more - it's available from [Tafelberg Publishers](#) for R325.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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