

The Art of

INNOVATION

Conceptualised and initiated by Yvonne Kgame



This book describes how and why all of us are creative and innovative. To do this, it looks at the change that isn't really changing.

People always fear and resist change. But that won't work in broadcasting—after all the schedule and the programmes change every day.

Broadcasters are used to change, and they should see it as an adventure.

Right now, more things are changing in broadcasting than ever before, as we embark on digital multi-channel, social and other digital media, and mobile reception.

But, in a way, things are not really changing. They are just developing—in the same way as the jam we buy at the supermarket gets better every year.

If this has confused you, read on—you'll get the drift.

In this series

- **Policy and Procedures for the Procurement of Local TV Programmes**
- **Language Equity Guidelines for TV Programme Makers**
- **Quality Assurance Guide to Educational Broadcasting**
- **Quality first: Hallmarks of Quality**
- **Content is Queen**
- **The Art of Pitching 2005**
- **The Art of Pitching –Revised 2013**
- **The Art of Co-production**
- **The Art of Sourcing Content**
- **National and International Annual Observances**
- **Thought Memory**

THE ART OF INNOVATION

By
Howard Thomas

Commissioned by Yvonne Kgame
Executive Manager: Editorial and Innovation

Howard Thomas has worked in the entertainment industry in South Africa for nearly 40 years. He is an award-winning TV producer, and has worked in radio, theatre, film, magazine and interactive media. He has been writing about the industry for over ten years and training in the industry for over 20 years. He is a SAQA-qualified training designer, assessor and quality assurance manager.

*He authored *The Art of Pitching*, *The Art of Co-production* and *The Art of Sourcing Content* for the SABC. He specialises in broadcast management, scheduling and audience targeting, and has made extensive studies of audience psychology within African cultures. He lectures, trains and coaches all over Africa.*

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Editor and proof-reader: Robin Nell B.A. Hons.

FOREWORD

A wise person will always find a way. ~ Tanzanian proverb

You enjoy the sun when you open yourself out to it. You enjoy other people when you open your heart to them.

You enjoy change when you open your mind to it. A closed mind is like a closed door—nobody goes through it, and it gathers dust on both sides. An open door allows in the light, the air and welcomes both.

There are many ways to disguise a closed mind:

- ◇ Looking for problems at the very beginning—giving yourself reasons not to move forward.
- ◇ Creating unnecessary work, yet not achieving results.
- ◇ Saying “It will never work”, without explaining and offering alternatives.

The person who suffers the most is the one with the closed mind.

However, these people don't have a closed mind to a new social network on their smart phones, and meeting new people online. But they do have a closed mind to change in their aspirations, careers, achievement, adventure and opportunities.

There is an old isiNdebele proverb which says, “The eye crosses the river before the body”.

This book offers some techniques with which to face the changes that we cannot avoid. We also should embrace change for what it is— opportunity, adventure; and not just an open door, but a new door.

Yvonne Kgame
Editorial and Innovation
SABC

“Courage is the father of success” ~ Nigerian proverb

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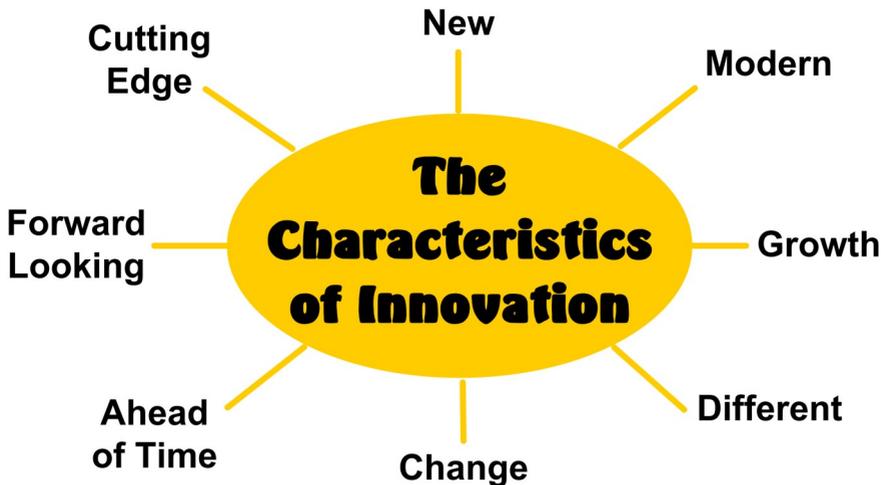
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INTRODUCTION

"If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got." Albert Einstein

The Value of Innovation

Innovation is not just a word, it's a necessity. Not only for the media, broadcasting, and public broadcasting—but for each and every one of us. If you are under 30, you will remember what life was like without the Internet and cellphones. Think back—look at just how much you innovated your own life, and lifestyle.



Innovation is a change in custom

Innovation is not a new touch screen or technology. We innovate in our everyday lives, and we do not know just how easy it is, until we try it. So firstly we have to innovate the programming of our attitudes before we can even start.

Innovation is the act of introducing something new. It's a creative process.

- It's what enables us to come up with new ideas for ways to manage, produce, design and develop content.
- It's how we come up with new ideas and concepts. It's how we get to the forefront with everything that breaks new ground.
- It's what keep us ahead, where audiences want us to be.

But it extends beyond our role in broadcasting. It permeates every aspect of our lives. It brings new life, new hope, new vision to the lives those around us.

Why Innovation?

'Somewhere out there is a bullet with your organisation's name on it... Somewhere out there is a competitor, unborn and unknown, that will render your strategy obsolete. You can't dodge the bullet. You're going to have to shoot first. You're going to have to out-innovate the innovators.'

New solutions to problems	New messages
New angles for telling stories	New role models
New and fresh stories	New markets
New knowledge	New images
New skills	New products
New values and attitudes	New methodologies
New formats	New business plans
New platforms	New resources

What Drives Innovation?

Every organisation encounters occasions in which it needs to adapt its strategy to shifting industry and competitive conditions:

The appearance of fresh opportunities

Threats

Advancing technology

Significant events that affect business

Quantum changes

Market change

Revolutionary moves

Dramatic response to new challenges

Technology breakthroughs

THOUGHT STARTERS

Enablers

Envision the way forward based on what works and doesn't work; gaps as well as adapting to new ways of effective public broadcasting.

In parallel, there is a need to collaborate with key stakeholders and to communicate with all key parties to source and harness input, skills, knowledge and wisdom across the board.

Opening innovative relationships is critical and joint research delivers embryonic ideas.

PART 1 -

THE BIG PICTURE

1

Convergence and the Big Picture

Leaping into convergence

There's always a bigger picture than you think. We used to have radio and television. But then along came digital and its shadow: Convergence.

Suddenly there was an interconnect between all the media. You can cut and paste newspaper text into a film script; embed a radio interview into a podcast; email a picture or even a video; broadcast direct to the TV set in the home, and your cellphone in the train.

You can read a newspaper online, and instead of a photo attached to the report, there will be a video. If television news has a report that is too long for the newscast, you can see more on the news channel's website. If you like it, you can share the link to the report and video through your phone, instantly to hundreds of people.

The Big Picture suddenly got bigger.

In today's multi-channel TV environment, we have to aim bigger. We used to make TV programmes to give the audience something with which they could feel emotionally connected. Today our audiences get emotionally connected to a text message.

Why? Because the text message that they connect to, has real meaning, it says, "I love you". You won't have to watch a hundred Hollywood blockbusters to feel a tenth as good.

We have to do better than we do now. A good show is just not good enough. It must now have meaning.

You don't need production values to put meaning into a TV programme – you just need quality. Quality does not need money. And ... quality is no more than a programme that the audience likes.

We now have to give our audience an "experience". And what's more, we have to give them an experience that is more gratifying than they will get anywhere else.

Giving our audience an experience means getting close to them and seeing them within the Big Picture. The Big Picture includes the whole media environment. You don't see any picture, big or small, if you stay up there locked in your Ivory Tower. You will end up innovating to make yourself happy.

Bungee jump from the Ivory Tower

The Big Picture

"Big Picture thinking" should be an innovative way of thinking. It's the way we think all the time, provided we don't look for the problems first.

Imagine you are moving house. While you are packing, you are thinking of where things will go in the new house. You pack carefully because you have asked friends to help with transport, and you are not sure they will be as careful as you would be. You start packing, so that you will be ready in time for the transport. You won't arrive at the new home until it is vacated, cleaned and ready for you.

All you are doing is thinking "The Big Picture".

The "Big Picture" in the new TV experience environment means no more than opening your eyes just a little bit wider. When you read the screen on your computer, your eyes are about 50 cm from the screen. You can read the words clearly, but you are only aware of the words on the screen. You are not aware of what is going on around you.

Now get out of your chair, and stand further back. You can now see your desk, and the books you used while reading the screen; your pens; and the phone as well.

Stand back further, and you can see half the room. You may

even see the door, and who is coming through it into your room. You may not be able to see the words on the screen anymore, but you can see your entire environment. If you need to see the words on your screen, you just have to go and sit in your chair again.

There's an expression. "You can't see the wood for the trees."

It's much easier to go closer to get detail, than to step out and orientate yourself to the big picture.

Have you noticed in television camerawork, that the camera mostly starts out wide and zooms in? Far less often does it start close-up and then zooms out. That because we need to orientate ourselves to the environment before we get into the detail.

But the environment has just got a lot bigger. Up to now, broadcasting meant radio and TV. Then the print media, and recorded music were included, and we changed the name to "The Media". We didn't yet pay much attention to live stage events.

But, not anymore. Convergence grabbed up television along with all the other creative industries, and has interlinked them with each other.

Digital has made it possible for the sights and sounds of all the media to change over with each other – for one to be represented on the other.

Your radio talk show can be changed into a TV show, serialised in the magazines. Your live concert will find itself in edited form on YouTube. Instead of a photographer taking a photo for the newspaper, they can extract it as a picture file from the television signal.

People can comment live over the social media, and on that basis, people will either rush to buy tickets on line, or not buy at all. You don't have to go to the concert to buy your T-shirt; you buy it online at any number of stores and have it delivered to your home.

You can watch your favourite TV shows again and again on DVD, on-demand on your TV, or stream it down to your cellphone.

It's so easy for the audience to have an 'experience'. If programme makers are smart, every step that the audience takes in that adventure, can yield another income stream.

The time has come when broadcasters make less money from advertising, but more money from all the others put together. Digital transmission will make possible for the SABC to fulfil its mandate to South Africa, and indeed exceed expectations.

2

Three features of the 21st Century

Niche audiences

Television broadcasters used to go for the biggest audience they could. They designed their programmes to attract the most people, even at the risk of making them look generic. That's all changed. Now they focus on a specific audience, and the new economics of TV can make that audience as low as 50 000.

What is a niche? It's a little part where the people have something in common that has a deep meaning for them. It could be an interest in lifestyle (interior décor or gardening); it could be an interest in celebrities; it may be religion, a profession, motoring, extreme sport or parenthood.

Some channels cater for the people who are passionate about animals, or history, or a specific genre such as documentary or action drama.

When the broadcaster has identified a common interest in an audience, the broadcaster will finely tune the programme schedule so that there is something for everybody within that niche. The smaller the niche, then the whole schedule will offer something for everyone.

Multi-platforms

Don't get confused with the word "platform". It's just the media version of a railway platform.

Imagine a station with many railway lines going through it. Some platforms go East-West, and some North-South. Others branch out to towns in other directions.

Just one station has many platforms that can take you to many places. That's all it means.

The same signal can now be picked up on cell-phone and tablets. TV channels can stream live through websites, or time-shifted (delayed). People can even download them when they are free to watch them (Video on Demand or VOD). There are podcasts, DVD rentals and DVD purchases. Given time there will be even more platforms on which programmes can be delivered.

Social media

Social media are now playing a greater role than before. As we will see later, these media are simply a faster and cheaper way for audiences to react – in essence, they are nothing new. The word "viral" means nothing more than the word "faster".

A few decades ago, you could choose to use a telephone to talk to someone, or if you needed to write to someone quickly, you could send a telegram. You could post them a letter. You had another choice: you could walk over their house and talk to them personally.

Today there are more choices, and most of them are instantaneous. The email message gets to them in a flash. It just may take them a little time to pick up the message, but usually their phone will vibrate in their pocket to tell them that they have a message. You can attach pictures, music and even video to your messages.

There is just a lot more media variety, which is a lot faster. Otherwise little more has changed.

Three over-rated myths

There's a lot spoken and written about social media, and a lot is not really true, but has become part of everyday belief. Here are three examples.

User-generated content

"User-generated Content" has come to mean that the audience supplies content. However, writers write, directors direct, journalists report, actors act, and singers sing. On the other hand, electricians lay wires, plumbers fix pipes, and salespeople sell cars. People do what they are competent to do.

A news channel is never going to announce, " ... and now we cross to our reporter in Manoka who's a full time fruit plumber, and just reports for a hobby." We are not YouTube.

User-generated content cannot possibly be more than "America's Favourite Home Movies". There are a billion blogs in the world, but the only ones that people read are written by people who can write.

Multi-tasking

You can only do one thing at a time. There is enough research to show that people concentrate on one thing even if they are doing two. It is not advisable to slice carrots while watching TV. Would you take a taxi where the driver watches TV?

The human brain doesn't multi-task like a factory robot doing three or four operations at the same time. Gloria Mark at the University of California has studies that show that when people are frequently diverted from one task to another, they work faster, but produce less. After 20 minutes of interrupted performance, people report significantly higher stress levels, frustration, workload, effort and pressure.

Multi-tasking is possible where you can operate three computer programmes at the same time to save you opening and closing, but it is dubious that someone with whom you

are having a cup of coffee is listening to you, while they are thumbing their way through the social networks.

But speaking on the mobile phone while you are driving? General consensus says, "No".

Audience Ratings

Advertisers used to buy numbers of people, but that was when television programmes targeted the biggest possible slice of the population. As we have seen, things have changed. Advertisers now buy specifically defined audiences, not numbers. They target in and aim at a narrow profile. If you can offer exactly that profile, you can charge the earth. Advertisers want attention, not eyeballs.

AR stands for Audience Rating and is a percentage of all the people who have access to television. If 40-m people have access to television, then a 1 AR represents 400 000 people. If your show scores a 5 AR, you are watched by 2 m people. Your "Universe" is 40-m people.

If you are only targeting women viewers, then your universe is likely to be only 20.5-m, in which case a 5 AR comes to 1.3 -m.

But are those people really watching TV with interest and attention, when all we can really measure is if the TV set is tuned to a specific programme? When people view television casually they are subject to the slightest interruption, and more likely to leave the room during a commercial break.

But what if they are having an "experience"? Just watch someone playing a video game. They are not subject to interruptions. In fact you have to shake them by the shoulder just to attract their attention. They are "immersed".

They are not just "paying attention". When people are paying attention, distractions are an irritation. When they are immersed, then they don't even notice distractions.

When soccer fans watch TV, they pay attention to most games, regardless of who is playing. They enjoy the art and

dexterity of the players. But, when they are watching their own team play, they are immersed. You can shout at them, they will not hear you. The same goes for the adoring fans of singers, and cult programmes like Star Trek. When someone is going through the social networks to see if they are mentioned, you will also find them immersed. People love to see themselves in the media.

Shoppers can become immersed when they are going through clothing hanging on the rails in shops.

Measuring attention is where the real challenge lies. Luckily we have digital media to the rescue.

We must aim for “attention” and settle for nothing less. We may not be able to achieve “immersion” unless we can offer a highly targeted emotionally satisfying experience.

But then, why can't we offer an experience if we use our creativity to innovate?

3

The awful economics of television

Simple arithmetic

Let's look at the sums. Television is the most costly (and risky) of all the media, so money plays the largest factor in content, regardless of whether the broadcaster is commercial, not for profit (like community TV), or public service.

You just cannot afford to make and broadcast content that no one's going to watch. Every programme needs viewers, and for varying reasons, according to the objectives set.

Programming doesn't just attract advertising.

Most educational programmes are funded, and the funder will want to know that enough people within the target audience benefited from the programme to justify the expense.

Organisations sponsor programmes for many reasons: to reinforce brand awareness, sell products, change behaviour, or promote a cause.

Whatever the reason, or objective, the programme must attract as many people from the target audience as makes it worth while to spend the money making the programme.

To get an idea of the arithmetic, let's look at a before and after scenario for digital television.

Before

Prior to the arrival of digital transmission, we had 50-million people (that we knew of). We had 35-million viewers (that we knew of – where do stolen TV sets go?). There were four free-to-air channels, and pay-TV accounted for 25% of viewing families.

The revenue that the broadcasters reaped from advertising (Ad spend) was high, on the face of it. But the data only showed where the advertising slots sold, and at the rate published in the rate cards.

It included the money that broadcasters spent buying slots for themselves for self-promotion. And the data did not reflect special deals and discounts, which are, of course, confidential. Before digital, ad spend on TV was about R13-billion (excluding self-promotion). This seemingly enormous amount of money was shared between three public service channels; one commercial, and many pay-TV channels.

It isn't as simple as this, but for convenience let's say that revenue per channel was R13-bn divided by six.

After

There are still two pay-TV operators but now more than 15 channels available free-to-air. The revenue is hardly more than R13-bn. Television doesn't attract much more revenue (despite an overall increase in ad spend) as ad spend on digital advertising, community radio and TV and outdoor advertising is growing at a faster rate.

So now the ad spend is spread over twenty channels, which means R13-bn divided by 20.

How do you cope when your audience has declined from 7-m to less than 1.8-m? Moreover your revenue has shot down from R2-bn to a tiny R650-m?

You have been used to a stable landscape for ages and suddenly you are broadcasting to next to no-one with a revenue of next to nothing.

What do we do?

WE INNOVATE

We will have to reduce the cost of content, but we also have to make cheaper programmes stand out among many more competitive programmes at the same time. We have no option but to turn programming into a meaningful experience for a smaller audience. We have to find a way for advertisers to pay for greater attention.

And for that matter, we will have to make advertisers pay the earth for audience “immersion”.

Innovate income streams and finance methods

We need to look at the nature of the “experience”. Turning TV programmes into “Experiences” requires innovation, creativity and courage.

Broadcasting now features:

1. Too many channels

How can people possibly watch all the TV we have access to? Do we *want* to watch everything?

2. Too few audiences

When a country has just one TV channel, everyone watches, and the channel is assured of a large audience. With 100 channels, there is a chance that each channel may only attract 1% of the entire population.

3. Too little money

There is nothing in our past text books or professional experience that shows us how to do more with less.

“Less is more” is one of those motivation speaker’s catch phrases that always sounds nice, but cannot possibly work in this context.

But based on what we know from the past, there is no way we can operate on the money we receive under digital TV.

What do we do? **Innovate.**

Wise sayings about niche audiences

Do not try to fight a lion if you are not one yourself.

Not to know is bad. Not to wish to know is worse.

Wood already touched by fire isn't hard to set alight.

Never argue with a fool as no one will tell the difference.

One who loves the vase loves also what is inside

PART 2

FIT FOR PURPOSE

Fit for Purpose simply means spending money wisely. It means taking a bold step forward, and taking the trouble to measure the Return on Investment on every programme (and allied activity) and allocating the appropriate budget that will yield the Return you want.

This section explains all these concepts for you. *Fit for Purpose* means that if the audience is happy with low cost dramas, then give them low cost dramas. It all ties up together.

Quality is in the mind of the audience. Production values cost money. Sometimes Production Values bring in additional revenue because they can be marketed, and sometimes they are a waste of money.

Fit for Purpose means giving the audience what they want, and what they will perceive as quality, at the lowest cost that is appropriate.

Why do we always go for the lowest cost? Because of the awful economics of entertainment.

1

The end decides the means

We cannot use the same thinking processes that we used to use for content. We need some new techniques – ones that open our eyes to the bigger picture of the media, and the smaller and more detailed picture of the niche audience.

Up to now we have been thinking inwards to our own channels, and outwards to the whole audience. We have to look outwards to embrace all the media (and anything else we can think of), and inwards to our niche audience at the same time.

This is not easy. It's a complete reversal to what we are used.

There are five aspects to this new way of thinking.

1. The future is not an option

The only thing we can be sure of is that change will continue. As we think smarter and start outwitting the competitor channels, so our competitors will get smarter, and try and get one step ahead of us. When they do, we will be jolted into getting back our advantage.

Every six months, the technologies by which your audience can talk to each other and us will change. Social media sites will come and go, some will last longer than others; most will never even get off the ground. You can't be too far ahead of your viewers by latching onto some new fad that is being heavily marketed by the inventors.

If the audience doesn't like it, it won't take off. You will have to time yourself exactly: long enough to see if the technology will be accepted, and yet still enough to be ahead of your competitors. The only thing that we can be reasonably certain of, is that only 10% of all new technologies and software developments will earn the acceptance of the public.

It's going to be a never-ending race to catch up and stay ahead. Sometimes you'll win, and sometimes you'll lose. But whatever happens, you will never be bored.

2. Develop a close relationship with the niche viewer

The old way of working was to target a demographic. It often started with the demographic of viewer that advertisers wanted, so that you could cram as many advertisers into the same programme. This would have them competing with each other to buy a slot around that programme, with the result that the cost of the slot went up. If you had a hit programme, where all advertisers wanted to be, you just hiked up the price of the slot, and you would still be "full

house" (all your ad slots sold out).

Everyone spoke the same language: the language of demographics:

- ◇ "Living Standards Measurement" (LSM), age and Gender
- ◇ Language groups and Attitude segments

It was roughly the same language used by the advertisers, so you just had to match the demographics, put on a successful show, and you had it made.

There was little chance of getting to know the viewer except in very broad terms. You could say that the most widely read magazine in that demographic was "True Love", and you could read a few issues of the magazine and get a feel for what the editor of the magazine felt that the audience liked. You could listen to the most popular radio station for that demographic, but that was like being the pilot of a plane between Johannesburg and Durban, and knowing that every Monday a large number of people aboard were regular passengers.

It is so different from a taxi driver who follows the same route day after day, and who carries the same 14 people at the same time, and on the same day, every day.

The airplane pilot has a mass audience; the taxi driver has a niche audience.

The taxi driver gets to know the problems that his passengers face in their neighbourhood – problems with the street lights, the drains and the schools.

He will get to hear, and end up being part of the solutions to the problems, crime rate, and their complaints. He will share their celebrations and their grief. He will begin to feel like a "part of the family".

Now that's a niche audience.

You have to develop the same relationship with your viewers, and the only way you can is to get them to hop onto your

“taxi” day after day and week after week. You have to get them talking, hear what they are saying and react in the way that makes them feel good.

You can’t sit back and think that your programme is the “taxi”. Your taxi, if you are to engage with your viewers will have to be the total package you offer your viewers. The actual programme will be a part – there will be an array of platforms where your viewers can join in the total experience, and where you have built in mechanisms by which you can hear what they have to say, and offer them anything that makes them feel good. After all, the difference between watching a programme and benefiting from an experience, is the degree to which the viewer feels emotionally satisfied.

3. Dream that you are the viewer

Imagine yourself in the place of the viewer. You must BE the viewer. You must know that they need to know, and what they want to know. You will be able to give them what they need to make them feel good. You will be able to give them what they enjoy getting outraged about. People often like bad news, if it gives them a common cause, and a purpose that unites them as an audience.

You must offer them comfort for their fears, and give them a hand up with their dreams and aspirations. To do that, you have to think and dream like them. That’s how well you have to know them.

Try and find an avatar for your viewer. There’s an old trick that applies even more than it did in the past. With a mass audience, producers and channel managers often create an imaginary “average viewer”. They give the person a name, an appearance, a height, age, weight, and the style of clothes they like. They develop an intricate avatar that represents the whole audience, so that at least the way they target their audience is consistent.

It works in that it develops a disciplined consistency, but the mass audience is far too wide for the avatar do anything

more than channel consistency.

With a niche audience, it's different. When you're trying to attract a narrow cross section of the viewership, the more defined your avatar, the more you will define your audience.

If you look at some of the local business channels, it's not difficult to see how the "avatars" differ from each other. In all, business people are targeted with many different channels, TV programmes and radio programmes. But examine them carefully. Each one has a distinctly different avatar.

The total market for business programmes may not be more than 75 000, but each offering sees that 75 000 in a different way, and so manages to capture a fair share of the potential audience.

You have to get to know your audience as one person, finely defined, so that the moment that person jumps aboard your taxi, you know how to greet them, and pretty well what they will talk about throughout the journey.

4. Envision the end

It is common practice, before you pitch a programme, to be able to see the entire programme, from beginning to the end, in your mind, with your eyes shut.

Everybody can visualise, it not the domain of the "creatives". When you make a cup of tea, even before you have switched on the kettle, you have an image in your mind of what the tea will look like and in which of your mugs you will use.

See how easy visualisation is:

Close your eyes. You are looking at a large onion. You take a knife and slowly peel back that papery covering. You are beginning to smell the onion. You slice it. Can you see the tears begin to well up in your eyes?

Open your eyes – you visualised it all. Now do the same with a lemon.

Now jump right ahead and see yourself sitting in front of your TV set at home. Your own show is about to start. The screen is momentarily black, and then your opening sequence bounces into view. What do you see? What do you hear? Is there a title? What does it say? How does it look?

The title sequence cross-fades into the body of the programme. What do you see happening? Don't describe what should be happening, say what you actually see in your mind. There's a big difference between description and visualisation.

Visualisation means using the eyes of your mind. Have you heard broadcasters describe radio as "The Theatre of the Mind". It has to be. With radio, all you can do is hear. The job of the announcer is to use language and sounds to evoke images in your mind so that you have the same audio visual experience you have with the movies. The difference is that with radio, you hear with your body's ears, and see with your mind's eyes.

That's what visualisation is. If you enjoy the radio, you can visualise.

Broadcasters have an unfortunate tendency to resort to an academic style in order to look formal, precise and learned.

Your audience is neither formal, nor exact, and usually at the level of only high school, education. Why don't you describe the programme in their language, to their level of education, and in their culture? It's very difficult to take a doctorate thesis and turn it into a children's story.

But visualisation is not just for programmes. It's also for the effect of the TV programme combined with all the other media you have used to create the multi-platform experience. You have to see in your mind's eye, not only the programme, but also the:

- Interviews with the stars in the magazines, newspapers and on the radio.
- Live visits to shopping centres on Saturday mornings

- Music concert in a stadium that features the singers.
 - Website with the streaming promos and extracts from the episodes
 - The biographies of the performers and artists
 - Free downloads of animated sequences for screen savers, and the signature tune as a ringtone.
 - Link to the Facebook, Twitter and any other current social media pages
 - Online sales of DVD past series, and merchandise paraphernalia.
 - Links to online sales of associated books and music
- Anything else that is currently "hot"

You have to see it.

If you are inventing a new channel, can you:

- See the channel schedule as it is printed in the "What's on this week" in the Sunday newspaper?
- See and hear the station ident?
- Read the rate card?
- See the accounts showing the costs and revenue?

All in your mind?

Visualisation also applies to business plans, strategies, positioning of the channel within the competitor environment, the gap in the audience that it fills, the audience profiles, and of course, the audience avatar.

If you can visualise an onion, you can visualise a budget.

5. Do the backwards plan

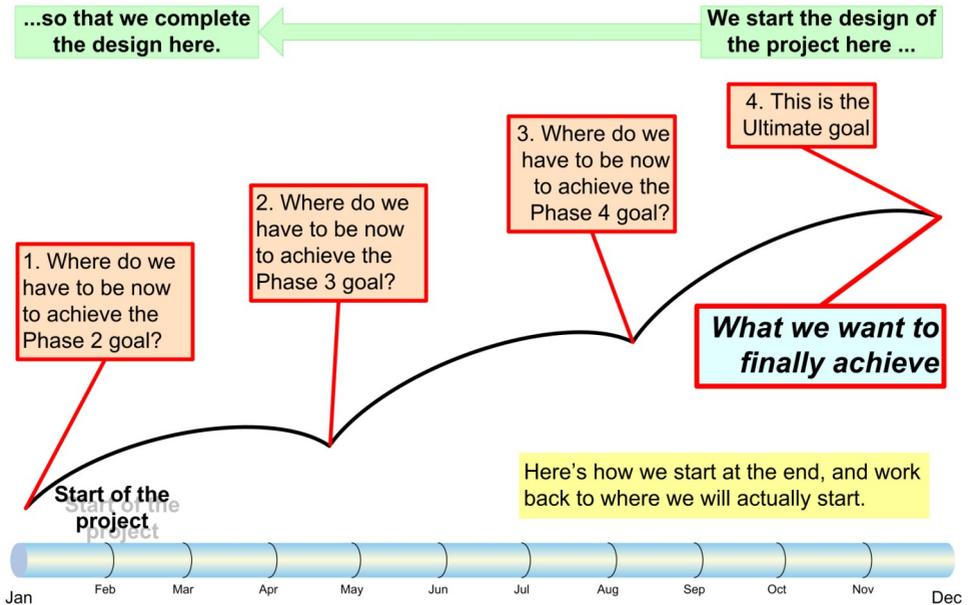
There's a trick to knowing where to start. You start at the end. In a way this is the same as setting objectives, but with this system, you work backwards so that once you have set your objectives, you can immediately chart the course to get to the end goal.

Say you want to start a new niche TV channel. You need to launch it in one year from now.

You make a list of all the things you will need to launch. You will need your target audience, schedules, stock of programme, pre-sold advertising and sponsorships, staff, broadcast and production facilities, business plans, marketing plans and a host of other things.

Now ask yourself. To have all that ready at the beginning of December, where do I have to be in September? At what stage of development of all the things I need in December, does everything have to be in September?

That now gives me my September deadlines.



Now move on to April. To be where I want to be in September, where do I have to be in April? How fast do I have to move so that everything is ready for the September deadlines?

Now I have my April deadlines.

Finally, ask yourself: to be ready for my April deadlines, where do I have to start right now?

This is really clever. Instead of looking at your year-end goals, and getting overwhelmed by the sheer immensity of what you have you achieve, you break it up, bit by bit.

You break it up into groups of tasks, and you break up each of those into deadline phases, or periods, or stages or whatever you want to call, them.

2

Public Broadcasting

Public service

Don't agonise about what Public Broadcasting is all about. It's clearly defined in the Charter of the SABC ¹, and you can read it for yourself. It's quite a short document. Academics and commentators have debated what PBS means for decades now, and they will continue to do so for more decades.

In the meantime, we have to get on with the job.

Your audience doesn't care about the philosophical meaning of PBS, why should you?

While we're at it, PBS is NOT about a paternalistic view that the SABC knows best and that it delivers what it thinks people need. The SABC has plenty of feedback mechanisms by which people comment on programmes, and express their views about programme priorities. By the time subject matter becomes a prerogative, it's been through many

processes to ensure that these are real and immediate needs.

The viewer is now expectant, and wants to be surprised with the content. They want their public broadcaster, their friend, to deliver what they need and want.

Public service programming talks to and with people, not down to them. PBS content introduces people to people. It brings communities and views together in such a way that the viewers want to think about issues and decide what action they want to take.

All programming is about delivering content to audiences so that they can act on it. Programmes either induce *action*, or they have failed.

Commercial programmes want people to:

- ◇ Watch again next time.
- ◇ Tell their friends to watch.

Public service programmes want people to:

- ◇ Initiate something that improves their lives and the lives of others.
- ◇ Tell their friends to watch next time.

People don't learn from the SABC or teachers only, they learn from other people too. They get their information from the News, educational programmes and documentaries. They learn through discussing the content with other people. It's the same at school and educational institutions. Learners learn from each other, by processing what they have been told in class or read in the textbooks. ²

That's why you must get down from the Ivory Tower, and get out into the people.

Public Broadcasting in Africa

In the changing world of increasing globalised commercial multi-channel, it would seem that public broadcasting will have to change alongside. Media analysts agree that the relevance of public broadcasting will only increase over time. Because of the proliferation of channels all over the world, it seems to breed a “sameness”, or channels copying each other”. People in the developing countries demand programming that is relevant to them. Languages, cultures, music and the arts are marginalised. There is little educational and social upliftment programming.

There is so much diversity in Africa, that each country’s Public Service Broadcaster has to rethink its mandate. Most African broadcasters rely heavily on advertising revenue, but in the future they will have to innovate—and develop more refined models that use a wide range of commercial revenue to subsidise the programming that is still lacking in the media space.

Digital Terrestrial transmission is the answer as it offers more channels at a lower cost. However, all African countries will always be at different stages of migration.

One aspect coming to the fore is the need for public broadcasters to reduce the cost of programming by sharing digital content assets. That’s getting easier: we can now deliver programmes to each other by Internet.

Cross subsidisation in PBS

Public service programmes do not mean “losing money”. It means that the programme is not trivial, but meaningful.

We saw that “meaning” is what makes programmes. We said that if you want your programmes (even your trivial entertainment content) to have a competitive edge, they have to deliver “meaning”.

If your public service programme has special meaning, it will attract a niche audience that specific advertisers will find

very attractive. The trick is for sales personnel to identify the right advertiser. They should never simply dismiss PBS as “going to make a loss”.

Public service is no more than niche interest programming that is motivated by specific social and personal needs. It’s nothing complex, and it is not per se, going to lose money. Remember, Fit for Purpose? It all connects together.

Innovate.

Where to find advertisers? Every marketer wants to speak to a specific market. The answer is to market, market, and market. Tell advertisers proudly of what is coming up.

There’s another aspect: there may be some public service programmes which have to fill a niche that may not deliver as much advertising as others. This is no excuse for them to be made on a shoe-string, and look as cheap as the budget will allow. People don’t stand for cheap. If it looks cheap and shoddy, people won’t watch. Then even your shoe-string budget goes to waste and you face a really negative Return on Investment.

Unfortunately for broadcasters, when audiences have 100 channels to choose from, they instinctively know a good programme when they see one, and a really cheap programme. They watch your programmes side by side with channels that broadcast the most expensive blockbusters the world has ever known. Make no mistake, your audience instantly knows the difference between “well-made” and “cheap and shoddy”.

Public service programming is not a nuisance. It is in fact an opportunity to make programmes with real meaning, and to build on them to offer a memorable learning experience. If you start from that premise, the advertising revenue will come in on its own, - provided you market the programme to advertisers. Get out of the standard PBS style and genre. PBS programming is programming. It’s not just interviews, it’s about the Charter: educate, inform and entertain.

3

Design for distribution

There's a fundamental rule in business: follow the only three steps:

1. Look for a gap in the market.
2. Check if there's a market in that gap.
3. Tie up your distribution first. (Make sure you have a broadcast channel or slot).

Competition is healthy, but it's plain stupid to sell a product that's exactly the same as others in exactly the same market.

The trick is finding a gap in the market where nothing like your product is being delivered at this moment.

But you may be wrong! You may see a gap in the market, but the gap you have identified may not be rich enough to afford your product, or it may be against their culture to buy your product. So you have to check that there is in fact a market in that gap, and that the market is receptive to your product.

Finally, before you spend any money whatsoever, find out how you are going to get your product delivered to the market. Tie up your distribution. Research this very carefully. You can always make your product, but getting it there could be a problem.

Now that you've tied up your distribution, you must ensure that you design the product in such a way that it can be distributed.

For instance, you may think that there is no TV channel for primary healthcare workers. You're probably right. Professionals in small clinics are starved for knowledge of up to date techniques and treatments, and appreciate anything that will make their life easier.

So you research and find out that there are perhaps 50 000 people across the country who fit into this category. You do a sample of clinics distributed around the country and you get a very favourable response.

Great. How do you get the programme to them?

First of all, these people are worked off their feet, and only have time to watch TV during their tea and lunch breaks. They may put aside time in the evenings, but they are so tired they may also fall asleep during the transmission.

So you look again, and find out that in general they work six days a week alternating their Saturday shifts.

This sounds great. We can broadcast every Saturday, and repeat the entire schedule for two weeks in a row, so that in fact we only need two days of new programming every month.

We could also have a website that collates all the past information connected to a search engine so that the past programmes are easily accessible at any time. We can also run a newsletter, and have a discussion forum. We could also have a live phone-in to experts for an hour every Saturday, and perhaps even broadcast the phone-in live.

We are so brimful of ideas and so excited that we have forgotten to ask, "How do we transmit. And how does the audience receive?"

- Do all clinics have electricity so that they can plug in a TV set?
- Can they afford a TV set? Will it be secure?
- Do they want to watch at the clinic, or at home? How many have TV sets at home?
- Do they have digital receivers? Do we have to broadcast nationally, and maybe have to pay for an entire countrywide, seven-day-a-week channel that we will only use for one day a week?

- Could we rather distribute regionally, or could we share with a niche channel that only broadcasts on weekdays?

Don't you think we ought to answer these questions first, even before we start worrying about where we are going to get the money to pay for the programming? This is why point number three above is the most important, "Tie up your distribution first".

Digital is a rather interesting transmission system. It's easy to configure in many ways. Your TV channel doesn't have broadcast 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can share the frequency with other channels who don't want to broadcast at the same time as you. A pre-school programme channel only wants to broadcast in the morning, and probably only six days a week. That means on Sunday morning the frequency can be used by a church channel.

In the afternoon, the same frequency can be occupied with a high school channel, and in the evening could occupy a lifestyle and home improvement channel.

There are also ways to distribute the signal regionally. Of course as soon as you start making demands on the flexibility, costs come into play.

Also you cannot book an entire frequency nationwide, and expect everyone else to come in with channels to occupy other time slots as if by magic. You may have to pull them all together as a consortium that undertakes the cost of the frequency. But that's all part of "tying up your distribution first".

Imagine possibilities

Now that you have discovered that all along you have the capability to visualise and imagine, let your imagination fly. You can always curb and trim it later.

It's far easier to reduce something that's too wide and too large, than to try and make something that you have seriously limited, into something bigger.

You can always serve smaller portions of a dinner you have cooked, but – what if you didn't cook enough in the first place?

At the same time, don't make assumptions about things that cannot be possible. You can assume that storage space on a hand-held device will get bigger, but don't simply assume that there will be satellites in the sky to do what you dream you would like done. Make sure the satellites are there, or that they are planned to be there in time.

Don't use a shot gun, use a rifle

In the old days, advertisers would buy slots around very successful programmes that carried the highest AR. That was a shotgun approach. They simply peppered the airwaves with advertising in the hope that some would strike home eventually.

That's not the case anymore. Advertisers target specific audiences very carefully. It's the same as we do – we target audiences very carefully – especially our specialist niche audiences.

That's where it pays off. All you have to do is identify the same niche audience as an advertiser wants to target, and you have a marriage made in heaven. You have every reason for a long and fruitful business partnership.

4

Cost to the profit you want

Calculate the ROI you want

We saw that we work backwards to get to our plan on how to move forwards. It's almost the same with costs.

You start from your Return on Investment (ROI).

ROI is not a complex concept. Here are two examples:

I need to save some money, and I want to make the

most interest I can get. I have R1 000, and the banks offer me 6% a year. However, they also charge bank charges of R2 a month.

My interest on R1 000 will be R60. If I deduct the bank charges of R24, I get a net return of R36. So my return on my original investment of R1 000 is R36, or 3.6%.

I need to deliver 100 000 brochures with health advice to schools. The brochures promote boiling water in the rural areas, so that we can reduce the incidence of water-borne diseases. These diseases cost the State R1-m a year. The printing and distribution of the brochures will cost R500 00. We achieve this and wait a year. We find out that after one year, the costs of the treatment of waterborne diseases has gone down by R100 000 to R900 000.

We have saved R100 000, on a cost of R500 000. Our Return on Investment is 20%.

In that example it is quite easy to calculate a Return on Investment in money terms; - in public service broadcasting it is not always that easy. But there is always a way to relate effect back to monetary terms – if you use your imagination.

For instance, you can compare costs. Supposing you need to educate newly eligible citizens in the need to apply for their ID Document to enable them to vote.

There is an alternative – you can erect billboards at all major taxi tanks. According to research (which is easy to conduct) you determine that the cost of advertising through outdoor media comes to R10-m for a six month period. You calculate the number of people who will get the message and perhaps interpret the urgency and importance of applying for the document.

Then you research the effectiveness of a half hour programme at midday, and make an estimate of a comparative effectiveness of the message once it has been explained in detail for 22 minutes.

You want to achieve the result of a person going to Home Affairs and applying for their ID in order to exercise their right to vote. You can compare the two media, and in so doing achieve a ROI for each based on the comparison.

Any measurement is valid as long as you compare apples with apples, and pears with pears – so that you don't mix measurements, and always use common dimensions.

Now that you know what ROI you want to achieve, you know your budget. It takes a little imagination to work out your ROI, and it only takes simple arithmetic to calculate the maximum cost the programme can allow.

If you want to achieve an ROI of 20%, and your revenue will be R1.2-million, then your costs cannot exceed R1-million.

Start at the ROI, conservatively estimate your revenue, and you automatically have the maximum costs; the budget

Make everyone work to the budget

If you don't tell everyone on the production what the budget is, they won't be able to work to the budget. How do you expect them to use their skills to make a low budget programme when they are under the impression it is a blockbuster?

Visualisation and innovation must go down the line, right through the value chain of the broadcaster.

If people know what is expected of them, they will apply the appropriate innovation to achieve the outcomes. Ask them to think big, and they will innovate big and expensive. Ask them to think big and cut corners, and they will stretch their innovation to make the lowest budget look big.

Innovation is contagious.

PART 3

EMBRACE CHANGE

1

Understand creativity

To understand creativity, you have to understand some terms that are often confused:

Novelty	Novelty means something new, fresh and interesting. Novelty is always unexpected and appeals to the senses. It is not really important, and not likely to remain a novelty for very long.
Creativity	Creativity is no more than doing something different with the skills you have mastered. Creativity does not come from nowhere. It comes from skills. You can't write something differently (creativity) unless you can write. You can't compose music unless you are a skilled musician.
Innovation	Innovation is different from creativity in that it doesn't do something different; it makes things better. Innovation improves. As with creativity, you have to be a master of your skills before you can improve on them.
Invention	Invention usually applies to a "thing". You invent a new camera, or a new software that converts scripts into budgets

An example:

You will **invent** a new app for a cellphone, where the content is **creative**, and sells on the **novelty**. It is so different from anything ever done before that it is not really **innovative** – it hasn't improved on anything. Because of that, it is novel, and the **novelty** is the feature that will sell the app.

You think of a way to give a news programme the feel of a reality programme. This is really **innovative** as it is a development on both the news and the reality formats.

Because of this, the use of characterisation and scripting will have to be **creative** as it must be different from anything that has come before. Once it launches, we hope the audience will be attracted initially by the **novelty**, but then come to appreciate the **innovation** and **creativity** involved.

There's no need to nit pick on the meanings of these words. People use them interchangeably, and as long as you know what they mean, it doesn't really matter what word they use.

The Six Laws of Innovation

1. Ockham's Razor

In the middle ages in England there was a monk, William of Ockham, who was a brilliant mathematician and philosopher. If you read his work today, it is very complicated, and yet he invented the essence of simplicity. He said that "*entities must not be multiplied beyond what is necessary*". This principle became known as Occam's Razor, and we can restate it as "A problem should be stated in its basic and simplest terms".

Another way of looking at it is: if you have a problem, and there seems to be a number of possible solutions to it, then the simplest and easiest one is most likely to be the right one.

It's ironic that someone with so deep and complex a way of thinking, could invent a method that is so simple.

Ockham's Razor is essential for creativity and innovation. No one can innovate when their minds are cluttered with a million possibilities, and it's like working in a rubbish heap. Ockham's Razor clears your mind, just as you clear your desk. Ockham's Razor also lets you see the Big Picture. You stand back. Look at the problem. See all the possible solutions, and choose the simplest.

Another word for simplicity is "elegance". You never refer to a person's clothing as "elegant" if it is busy and complicated. "Elegant" means simple, clean lines, matching colours, neat and tidy.

That's what innovation should be. People don't see novelty in something complicated. They can't see the innovation because of all the clutter. A good example is the development of the cellphone, and its dramatic success.

Innovators started off big, but all they did was call another person. Then someone did a little innovation and developed the address book. That made dialling easier, so everyone was attracted by the novelty and went and bought a phone with an address book. Gradually (well actually not so gradually, as innovation arrived monthly) the cellphone grew. There was an appointment calendar. Then the phone linked to your computer for backup.

Then someone added basic reading software, so you could read documents. Then along came a QWERTY keyboard and you could now write documents.

Then came music, photo library, camera, and .. and ... Now we have something like a handheld computer that fits into the palm of your hand.

That's innovation, invention, creativity and novelty at work.

Is there an equivalent in TV?

Just look at the reality style. People argue as to whether "Reality TV" is new or not, and hark back to early candid camera. That's an academic argument. What's important is the way the reality style (handheld camera, remarks directed straight to camera, intimate expression of inner feelings, fabricated deadlines, etc) has wriggled into many genres.

The staid and conservative documentary styles now seem to attract audiences with the informality of reality style. Reality style is the staple of all DIY and home handiwork programming. Lifestyle programming is not new, but lifestyle programming in the reality style is a clear example of continual innovation. We see little creativity in reality programmes, but we do see a lot of innovation; and the speed of that innovation, is the novelty that attracts audiences.

They think they are seeing creativity (something different). Actually, they are seeing development (innovation). This is because, as we saw at the beginning, broadcasters tend to “do what everyone else does differently, and avoid doing anything different”.

But digital has changed that. Copy-cat programme formats just won't survive in multi-channel niche audience digital television.

2. The Pareto Principle

At the beginning of the 20th century, an Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto invented a formula to describe the inequality of income in his country. He saw that 20% of the people owned 80% of the wealth.

This simple way of looking at something very complicated (he was using Ockham's Razor very effectively) caught the imagination of people who were in the business of innovation and problem solving.

Within 50 years, it became known as the Pareto Principle, and was attributed to almost everything.

People noticed that 80% of your sales come from 20% of your customers. In broadcasting terms, that translates as 80% of your ad sales revenue comes from 20% of your advertisers. It sounds like a hasty generalisation, but it works.

This is the power of Ockham's Razor.

You will know that 80% of your productivity comes from 20% of your staff. Maintenance engineers will tell you that 80% of the technical problems from incorrect handling of equipment comes from 20% of the operators.

Any channel manager will tell you that 20% of the programmes draw in 80% of the audience.

At the same time, Dr. Joseph Juran, the American quality management guru isolated a principle, which he called the "vital few and trivial many". Very few people in broadcasting

have recognised the impact that this expression has on solving problems in television.

The “vital few” are the programmes broadcast in prime time, which only covers about four hours a day. The rest of the day, when few people are watching, we have to fill the time with trivia, or programmes that will not last long, and cannot command a significant budget.

It also explains repeat programmes, when the “Vital few” become the “trivial many”.

Unhappily for Dr Juran, people call this an extension of the Pareto Principle, and ‘Pareto’ lives and ‘Juran’ fades away.

You can apply the 80/20 Rule to almost anything, from the science of management to the physical world.

How the Pareto Principle helps you

The principle is a constant reminder to you to focus on the 20 % that matters. Of all the things you do every day, only 20% really matters. There’s no sense in wasting time, energy and resources on the “trivial many” things that you do on a regular basis every day.

As a Prime Minister of England, Arthur Balfour, once said, “Nothing matters very much, and very few things matter at all”. The ghost of Ockham hangs around again. Keep it simple, and focus on what is important. It’s not going to help your programming if your schedules are a mess, and yet the files in the cupboard are beautifully labelled by an unproductive administrative assistant. What is important here is that there is someone on the staff who has nothing to do except make files look good. Wouldn’t that person be better utilised if they were trained up to make the best use of their time, contributing to the 20% of the tasks that are important?

If you keep getting interrupted by other people, and you cannot get all your work done, then make sure it’s not part of the 80% of the work that doesn’t *really* matter, and that you focus on the 20% that is important.

3. The Cheshire Cat Principle

This principle keeps you focussed on where you are going, and does not allow you to get bogged down in problems that will probably solve themselves along the way. It comes from Lewis Carol's Alice in Wonderland. Alice sees the Cheshire cat in the tree, and asks, "Cheshire Puss...Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat. "I don't much care where-" said Alice. "Then it doesn't matter which way you go", said the Cat.

If you don't know what you want to achieve then you may as well roam around a shopping centre, and idly drift from shop window to shop window, and just follow the passages any way you like.

There's a pattern here. The Cheshire Cat principle says that you must focus on where you are going, the Pareto Principle focuses on what is important, and Ockham's Razor says that you must keep things simple.

The formal way of expressing the Cheshire Cat principle is "set objectives" But this is where people make many mistakes. They say roughly where they are going, but aren't precise about it. If you don't set precise measurements for where you want to go, then you may as well not bother to set objectives in the first place.

What's the point in saying, "I'm going to Tshwane" You are giving yourself a destination anywhere within 2 200 square kilometres of the area called Tshwane. If you were to say, "I want to go in the direction of Tshwane and arrive at GPS coordinates 25°44'25.68"S 28°12'43.28"E, you would pinpoint the Union Buildings. All you then have to state is exactly what time you will arrive, and you have set a precise objective.

Objectives are so easy to set. You just have to remember that there are only four measurements for an objective to be precise:

Quality	How well do I want to do it? To what measureable standards?
Quantity	How many do I want to make
Time	By when must I deliver? By when must I show a specific Return on Investment?
Cost.	At what cost? At what target for revenue? Neither of these in general terms, but price, and measured in monetary value

If you can't measure it, forget it.

Format of an Objective

Here are some objectives:

To produce a 13-part one-hour drama series designed for the 9 PM slot, at a net Return on Investment of 25%, for the first quarter on next year.

To provide the LSM 6-8 school-going audience with a multi-media experience consisting of television, radio, print, digital and live media that promotes careers in the sciences, at a break-even ROI and for broadcast second season of next year.

To launch a niche channel targeted to the home-maker in the middle income groups, in at least three languages, with only 40% foreign content, supported only through whole-programme sponsorship, and for launch fourth quarter of next year.

4. Never stop asking "Why?"

When solving a problem, never stop asking why?

"There's a gap in the market for vintage drama."

Why?

"There's no vintage drama on any other channel."

Why?

“Because there’s no market for it. There’s no vintage local English vintage drama, and there are the classic movie channels on pay-TV.”

And ...

“We seem to have the higher LSMs watching at 6 pm.”

Why?

“Maybe they’re at home.”

Why?

“Because they have cars.”

Why?

“Because they can afford them.”

So?

“Lower LSM’s have to travel in taxis and buses that go slowly. And they travel long distances to work.”

Never stop asking questions until you come to an answer that makes not only sense, but that can be proved through research. Never accept sweeping statements from someone who appears to know more than you do. It’s not disrespectful, it’s just sound reasoning.

There are four rules to TV thinking:

Nothing is ever what it seems to be.

That’s why we keep asking “why”. Broadcasters publish their schedules a season in advance so that the advertisers can start booking slots around the programmes that they believe will enhance their brand value and sell products. But that doesn’t help you, because you have already published yours, and you can’t change the schedule just because another channel seems to have a better programme in one of your slots.

You can’t know what they have scheduled for the following

season for the same reason that you keep your following seasons' slots secret.

You also never believe a producer who says "I am so snowed under with business I can't move." The probability is he's not. You won't believe how many people "have a license for a TV channel". Until you have checked if it has been gazetted, the producer is probably trying to steer you away.

TV is a highly competitive business, as is the making of content. Nothing is ever what it seems to be.

5. Don't believe anyone else's perceptions

"I think people are tired of reality, and want to go back to real TV."

"People are tired of electronic entertainment. I think there's going to be an upsurge in live entertainment and theatre."

"No one wants to watch TV on a cellphone screen. It's too small."

"There won't be HD sets in South Africa for at least ten years, except among the very rich."

And countless other statements. These are opinions, and in the riskiest business in the world, people in TV have lots of opinions.

There are three sides to every story.

- A. "The soap operas are trying to get rid of their costly performers and replace them with cheaper new ones."
- B. "The older soap opera performers are getting too old for their characters."
- C. "Very often performers in daily dramas start getting stale and rigid in their performances."

**A Double-trick
SWOT swapped to TWOS Analysis**

You are probably familiar with the SWOT Analysis. To make it doubly effective, look at it as the TWOS Analysis. TWOS Analysis helps you understand your Strengths and Weaknesses, and identify both the Opportunities open to you and the Threats you face. It empowers you to uncover opportunities in the media environment that you are well placed to exploit. By understanding the weaknesses of your business, you can manage and eliminate threats that could catch you unawares.

Analysing yourself and other broadcasters using the TWOS framework, helps you develop the foundations to craft a strategy that sets you above your competitors.

TWOS Analysis

Divide a page into four squares, and head each square THREATS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES and STRENGTHS,

Under Threats list all the things that are completely outside of your control, such as new technologies, additional channel licenses, etc.

Under Weaknesses, list the things you are not good at, such as certain programme genres, and possibly a shortage of expertise.

Under Opportunities, list your current plans, and also some standby ones, in case the first one doesn't work.

Under Strengths, list what you have done successfully, where you have audience loyalty, and the strengths of the human resources at your disposal.

Now, based on the TWOS analysis, develop alternatives. Have a Plan B, Plan C, and Plan D.

	Harmful To achieving the environment	Helpful to achieving the objective
External origin (attributes of the environment)	T Threats	O Opportunities
Internal origin (attributes of the organisation)	W Weaknesses	S Strengths

6. Never, ever let anyone else tell you how to think.

You think best, your way. We are all different people.

- ◇ Some of us are extrovert and express our thoughts willingly, and therefore invite feedback from others.
- ◇ Others are introvert and prefer to think things over for themselves slowly.
- ◇ Some people are forthright and come to conclusions spontaneously, and don't easily take other arguments
- ◇ Other people are highly analytical and will work through a problem , carefully picking away at every detail.

Everybody has their own way of thinking, and that is the way they think best. This demonstrates the advantages of thinking in teams. If people with different thinking styles are allowed to contribute their way, you are likely to reach a solution and to innovate a lot quicker, and with far better results.

That is why you should avoid strict and formal meeting structures. Also you should be wary of brainstorming. These sessions can get dominated by the loudest mouths, and some people's contributions get shouted out.

Don't talk yourself into excuses.

I don't work well under pressure. Really? How do you cope with an emergency at home?

2

Plan to react quickly

We live in fast changing times. But, make no mistake, people have not intrinsically changed. They are still the same people who feel things the same way they have felt about things for hundreds of thousands of years.

People still:

1. Do things for their own reasons, not ours!
2. Seek pleasure
3. Desire the company of others
4. Make decisions based on emotion, justify with facts.
5. Are curious
6. Do not change their minds; they make new decisions based on new information.
7. Want to think they are in control of their own decisions

But the Internet, wireless cellphones, wiki-knowledge, and instant gratification consumerism means that they have grown to expect things to change quickly – but with the condition, that it is on their terms.

This is where a lot of the stress of modern living comes in.

This gives us unique opportunities for innovation: innovate with novelty, but make sure it is what people seem to expect and want. This is not easy.

There's a quote that very clearly illustrates modern living.

We are in the world of the worldwide web; twenty-four hour banking; satellite television; sound bitten and spin doctored politics; mobile phoneophilia; three-minute culture; pick 'n mix lifestyles; and serial monogamy.

It's a world of ephemerality; instability; proliferation; fragmentation; hallucination, and, above all, chaos. It is a world where the beating of a butterfly's wings in South America can cause a stock market crash in Hong Kong. It is a world of unexpected, unpredictable, uncontrollable, unremitting - some would say unnecessary, upheaval. ³

In a world like this we need to:

Have creative options

Make sure that you have options that you can act on quickly. Envision your ideal outcome. See a clear picture of it in your mind. Don't lose faith in it, but also allow for things that are outside your control, things like:

- ◇ Regulatory changes
- ◇ Massive shifts in public taste and fashion.
- ◇ Sudden changes in economic conditions
- ◇ Plans that competitors have worked for a long time that you didn't know about.

These are what we call threats.

That's why we do a SWOT analysis.

Research before you act on a guess

Don't be scared to guess what's going to happen in the future. You cannot make a fool of yourself, as no one else knows what's going to happen either.

Never be afraid of making the wrong guess. It's was only a guess anyway.

Do not under-estimate the power of your instinct.

Instinct

We know that something is right or wrong instinctively when we have an intuitive feel that it is right or wrong. This intuition comes from warning signals that may or may not give us a warm feeling in our guts.

These warning signals come from a type of conditioning. A bad experience programmes us to recoil when we feel the same experience coming back to us.

We behave in response to experience. We have learned to be wary of experiences repeating themselves.

Here comes the interesting part. We may feel that something bad is going to repeat itself because we recognise the warning signs. But are these signs really the signs that the SAME thing is going to happen again?

As we get older and more experienced, and as our instincts get honed even more, so we respond to warning signs that come earlier and earlier.

This explains why experienced people are more conservative and less adventurous.

So is instinct good enough?

Informed instinct

We live and work in changing and changeable times.

Technology is wreaking havoc with the order and symmetry that we have been used to. What we learn in the textbooks gives an impression of a broadcast world that is cut and dried, definite, immovable and trundling along as it has done for years.

That's where our instinct is so bad for us. Our instinct gives us warning signals of a world of experience gone past.

That's fine in stable times and given the assumption that things don't change.

But times are not like that. Based on experience, the warning signals are obsolete.

Broadcasting as it was ten years ago is not as it will be a year from now. Our instincts have little to offer us if we are to use them to make decisions based on past experiences.

We have to learn to mix and match them, to make our instincts as moveable and changeable as the times.

Do multiple strategies

It takes a day to write a strategy

You can generate Plan B, and Plan C in a matter of hours. It takes a day to design the strategy for those options.

It takes a year to make a programme

It takes a year to make a programme series. Once you start, you can't stop, or you will have to write off all the money you have spent so far.

Until a Programme has a final master and is ready for broadcast, it has no value whatsoever, and all the investment is a DEAD LOSS. It only has value when it is ready for broadcast.

Strategies are cheap, content is expensive.

3

Watch people and TV

When you're in the mass media, good enough is fine. When you're in niche audiences, then good enough is never good enough.

- ⇒ Watch the public, don't listen to salesmen
- ⇒ Check your sampling
- ⇒ Ignore what your friends say
- ⇒ Innovate using data
- ⇒ Watch TV

Do you know what the public watch?

Choice is stressful

People demand diversity, but they are uncomfortable having to make a choice.

People want choice – they demand choice. However, when they get it, does it improve their lives, or compromise their quality of life? Psychologist Barry Schwartz writes in “The Paradox of Choice”.

When people have no choice, life is almost unbearable. As the number of available choices increases, as it has in our consumer culture, the autonomy, control, and liberation this variety brings are powerful and positive. But as the number of choices keeps growing, negative aspects of having a multitude of options begin to appear. As the number of choices grows further, the negatives escalate until we become overloaded. At this point, choice no longer liberates, but debilitates. It might even be said to tyrannize.”⁴

Just because there are 200 channels, it doesn't mean that viewers get instant gratification. They will always moan, “Two hundred channels and nothing to watch”. Television is something audiences watch regularly. Each time they switch on, they want to see something new.

However, how do they know if they are going to like it? In the same way as the programme buyer ponders over whether audiences will like the programme, the audiences also worry about whether it will engage them, and satisfy them emotionally.

Schedule for audience movements

It was easy when we simply had to assume that people watched TV at home. But now they can watch TV anywhere. We have to learn more about it, as there are certain programmes that will draw viewers as groups (and groups can't watch mobile TV). So we can now control who watches when, by simply targeting the programmes to solo or to group viewing. This is a real challenge to innovation.

Get ready for mobile

New ways of composition

On mobile TV, we have to find new ways to compose the picture, and produce the sound. The innovation comes in

where we have to make two versions – one for mobile and one for home HD viewing, all at the same time, and at the same cost. Calling all innovators!

Programming for on-the-move

We also have to schedule programmes and design them for on the move. People want to watch sports and other live events, but most other programming, people are happy to wait for, and watch in comfort.

Even with no recessions, even in prosperous times, there is never enough money to make every programme with a Hollywood style budget. There are more media opportunities coming on stream (digital, illuminated outdoor for example), and advertisers have so much choice. Television has to fight for its share of the advertising revenue pot.

Know fewer people better

1. The value of all the niche audiences is greater than the value of the mass they make up
2. It's so much easier (and less risky) to design programming (and experiences) for a niche audience. They are easier to get to know, and easier to keep satisfying.
3. Quality viewers, not quantity
4. We're over the era of mass audiences and, sheer quantity and ARs. We've moved on. We've innovated.
5. Target their hearts
6. It's all about meaning, meaning is about emotion, emotion comes from the heart.
7. Become exclusive
8. Always make the individual members of your niche audience feel special. Make them feel as if they are members of a very exclusive club, and their

membership of the club is because they are privileged and special people.

9. Offer multi-faceted activities

This is why you have to offer them an experience. They don't get an experience when they watch format mass audience TV. You have to, and easily can, offer them a multi- (many) media experience where they can take part of activities other than just watching TV. They want visits, live tours, books, music, clothing, - in short, they want you to give them an IDENTITY.

There are so many ways of getting to know niche audiences. Here are just three of these tools.

SABC Attitudes

The SABC embarked on in-depth research to divide the population into groups of attitudes.

An attitude is a predisposition that a person has to like certain things, and to dislike others. Attitudes are learned, and are difficult to change.

The SABC Attitude Groups are available on the web.

SAARF Lifestyles

The South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF) divides people into a number of lifestyles segments, also dependent on their income group.

The lifestyles are:

Outdoors; Gamers; Cell Sophisticates; Sports; Cell Fundamentals; Avid Readers; Traditionals; Homebodies; Showgoers; Studious; Good Living; Gardeners.

SAARF Lifestages

These groupings define the stage of life that a person is

going through as opposed to their actual age. It is far more precise as it aligns age to attitudes.

They are:

At home singles; Young independents; Mature singles; Young couples; mature couples; single parent families; mature families. ⁵

We started off with six Attitude Groups. Then we looked at 12 Lifestyle Groups. That comes to 72 different combinations of niche audience just there. If we move on and include the extremely valuable Lifestages Groups, we now have 6 Attitudes multiplied by 12 Lifestyles multiplied by 7 Lifestages. This already gives us 504 different combinations of niche audience.

Now multiply by five different income groups, 11 different languages, and a number of different living environment, and there are tens of thousands of different niche audiences that you can serve.

Start with one with four options. Then each of those four have four options and so it explodes to hundreds of options

Strategic shifts

Reposition our content delivery in a multi-channel/Align our content plans to the corporate digital migration plan.

Explore the creation of African animation.

Build the SABC content brand as the authentic African story

Establish a strategy to grow innovative local formats

PART 4

WHERE WE NEED TO INNOVATE

1

Targeting an audience

When you target an audience, you are closing in on a niche that you have identified as being desirable, viable and rewarding (either in public service, or in commercial terms.)

There are three stages that you need to go through:

Define

Measure the audience in numbers (it really is quite easy with the extensive data available in South Africa.).

Use creativity to understand

You can't afford qualitative research, where you send out researchers to interview people about their feelings, run focus groups and do attitude surveys.

This research is far too expensive for the value it returns.

It is far easier to look at the quantitative data (the various dimensions that you used to count the audience), and then look *through* it.

Look at the figures, look at others, and establish connections. Start putting it all together, asking yourself all the time, "What does this tell me about these people?"

We call this "Creative Interpretation". It is not easy, but it is one of the most exciting creative jobs in broadcasting. There is a world of discovery there.

Innovation in educational programming

Educational programming is not a public service. Many channels make money out of educational content. It's well-known in the media that you can sell education to an African audience anytime. They cry out for school revision; basic healthcare; family medicine; adult education; home improvement – and many other things.

It is not true that education has to be the loss making content. It pulls in niche audiences, and in so doing it must pull in advertisers. The problem is that there is a mindset that automatically assumes that people don't really want educational programming, and neither do the advertisers. Get creative and innovate, and you may be in for a big surprise.

Genres

Genres are like handcuffs. They restrict your movement. Audiences don't understand or care about "sub-genres" and "cross-over genres". They don't care about the differences between soaps and telenovelas. These are business and production decisions. You should rather look at genres through the eyes of the audiences.

When you tell the audience that you are scheduling a "drama series" you tell them they will be thrilled with cliff-hangers for a few weeks. Then they can schedule their lives accordingly. They don't really care whether a series is a soap or a telenovela, as a full year of episodes these days seems as long as forever anyway.

They are more interested in what a programme is about, and who is performing. The word "reality" is a drawcard, and just about the only things you can't apply it to is a sports match and the news.

2

Design specifically for foreign sales

The danger of foreign sales.

You can't compete with American budgets. Aspirations for global sales on the scale of the American soaps, sitcoms and drama series are just not possible.

The convention says that global sales are generic, and you can't change attitudes.

If you aim for foreign sales, you have to produce for the foreign market, and then the programme will probably look foreign.

But there are niche markets: animated children's television programmes with an African feel, because there are unusual stories with unusual moral twists, and animation is cheap and easy to translate and revoice. There are plenty of animation directors around, but producers without vision are discouraged because they say there are no trained animation scriptwriters and directors. For the innovative, here's an opportunity.

South African soaps don't export well, because they are made for local consumption, and the needs of foreign audiences don't come into the scripting or the production.

You are better off making two versions, one for local consumption and one for foreign sales. It's not difficult, but you have to purposefully make the extra version, and you have to be assured through pre-sales that it will warrant the cost.

It is also better to target foreign sales in the countries that are easy to get to know - like Africa. However, you should be conscious that South Africa has a very different culture from other countries in Africa - one that often does fit in with the

local values of other African countries. ⁶

It takes time to get to know these markets, but there is also a short cut in preparing your quest for knowledge. Study the cultural differences on as data. The Geert Hofstede analysis is a always a useful staring point.

Talk to people in their own language.

People do not watch programmes they don't understand. The biggest barrier to understanding is language. Subtitling works if it is done to meet the reading conditions of the audience (see below).

If English is not the audience's home language, then they tolerate it; which is not the same as liking it.

It is not quite right that people will watch any programme if it is in English. People have to understand the programme, and there is a large barrier to understanding English because of many different accents.

A word on accents

It's not just language that's a barrier. There are also accents. If you watch programming from other parts of Africa, the accent is often a reflection of an adaptation from the language of colonisation. Even so, it is easy to tell a Nigerian accent from a Kenyan accent.

An "accent" is the way people pronounce the words in a language. Every language has its own rhythm, or "tune" if you like. Accents also consist of a tune - the way the inflexion works, when the sentences go up and down in pitch.

When these are different to the way we are used to hearing them, then the accent is difficult to understand.

A dialect is a way of speaking the language where different words are used. Dialects are even more difficult to understand. In South Africa most languages have more than one dialect, and many more different accents.

Go and ask someone from another part of Africa, and they will tell you that the South African accent is “horrible”. It’s a mixture of the pronunciation of many languages, through many cultures, and through many colonial languages. They also cannot distinguish between our dialects and different accents - they lump them all together into what they hear as a South African accent.

Audiences do not want to struggle to hear and understand.

It’s fallacy that spoken English will be understood everywhere English is used.

The danger of foreign awards.

A foreign award was awarded by foreigners. You must always ask yourself from whom you want praise and recognition? Do we want awards that are identified by professionals, or do we want to be lauded by my audience?

Will a foreign award bring in any more money? If not, then why are we travelling abroad to enter and collect the award?

Does my primary audience care, and if not will it influence sales elsewhere? Will it be a marketing tool?

Awards are now becoming cheap. There are so many film and TV festivals, and so many awards, that it is now difficult not to be “award-winning”. It’s nice for the performers and crew in the programme, but will it sell programmes?

Local and pan-African awards are far more likely to reflect the appreciation of local audiences.

PART 5

SOCIAL MEDIA MISUNDERSTANDINGS

1

People say things that suit them

Social media are NOT:

Separate from digital media

They are all one thing. Podcasting, blogging, posting, tweeting are all basically the same thing. The only thing different is usually a trade mark

New

Social media started when people wrote letters to each other because they were too far away to have a conversation.

A change in people

Nothing has changed human emotions in millions of years. People may change (a little) the way we do things, but a wheel is still a wheel. This may seem confusing because there is so much change, but it's still a matter of people just being social – which is what they do anyway.

A different and powerful marketing tool.

Social media are no more than word-of-mouth. You can be bad-mouthed as easily as you can be over-sold.

Viral

Viral is no more than electronic rumour. Fifty years ago, it took as long to spread a rumour as it took for about 1000 phone calls. Today it's lightning fast, that's all.

A potential gold-mine

To carry on the metaphor, a bonanza from digital media is a flash in the pan. People always make money during stages of innovation. When things settle down, people get bored. If manufactures didn't keep on adding features to phones, and buying in apps, people would get bored with their phones.

This does not mean business models. It means the same as a phone model. In the same way that people argue, often quite strongly, about which make of phone to use, and which model of which make of phone to use, so Some take photographs, others play music, still more play games. But the primary use is to make telephone calls.

2

Go back to basics

Social media are not new. Go through the history. People just want to talk to other people about themselves. People have been like this since the beginning of time. However, in all that time the ways people talk to each other has got faster and faster.

Now it's instantaneous. But that doesn't make it any different. The motivation and the need are still the same. The response is still the same.

Social media are changing and evolving in their mechanics. The media do not evolve in the way people use them.

Facebook is like an old-fashioned bulletin board, except that people shamelessly post personal trivia and indulge in public spats and revenge.

But before electronic media, people did that anyway in the bus queue, or the taverns.

People are doing what people always do, and have always done since the beginning of humankind.

Don't be fooled by the so-called "secrets" of marketing on

Twitter, as opposed to Facebook, or LinkedIn, or any other social media. They come and go. Hardly anyone remembers MySpace, and Second Life.

The motivation as to why people use these social media is one thing.

The mechanics are different.

All you have to do is to define what you are going to do in your programmes based on the emotional needs of people.

Look upon the media as models

Regardless of the model of phone, they still make phone calls.

It's exactly the same with social media.

The primary use is to talk about yourself. People use the conversations of others to give them the clues and the cues to talk about themselves.

Research shows that 70% of activity on the social media is "talking about me".

The other 30% are spent in reading news, downloading music, and researching.

Changing attitudes

Innovation means asking questions. The most important one is "Why?", but that comes after some of these:

◇ What motivates people?

People are not complicated. Maslow explained them simply, and he continues to explain them simply.

◇ How and what do they feel?

What people say they think is not important. It's what they *feel* that matters, and they never tell you that.

◇ What are their beliefs, values and attitudes?

You cannot change beliefs and values, so don't try to. It's hard to change people's attitudes, but if you want to, you must:

- ◇ Do it slowly
- ◇ Do it carefully
- ◇ Do it deliberately

3

Be warned!

If you're going to have a conversation with your viewers, you are going to lose out. The more people in the conversation, the louder people have to shout. And since people primarily want to talk about themselves, they probably don't want to read about the television channel writing about itself.

People say they want information. Social media is probably the place for information. But information has to be useful. Your marketing blurb is usually not *new and useful information*. Advertising has its own place in the media space.

People do not like other people who shout at them.

Notes

1 Broadcasting Act No 4 of 1999

2 Anita Woolfolk. Educational Psychology. See Chapter 11: Engaged Learning: Cooperation and Community.

3 Foxall GR; Goldsmith RE; Brown, S: Consumer Psychology for marketing. Cengage Learning. 1998

4 Barry Schwartz. The Paradox of Choice. Harper Perennial. 2004

5 SAARF Segmentation 2011

6. Geert Hofstede (geert-hofstede.com). See also Marieke de Mooij - Consumer Behavior and Culture. SAGE. 2011.

Further Reading

Rework

Jason Fried & Heinemeier
Hansson

Flow

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Understanding creativity

John Dacey

Understanding Creativity

Jane Piirto

The Creative Economy

John Howkins

Creative Industries

Richard Caves

**Creativity, Communication and Cultural
Value**

Keith Negus

The Managers Pocket Guide to Creativity

Alexander Hiam

The Experience Economy

Pine & Gilmore

Karaoke Capitalism

Jonas Ridderstrale

Picture credits

Charts and drawing supplied by the author.

THE ART OF INNOVATION

A Reference Guide

This book looks at the impending changes in South African television, and how we can inspire innovative approaches to public broadcasting.

The paperless office was predicted in 1975. We have yet to see it.

Film mogul Darryl F. Zanuck of 20th Century Fox said in 1946:

"Television won't be able to hold on to any market it captures after the first six months. People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night."

Sumner Redstone, president and CEO of the major media company Viacom, as quoted in Screen International, Oct. 21, 1994:

"I am very sceptical of this talk of 500 channels. I just don't know what's going to play on them."

On the other hand, predictions of the flat TV screen, 500 channels, mobile TV and even completely transparent receivers are on track.

So who's right, and who's wrong?

BUT

That's only the technology.

Many of us have seen men land on the moon, masking tape, the telex, the mobile phone and the microwave oven.

However, we feel the same emotions, as our grandparents' grandparents. People have not changed in how they react, laugh, cry, hate and love for hundreds of thousands of years.

So what's going to happen?

Wherever it is, it will happen in our time; it will revolutionise the way we do things, but it won't change WHY we do things.

In the meantime we will be part of vast innovations designed for people who keep making the same mistakes, but who triumph with exactly the same feelings of excitement and pride.



Yvonne Kgame
Executive Manager: Innovation and Editorial
TV Division. SABC