

Sexism, ethics and student employability top education agenda

Brussels, 21 May 2008 : Professors, academics and advertising professionals shared their research and experiences as the latest trends in the advertising world came under the microscope on 16/17 May at the Ecole Supérieure de Publicité in Paris, within the framework of the annual Conference organized by the European Foundation for Commercial Communications Education (EFCCE www.eacaeducation.eu) created by the European Association of Communication Agencies (EACA).

Based on two key themes, digital advertising & Corporate Social Responsibility, the EFCCE Conference sparked some heated discussion, particularly in the area of preparing students for life in the digital agency environment; on the ways to teach creative, yet ethical, advertising and to win consumer trust thanks to self-regulation and corporate social responsibility; and on the links between the portrayal of women in ads and gender inequalities in creative departments.

The conference was opened by Gary Leih, EACA President & Chairman and CEO of Ogilvy Group UK, with a keynote speech by Laurent Habib, CEO Euro RSCG C&O and Professor at Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne University.

The first round table session, bringing together Gary Leih, Pieter Goiris CEO of Belgian agency Boondoggle, Roger Sjögren, Head of Education of Sweden's Hyper Island School and Martin Florek, EFCCE intern at Carat International, raised the question of whether a generalist or specialized background is more advantageous for students looking for employment with communication agencies. The predominant view was that a generalist approach underpinned by an understanding of one or two specialist disciplines gives the best result in matching agencies' expectations.

Alejandra Hernández Ruiz, Professor at the University of Alicante in Spain, presented the results of a research project on gender inequalities in the creative departments of communication agencies. For her, male dominance in the creative area is one of the key reasons for sexism in advertising and is linked to the fact that women do not specialize enough in creativity in academia.

A debate on how to teach ethical advertising was initiated by a presentation of Oliver Gray the Director General of the European Advertising Standards Alliance on the current trends of self-regulations of the industry, reinforced by the intervention of the well-known creative, Jean-Claude Hamilius, a Professor at the Hochschule Mannheim.

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The three highest-scoring teams from the initial online judging round of the first AD VENTURE student competition (www.eacaeducation.eu/student_competition), organized by EACA through its European Foundation for Commercial Communications Education, was won by four Spanish students from the University Cardenal Herrera CEU in Valencia. Answering a brief to devise a campaign to communicate the EU to its citizens, the Spanish team beat over 40 other teams from 11 countries to win first place with an advertising campaign which encourages young people to become more European by travel and interaction with their peers in other cultures.

The second round jury comprised Hervé Brossard, Vice-Chairman of DDB Worldwide & AACC President, Nikklas Frings Rupp, Managing Director of the Miami Ad School Europe, Jean-Claude Hamilius, Senior Lecturer of the Hochschule Mannheim in Germany, Frances Illingworth, Global Recruitment Director of the WPP Group, Marc Tacquet-Graziani from the Directorate General Communication of the European Commission, Helga Van den Bulck, Lecturer at the Plantijnhogeschool Antwerpen and Roderick White, Editor of Admap.

In recognition of their achievement, the Spanish team will attend the student programme of the International Advertising Festival in Cannes in June and will have the opportunity to present their campaign to the audience of senior agency & client management at the Euro Effies Gala on September 17 in Brussels.

In his closing speech, Bruno Valluet, the Director of the Ecole Supérieure de Publicité thanked the speakers and participants for the very interesting exchanges and debates on the future of commercial communications education in Europe.

Although only launched in 2007 to strengthen the partnerships between academia and the advertising industry, EFCCE has already brought together over twenty-five academic establishments from 11 countries, all offering specialised programmes in commercial communications. In addition to its student competition (AD VENTURE www.eacaeducation.eu/student_competition), the EFCCE has set up an agency internship scheme, launched a survey of agencies' expectations concerning the recruitment of young graduates and created a group of specialised researchers

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About EACA

EACA – the European Association of Communications Agencies - represents 30 national associations of commercial communications agencies, the 12 largest international agency networks operating in Europe, 8 international media agency networks and 9 national associations of integrated communications agencies.

EACA is a Brussels-based organisation whose mission is to represent full-service advertising and media agencies and agency associations in Europe. EACA aims to promote honest, effective advertising, high professional standards, and awareness of the contribution of advertising in a free market economy and to encourage close co-operation between agencies, advertisers and media in European advertising bodies.