

HK4As echoes CE's Policy Address on Creative Industry – Press Coverage

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Hong Kong creative industry delivers verdict on Government proposals

by Benjamin Li 15-Oct-09, 11:41

HONG KONG - Agency heads have delivered a lukewarm response to the SAR's latest commitment to aid the creative industry.

The Government released its [policy agenda](#) yesterday. The second chapter of the document contains several pledges to aid creative businesses, including a promise to "support projects that are conducive to the development of local creative industries through the \$300 million CreateSmart Initiative".

It talked about developing a "creative industries cluster" and showcasing creative work overseas, including at the Shanghai Expo. It also announced an "open competition for the development of the corporate identity of [Government body] CreateHK for the Government to set a model in the use of local creativity for the private sector to follow".

However, industry sources gave the commitments a mixed response when it came to its impact on the advertising and media industries.

Robert Campbell, managing partner and creative strategist at Sunshine, said the onus remained on agencies to develop their industry. "My response is that the real question is whether the advertising industry is doing enough to support the creative industry before it blames the Government. The advertising industry should stand up and do what is right."

David Ko, executive vice-president and managing director of Asia-Pacific at Waggener Edstrom Worldwide, asked for more specific proposals. "I applaud the Government's efforts to promote the city's creative industries, but the efforts are still skewed towards showcases and promoting the city's creative output. They are not doing enough towards

nurturing creative talent at the primary and secondary school levels. More specifics about how the Government intends to introduce creative content in the curricula would be very welcome.”

One agency source agreed there was still a lack of specific ideas. "There is a lot of noise but little substance about the creative industry. There is a lot of coverage in the newspapers, but we are lacking the next steps. There is little or no incentive for people to start creative businesses."

He argued the Government should be setting more of an example in its own campaigns. "Why doesn't the Government open up the creative tender of all its ad campaigns, including TVC and branding campaigns? Right now the tenders often go to those offering the best price, but not necessarily the best creative."

However, Michael Chu, managing partner at Evolve Associates, said it was up to trade bodies such as the Hong Kong 4As to push the Government for specifics. "Now it is time for the trade to lobby, to get together and get down to the core of the matters, to attract and retain talent, to work together to push the Government. The HK4As and Hong Kong Advertisers Association need to give ideas to the Government. We need to make our voice heard. You can't expect the Government to know exactly what to do, it is not the industry expert, it is the policy maker."

Earlier in the year, the HK4As worked together with the Commerce & Economic Development Bureau to create 100 employment opportunities, which included a full-time trainee programme for graduates and summer internships. It placed over 60 per cent in member agencies under the Association.

"The HK4As is glad to see that the younger generation expressed enthusiasm for joining the ad industry" said Royce Yuen, chairman of the HK4As. "Training the new generation will continue to be our mission, and now we can do even more with the Government's support."