

## Goings On

With Michael Cullen



### ADLANDERS RANT ABOUT ALL THAT DRIVES 'EM NUTS

The annual event where adlanders are encouraged by IAPI to let off steam and talk about topics which irk them greatly was a true eye-opener. Ten speakers took to the stage in the Sugar Club to discuss everything from what clients won't pay for to the plethora of award shows. Pleas for minorities and a rant about the power of negative thinking were also aired.

Fintan Cooney spoke about why he left adland and is never coming back. Cooney quit Chemistry three years ago to become an undertaker with Fanagans. To say he really digs his new job is no exaggeration. No longer does he have to use PowerPoint. He saw an erosion of respect in the client-agency relationship and felt his best option was to move elsewhere.

The client says "jump" and the agency says "how high". What Cooney really enjoys most about his new job – compared to his old one – is that nowadays his clients appreciate him, he does not have to deal with clients who think they can do his job better than he can, and when arranging funerals he only has to deal with difficult clients for three days, not three years.

Pitching is now "complete madness". Agencies give away €100,000 of business for free, for ideas that may never be used. It makes no sense. The old 15 per cent commission and charges for creative fees has given way to the blended rate with €70 an hour or less. Cooney says it's crazy and agencies are worth more than that. Why on earth do agencies do it? he asks.

"I was 'a suit' that never wore a suit," he joked. "Here tonight, I'm the only one wearing a suit!" Michael Clancy, managing director, MediaVest, said there are too many awards. With about 1,545 people in adland, there are 17 different award shows with 944 gongs each year. He estimates the industry spends a total of €3,200 per person on each award show.

For her 'Mind the Gap' talk, Rachel Ray, a strategic planner with Simply Zesty, accused adland of developing an unhealthy addiction to technology. People are tethered to their tablets and social media, causing anxiety. Whenever people get any news, they tweet. Habit loops demand constant checking of emails and texts and they feel bad if they ignore them.

Technology is more addictive than smoking. People in the business are messing with their heads, which is ironic given that agencies are hired by clients for their skills in influencing consumer behaviour. Facebook is like getting kicked in the face. Ray suggests agencies can get to grips with the technology obsession by introducing mindfulness at work.

Irish International planning director Leo Moore had a double bill at this year's rant night. He asked why advertising was making him cry? He blamed the John Lewis Christmas ads for encouraging ads with kids with a problem and "plinky, plonky piano music". Moore decries the huge amount of overly emotive, sickly ads out there. Agencies should entertain consumers and target emotions other than sadness by making people laugh and marvel.

When Moore later took to the stage for a second time, he spoke about why planning is not a product and its division from the creative process. "Our purpose is to help in the creation of work that works," he insisted. Planning is about inspiring imaginative solutions by working closely with creatives. If it's separated from the creative process, it's not planning.

The power of negative thinking was what motivated Chemistry planning director Sinéad



### GETTING MORE GREEN

Being smarter by generating more value for creative agencies for the work they do in setting the advertising wheels in motion, as well as taxing crappy imported ads in an effort to get multinationals to use a local agency to create better work, was the gist of Publicis creative director Ger Roe's talk at the IAPI Rant Night in the Sugar Club.

Cosgrove to take to the stage, while her agency colleague, art director Adrian Fitz-Simon spoke about his interest in music outside of his day job. He wrote his own album reviews for the newspapers and on Facebook. He has a blog called *The Band That Wasn't There*.

Max Brady, executive producer for commercials' company Pull the Trigger, chose to rant about penny-pinching clients who don't expect to pay for anything if at all possible. They know zilch about how advertising works. Brady insists procurement folk do not believe people on shoots deserve to be fed. There are clients who want a three for two-day shoot.



### EXPLORING BERLIN

Wexford man Barry McKeon explains a mosaic at the Federal Ministry of Finance building in Berlin. The city walking tour delves into the past, charting the time from the Teutonic Knights through to its role in the major events of the 20th century – as the hub for the Nazi Third Reich, as the divided city of the Cold War and as the capital of a unified Germany.