

#CannesLions – Fishing For Your Sole

By Karen Strauss, Chief Strategy & Creativity Officer, [Ketchum](#)



Early each morning here on the French Riviera, anglers can be seen casting their lines in search of a perfect catch. Their leathery, tanned skin and white hair are outward reflections of their age and love for fishing. And they are reminders that we are all, no matter our age, hoping to snare a big one.

Here at the Cannes Creativity Festival, the big fish is a lion-shaped trophy of creative affirmation. Most of the winners bounding to the stage are young, mirroring the industry.

But on the lecture stages, it's been the mature voices finding their soles—the prized fish that takes some patience to hook. [Madonna Badger](#), the advertising executive who survived the fatal house fire that killed her parents and three young daughters, celebrated her 52nd birthday onstage with a standing ovation for her compelling work fighting the objectification of women in advertising. She spoke emotionally of her long journey through grief to discover new purpose. Despite her loss, she has turned the page on a new life.

Cindy Gallop, the 55-year-old, colorful founder of *Make Love Not Porn* and advocate for female creative directors, took to the stage twice with her crusade to ensure the woman's voice—in bed, and everywhere else. When she discovered there were no female creatives in the [Case for Creativity](#) book handed to every Cannes delegate, she started this firestorm [Tweet](#). Her victory included public apologies from the male

establishment here. Cindy shines as a trailblazer.

Anderson Cooper, 49, in his stage interview of Anthony Bourdain, 59, got the biggest round of applause upon replaying the now famous moment when he called out Donald Trump for using the argument of a five-year-old in response to Trump saying he didn't start the attacks on Ted Cruz's wife. At the pinnacle of his CNN career, Cooper, and Bourdain for that matter, demonstrate a zeal for the "big get."



As the 55-year-old moderator of a Cannes stage panel called Content for the Ages—All of Them, I enjoyed shedding light on the pitfalls of ageist stereotyping. I shared Ketchum Brazil's social experiment, [Age Shamelessly](#), which convincingly flips assumptions about how older people think and behave and how younger people do. It proved an excellent backdrop for convincing the crowd to shape and aim content toward shared passions instead of age, especially after every hand went up when asked whether they usually targeted Millennials and treated them as a monolithic bloc.



Panelist Adam Singolda, the founder and CEO of [Taboola](#), the world's leading



content discovery platform, shared a case in point—the [Life Reimagined](#) campaign for AARP. By offering “age-agnostic” content about finding love and changing careers, the one-time retirement association taps universal truths to engage people of all ages. Panelists Rachel Schectman of [STORY](#) and Michael Fanuele, Chief Creative Officer of [General Mills](#) (*client), also shared work that succeeded by engaging through passion, not age.

And what do the fishermen teach us? Casting about, they follow their passion, angling for the big catch. They are focused, determined, and starting over each day. A strong argument for age-agnostic marketing.

Remember to check out [Ketchum.com's Cannes social hub](#) for the latest from the festival and join the conversation with [#KetchumCannes](#).

About the Author: Karen loves winning trophies for clients, believing awards affirm how much strategy and creativity matter. As Ketchum's chief strategy and creativity officer, as well as co-lead of Ketchum's 50+ specialty, she is an evangelist for courage and creativity in communication, and she ensures strategic discipline and creative liberation for the firm's global network of planners. Her devotion to studying human behavior, crowdsourcing creative ideas and working across silos have contributed to Ketchum winning more awards for clients than any other PR firm. Some of her

initiatives include the creation of Mindfire, Ketchum's crowdsourcing site for fueling creative ideas; the Ketchum Creative Community and related Passion Panels to solve client challenges; and the Ketchum Media Optimizer, the first media planning discipline in the public relations business. As a member of the small minority of female agency creative chiefs, Karen is on a mission to inspire and empower more women to take on lead creative roles.