

SABC Corporate gets real

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South Africa's national broadcaster has stepped up to the plate to proactively shape its corporate image.

For the first time in over 10 years SABC Corporate is going to market with a message. This communication message tackles the SABC's seriousness and respect for the challenging mandate of entertaining and informing the nation.

In addressing the SABC corporate image a conclusive move was made to disrupt the current perception. "The campaign strategy is to produce creative that can resonate the SABC's mandated role. But more than that it is to unearth the reality of the role the SABC plays in everybody's life. This means passing on "ownership" of the SABC to the people it is there to serve." says Mohale Ralebitso, Deputy MD of TBWA Hunt Lascaris.

SABC has launched a multi channel marketing campaign with TV, Radio and Outdoor executions. The core concept is to demonstrate how the TV and Radio mediums, quietly and magically, touch the lives of individuals that make up the strata of South African life. The commercials are in essence stories of real people who by nature of the SABC services have the opportunity to connect with each other, the world and beyond.

Most people have moments in their lives that are crystallised to memory. Where were you when Mandela walked free from prison, when South Africa won the Rugby World Cup, when Chris Hani was assassinated, when little Nkosi Johnson stood as a giant and finally died of HIV Aids and when Walter Sisulu passed from this world? And what about the first TV broadcast back in 1976? All these moments have one thing in common - you were most probably watching or listening to a SABC broadcast.

"The 'story' we tell in our commercial could have been any one of over 42 million in South Africa," says Creative Group Head Paul Warner of TBWA Hunt Lascaris. "They are the moments that demonstrate how the SABC is part of the fabric of South African life. How in its role as facilitator, it quietly brings people together and affects people on an individual level."

"Our advertising needs to be indicative of SABC's strategy. This strategy reflects and gives expression to South African stories and people. For us it was critical to tell these types of stories and download them into creative executions that hit home," added Mark Jakins, Group Sales & Marketing Director for the SABC.

Drawing to bear the broadcaster's reason for being sees the latest commercial, entitled "Gogo / Grandma", depicting a local town hall where a community all meet to view their favourite show. This is watched on the single TV rigged up with "bunny ears". Over time we see all the people enjoy their much-loved past-time and eventually the "Gogo" of the community is bed-ridden and unable to join everybody in the hall for the regular giggle and intrigue. In a rallying together at the "Gogo" illness the community marches to her bed-side at hospital for what we would believe is to be their final respects. Instead the younger folk hook up the "bunny ears" and fire up the "telly" to make sure "Gogo" gets to enjoy her shows/past-time and shares the moment of humour with them all.

"The highly emotive creative draws on our insights that people identify more with something that they feel part of. The "Gogo" story has resonance for us all because we connect with what it means to belong, to share and grow", adds Strategy Planning Director Marie Jamieson.

However, proactively shaping its image to have meaning for the nation has been more than a commitment to the disruptive creative processes. SABC Corporate has perpetuated its community involvement and upliftment approach as far as the production elements of the TV commercial. A local church community of Ga-Rankuwa was employed as cast rather than hire professional actors and the like. "Our shoot had to be extended by two days to train our cast to be "natural" on camera.

But the positive impact on the community from the acting fees we could pay them was astounding," commented Warner.

"It has been a real partnership between ourselves and SABC Corporate. The SABC's goal to be the Nation's best loved broadcaster has become our passion, just as it is theirs to serve the nation. We believe that the campaign will ground the repositioning by connecting with its audience, ultimately opening up the opportunities for real relationships between the broadcaster and its millions of viewers and listeners," concludes Ralebitso.

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