

Jordan Major - Finding the humorous side to a turbulent year ahead

 By [Jordan Major](#), issued by [RAPT Creative Agency](#)

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It is no secret that 2024 brings with it a sense of anxiety for almost all South Africans. If the current turbulence is anything to gauge from, we can all anticipate more of the same to come in the new year.



Image supplied. Jordan Major, strategy lead for culture and innovation at Rapt Creative, says humour will play far more important role in 2024

Rising prices and inflation continue to pressure consumers, cutting back wherever they can. Lack of service delivery continues to be debated and fiercely protested across the country.

And who can ignore the upcoming national election - arguably one of the most closely watched since our country's shift to democracy.

In my opinion, the one thing that will unite all South Africans in 2024 is that it will not be an easy year for any of us.

How do brands shift to reflect these trying times?

The question those of us in Adland should be asking ourselves is 'How do brands shift to reflect these trying times?' By and large, the *status quo* in times like those we are expecting is to continue business as usual.

For many brands, it is almost 'controversial' to speak to these difficulties.

But, if Adland's adoption of the load-shedding conversation is anything to gauge by, shifts are indeed happening.

Recently I listened to a recording of a talk Ann Nurock gave on Cannes this year. As always, Nurock presented her main takeaways exceptionally well and showed an assortment of case studies of the exceptional work that the world's top brands have created.

The return to humour

Beyond great advertising, one takeaway that stood out was what Ann framed as the 'return to humour' after the more sombre take on pandemic-influenced advertising.

South Africans universally have a great sense of humour. It is arguably one of our most admirable qualities as a collective people, and one of the most important aspects of our resilience.

We have overcome an incredible amount as a fairly young democracy, and humour has been an invaluable factor in this journey. In line with this, humour has never really left the South African advertising conversation.

The role of humour in 2024

But will it play a far more important role in 2024?

Undoubtedly. Approaching a new year of intense uncertainty in some areas, and guaranteed tension in others, as a nation we will find ourselves in difficult times.

Humour will become not only an escape but a responsibility on which brands must deliver... thereby providing some relief for the country. While a challenging course for many brands to navigate, it most certainly is a worthwhile one.

The enfant terrible of brands – everyone's favourite peri-peri flame-grilled chicken brand – has been employing such tactics for years, and mostly they have been very successful.

Now does this mean that all brands should apply this playbook? Not exactly – what works for the chicken franchise is not necessarily going to lead to creative and commercial success for all brands.

On the contrary, it could lead to failure for some.

Considerations for brands

Here are the most important considerations for brand custodians to interrogate before applying a more humorous tone:

1. Be clear on what issue the brand aims to challenge and determine if the brand has the appropriate credibility to engage with consumers on that issue.
2. Is it possible to bring a humorous element to such a serious topic, and make it land?
3. Decide on the type of humour to be employed: dry, more high-brow humour versus something more accessible, for example. Then, and only then, should the creative solution itself be tackled.

While nothing is ever truly guaranteed, I will go out on a limb and say a little more light-hearted relief will go a long, long way.

ABOUT JORDAN MAJOR

Jordan Major is the strategy lead for culture and innovation at RAPT Creative. He believes in the power of collaborating with culture to connect brands to their customers.
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