

Long client relationships need to be nurtured

Delivering on your brand promises and a core of mutuality is the secret to successful client-supplier relationships, says Ogilvy South Africa, which recently garnered several client accolades.

Ogilvy Johannesburg was awarded the coveted South African Breweries (SAB) overall Supplier of the Year award; and Ogilvy retail agency, Zoom Gauteng, was awarded the Outstanding Achievement: External Suppliers Award from its largest client, OK Furniture; while Zoom Cape Town received Best Supplier awards from both Cashbuild and Pep Stores.

"A 45-year partnership in business does not just happen. I believe there is a core of mutuality that fuels the relationship," says former SAB marketing director Peter Savory on the enduring relationship between Ogilvy South Africa and SAB. Savory worked on the SAB account from 1959 to 1991.

For Savory long-standing relationships with clients are nurtured by the five principles:

1. Being full partners towards a common goal;
2. Agencies being informatively and fully briefed;
3. No bullying or bad manners;
4. Ads should be so good you draw a sharp breath when you see them;
5. And agencies should make a profit so they can worry about their clients' business and not their own.

Ogilvy group managing director, Gary Leih, says the client recognition is a powerful endorsement of the way Ogilvy South Africa conducts business with its clients. "The group's mission is to be 'most valued by those who most value brands' and I believe the client tributes are evidence that this is a reality," he says.

Ogilvy's SAB award was reinforced with Ogilvy SA CEO Robyn Putter being elected to the SAB Hall of Fame.

Zoom Gauteng managing director, Doug Maritz, says Zoom pledges total commitment to its clients' success and aims to become their most valued business partner. "We make sure we are in touch with every aspect of our clients' business. OK Furniture is a case in point. In our six-year relationship we have come to understand their business category - furniture retailing - and their business very, very well," he says.

Steve Massey, Zoom Cape Town creative director, says several factors contributed to the recognition received from Pep and Cashbuild. "A full understanding of the business is critical to creating good relationships with clients, as is total involvement, shared passion, open communication channels with top management and commitment to growing the business.

"And, of course, accountability is important. We get paid a fee to cover our costs and incentive bonuses based on

transaction and turnover targets. We speak up if we believe something is going to jeopardise this," says Massey.

Ogilvy South Africa was also recently awarded an enormous wire and beaded "buggy" by Volkswagen South Africa to celebrate a successful 25-year relationship.

Ogilvy Cape Town business director, Jacques Burger comments that the success of the Volkswagen and Ogilvy association is about keeping every day like the first day of the relationship. "It is about constantly innovating, staying fresh and continuing to improve on the amazing communication platform built over the past 25 years. The relationship between Ogilvy and Volkswagen is not one of 'them and us' - we are one team of amazing people working towards the same goal. The most exciting part of the relationship is not yesterday or last year, but today," he says.

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