

Mismatched marketing

 By [Banele Rewo](#)

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There is a trend practiced by marketers, advertisers and promoters in black and coloured locations, which are so very complex and vibrant that, when conjuring up campaigns for products, marketers and promoters need to tailor their approaches to suit the target. Photocopying marketing strategies will only result in people only interested in whatever free stuff given out. Needless to say, that particular campaign will not succeed in winning over the target market from the competition.



Looking back at my high school days, I can remember a few individuals whom I could bet on and predict what they would turn out as. The guy who brandished a toothy smile and a bag full of stuff was, at best, on the way to being an investment banker or salesman at Verimark. The girl or guy who had all the badges and colours and sat at every chairperson's seat is still studying towards something to this very day. When this über bookworm finishes studying all the books in the library about marketing, he or she may conjure up the following marketing strategy to sell bread, security or a bank account:

“

Mobile sound truck+
Five energetic 20-something-year-old promoters
+
T-shirts and goodies
+
Set up shop at one of the five newmalls in Soweto at midday
= Brand awareness and sales

”

This strategy is evident almost on a daily basis around the locations and other black locale. Sales for these companies, their communications partners and marketing departments do not show any signs of improvement, thus an inquest is required.

This is not how to market in Soweto or in many of the other black locations around South Africa. The vibrancy of these places is not just a tourist attraction statement; life here is really vibrant and fast-paced - and so should your campaigns be. It is a secret no marketing module will cover, not because the professors negate it but because they do not know it exists.

Forget about hiring any person who is actually perfect at their job in theory but has no clue on how to get a crowd excited. My point here is to inoculate marketers with the bird's eye view of such practices.

House and kwaito are for school kids who are in at school at the time of these promotions. Older people, who have no money to spend because of unemployment - which is why they are there in the location at that time - despise house and kwaito. With much respect: photocopying obstinate strategies that work exceptionally well in affluent suburbs with actual housewives and then passing it on a complex market like the locations is impermissible.

Room for improvement

Chubb Security put a mobile sound in Thokoza Park, Soweto, on a Saturday afternoon and set to blasting kwaito and house CDs. This, by no surprise, irritated the hell out of the people who had come to the park to relax; however 10- year-olds who heard the ruckus were entertained. Maybe by the time Chubb cut out the air for the jumping castle, the kids went and told their parents about the importance of security...

Proxime accessit is **Blue Ribbon Bread** with another nincompooopy idea: why did you park your mobile sound, bopping house music, at 11 am in Protea Garden's Mall - a mall deep in the depths of a squatter camp? Is it a well-kept secret that unemployed 50-something-year olds enjoy house music and someone talking nonsense about getting down and dancing over the microphone? That does not fill someone's stomach.

Pep sells uniform at a very affordable price. Maybe the people would love to win that package by just telling you promoters what they think Blue Ribbon does for their health. Oh yes, **Nedbank** had to do the same and drive around a mobile billboard and a woman who is as terrible at speaking the English language as was the relevance of using the language to communicate with the Venda-speaking people of Chiawelo at one in the afternoon. Sense? Cents? None. None.

Whatever happened to tailoring your campaigns to fit the needs of the target? Is it cost-saving or marketing suicide you have in mind? Is it not respecting the consumer and assuming that a CD and a t-shirt will boost the sale of bread. Those tactics will not change the price of bread.

I can tell you what can change the price of bread and probably add good marketing ideas that will hide the incompetence of many human resources departments. I am talking about the need to equip your company or department with highly creative staff to withstand the advent of new technology and heavy competition.

My prediction

My prediction is that successful advertisers of the future will not even consider permanency as a major hiring factor but good solid freelance ideas from hungry, talented and overlooked individuals. Truth be told, a company that puts up a dummy campaign and has people come up with ideas is mostly like to hit the nail on the head because, first of all, the people taking part in that "test" campaign will be most likely be regular consumers of the product.

Think "**FHM** direct your own advert". This is a sure-win inexpensive exercise that will give the creatives who are experts, like me, on Loxion Etiquette and Mannerisms a platform and have your product or brand walk the talk and talk money like everything else in this place. If you could do that, **Vega** and **AAA** may just turn brown each year.

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