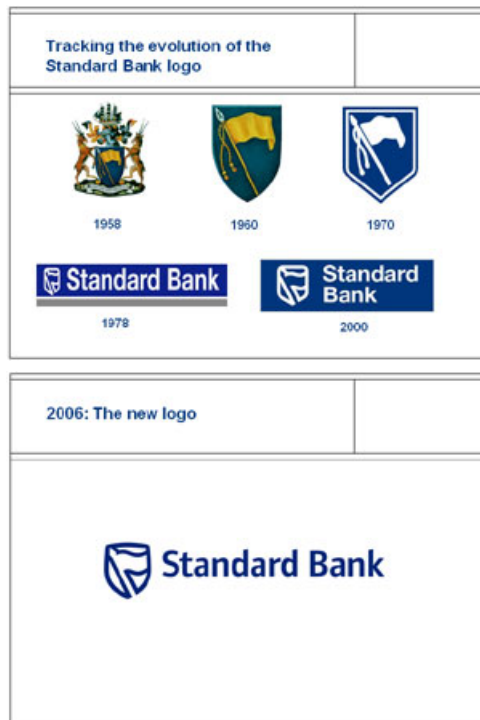


# New Standard Bank ads document brand changes

What route do you take when the creative brief requires you to develop a new pay-off line and brand essence for an organisation with an international presence? Such was the case when TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris and Magna Carta were tasked with developing a campaign for Standard Bank that would replace 'Simpler. Better. Faster' and entrench the new pay-off line: 'Inspired. Motivated. Involved'.



Undaunted by the challenge, the creative team at TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris took a bold move away from convention: the campaign does not employ paid actors and approved scripts to create the requisite commercials, but instead features 'real' people from a broad range of backgrounds relating personal accounts of how Standard Bank has made a difference in their lives.

Explains Sandy de Witt, group creative director: "The new brand positioning highlights the fact that, although banking is a numbers game, Standard Bank consistently aims to better understand the variety of people that make use of its products or services so it can continue to deliver relevant solutions for them. Since Standard Bank takes its inspiration from the feedback and insights it receives from real life, down to earth people, we went out and spoke to some of them." De Witt continues, "What's unique about the campaign is that we identified 'ordinary' people and conducted interviews with them. We learnt about their experiences, insights and expressions on a number of topics, including banking, and then we basically recorded this informal 'feedback' and made ads out of the footage."

## Documentary approach

In keeping with this concept, a documentary approach has been used to ensure an honest (i.e. not contrived) and engaging platform to which the public can truly relate - whether they be at the lower-end of the income scale or high-flying executives with corporate and/or personal banking needs. Footage was shot in high definition video format (rather than conventional film) to endorse the documentary feel, while the input of documentary director, Lourens van Rensburg, added further value.

"By taking an alternative almost 'anti-advertising' route," continues De Witt, "we have broken the proverbial mould and delivered a campaign that endorses the customer-focused way in which Standard Bank goes about its business. We believe that this approach will also prompt a shift in thinking, which in turn will contribute to the longevity of Standard Bank's new brand positioning."

Standard Bank's group marketing director, Sarah-Anne Orphanides, comments: "To move away from 'Simpler. Better. Faster.' as a pay-off line was a bold but necessary decision to make in order to raise the Standard Bank brand to the next level. To truly demonstrate this we realised we needed to develop a campaign that was authentic and engaging; a campaign that all our customers, stakeholders and people would be able to identify with. By following the recommended, albeit unconventional, route we placed a high level of trust in our agency."

Standard Bank has identified several target market groupings, all of which needed to be covered in the advertising campaign in order to convey the underlying message that Standard Bank is a bank for everyone. Achieving this powerful and emotive end-result, however, was far more difficult in practise than the team envisaged. George Low, creative group head, says, "Although there are millions of people out there who are genuinely inspiring and interesting with valid stories to tell, choosing ones which would make good commercial material was a task in itself," he says. "When you factor in the truly unknown quantity with which you're working - such as the photogenicity of the subject, the way they express themselves and the visual interpretation of their stories - the job becomes that much more complicated."

## **Real stories**

A strategic plan to identify the subjects nevertheless paid dividends. After a team of 12 long-form/documentary scouts had spent approximately two months visiting diverse towns and cities across South Africa in search of prospective stories, the TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris crew set off on an intensive, two-week-long field trip to capture the subjects on camera. Low says, "The leeway given by Standard Bank meant that our production parameters were loose by design yet this approach delivered excellent results."

While consciously striving to elicit the stories in each subject's own words, Low and art director Peter Khoury used innovative interviewing techniques to prompt the narration so as to ensure maximum usability. "The process demanded a balancing act, with our aspirations for honesty and integrity on one side, and a discernment for what would make a good and meaningful commercial, on the other hand," says Khoury.

Low comments, "We found so many wonderful characters that we filmed in excess of our immediate needs and then whittled down our options back in the edit suite. In addition, to further demonstrate that Standard Bank really understands what life is like, several versions of each commercial were cut to provide more depth of character to the individuals on screen." The initial batch of six 40-second television commercials, some with different edited versions, will make their broadcast début on 7 April this year. This will be complemented by outdoor, cinema, radio and print advertising and PR campaigns. Several other television commercials are in the pipeline.

In South Africa, the full set of commercials will feature a cross-section of people representative of the country's demographics from an ethnic grouping perspective, as well as age brackets, language groups and diverse financial standings. "We encouraged the subjects to speak in their respective mother tongues, adding subtitles in English for the

edification of the audience," says Low. "As a result the campaign displays the human side of Standard Bank and demonstrates its commitment to truly understand its various customers."

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