

Afrikaans advertising: an important link in the Afrikaans ecosystem

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A television commercial, print or radio advertisement is more than just a pretty picture. It should speak to its target market, and addressing a community in its home language is one of the most fundamental ways of doing this.



Karen Meiring, Director of Afrikaans Channels at M-Net, which includes kykNet, kykNET &kie and kykNET musiek – a platinum sponsor of the Pendoring Awards this year: "You speak to the heart and soul of a community through its language and culture. Language can add to content's resonance and relevance and that is what an advertiser wants to achieve."

When you approach a community that you want something from, you have to be present in the language of that community, explains Karen Meiring, head of Afrikaans Channels at M-Net, which includes kykNET, a platinum sponsor of the Pendoring Awards this year. "You speak to the heart and soul of a community through its culture and language. Language adds to the marketing message's resonance and relevance, which, after all, is what an advertiser wants to achieve."

Being part of the Pendoring Awards is in kykNET's long-term interest. "Strong and sustainable Afrikaans advertising is important. Afrikaans television commercials are part and parcel of the Afrikaans ecosystem and as long as a language is commercial, it remains sustainable."

Afrikaans television commercials are good for the channels, their viewers and Afrikaans advertisers. "We know that our viewers want to be addressed in their home language. Their response to advertising in Afrikaans is to the benefit of the brand as it receives the loyalty of the Afrikaans community."

kykNET represents the culture, interests and the passion of the Afrikaans-speaking community and understands its viewers. "Afrikaans is our focus and core business. We serve a market that wants to view television in its own language at home," says Meiring.

Yes, Afrikaans speakers understand English, she says, "but Afrikaans is a commercial language. Afrikaans music, for example, is the best selling genre of the music industry in the country. The point is that Afrikaans communities support Afrikaans products - they attend festivals, theatre productions, music shows and films, and listen to radio and watch television in Afrikaans."

"Remember that kykNET is not just a channel, it is part of an Afrikaans lifestyle. We are one of the biggest advertisers in Afrikaans, and we are very active in supporting a number of events that emphasise creative work in Afrikaans."

"One of these," she adds, "is the Pendoring Awards. "The Awards remain important, not only to the channel, but to the Afrikaans community as a whole because it encourages brands to talk to their audiences in their own language.

"While we understand this is not always possible, for a variety of reasons, for example the effect of the recession, the benefits of talking to a community in its own language cannot be underestimated."

For example, Afrikaans expats do not leave their language behind. kykNET has two channels in the UK, kykNET International and kykNET Musiek on the You View TalkTalk platform.

However, with the world entering one of its most exciting times in terms of the digital space, there should be no excuses. "It is becoming much more cost-effective to create material for and to advertise on the Internet. kykNET has an excellent digital presence, and its Internet offerings are very well supported by the Afrikaans community."

The Pendoring Awards take place at Vodacom World in Midrand, Gauteng on 24 October. Entries for campaigns that ran from 15 July 2013 to 21 July 2014 are now open and will close on 21 July 2014.

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