

# Reality and life is not in black and white



By [Bonnie Ramaila](#)

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I am not too sure why the latest Ola Cornetto - black and white ice cream TV advert is done in that cinematic grading. Firstly, the ice cream is brown and white for crying out loud - what's this black and white all about? (video)

Yes, I know, it's the name of the product and it probably made sense to depict it as such. Secondly, the depiction of both the black girl and the white guy (black and white being operative in this case) is appositely related to the concept and the product. I wouldn't say though that the advert talks about the benefits of the product, but at least it tells you about the new product that has two types of colours (and flavours) in one.

Now, the question I ask myself is what informed the grading? Was pre- and post-testing research conducted with the target audience on the concept? What did the focus groups say about the TV concept and its execution? Did they suggest the desaturated colour palette (by 100%) for grading as the final execution? Or was it the creative director's advice after the client raised concerns or client's choice? Just asking...

For me, the advert is downplaying the racial nuances that probably some consumers might take out of the advert, hence the grading. I imagine that there was a lot of tussling around between the agency and client in terms of the final product.

## Why not full colour?

The advert places the product pretty well in its execution, but I am not too sure if the cinematic grading does justice to the advert. What was wrong with the use of full colour? Besides, the ice-cream is brown and white and so is the young mixed couple in the advert.

Why are we afraid to face the reality that in this day and age, our country's youth see things totally different from us, the old-guard, unless there was no prior knowledge of this from any of the parties involved in the making of the TV commercial.

It was coincidental that I saw the advert after I had just read an article in a research report by the South African Attitudes Survey, which showed the interaction between social science structures and attitudes pattern. To summarise one particular finding related to my point, the report revealed that today's youth (the same target audience used in the ad) are not fazed by race relations or race matters. Instead, they are bothered by socioeconomic matters such job creation and unemployment, and about 75% of them think race relations or race matters are a non-issue.

With this insight, why would we want to hide behind 'grading' instead of depicting the reality of the situation of our youth as we know it? The research confirms that our youth are integrated; they see nothing wrong with interracial relationships or friendships. Now, why hide behind this cinematic grading when it's a normal societal thing among the very audience targeted and used in the advert? Reality and life is not in black and white, it's in full colour.

## **Part of the agency's job**

Why aren't clients or agencies privy to such information for insights to enhance their communication to the consumer? When handling a client's products, especially FMCG, it is pertinent to familiarize oneself with a lot of literature related to the client's products to gain insight. Various journals, articles, reports and any other useful information would assist one to add value to the client's products, and enhance the quality of communication to the consumers - and this is actually part of an agency's job.

The grading is so unnecessary and I find it intrusive and jarring! I think Ola has lost an opportunity of being one of the few clients who are bold enough to have an interracial advert that depicts our youth's attitudes and social habits, and at the same time sending out a positive message. We should not be overly cautious when we do adverts; adverts are for fun and driving a point across. We need adverts that espouse our changing culture and the mentality of our society, as seen or experienced by the target audience. Our leaders of tomorrow are no longer racially tolerant, they have started cohabiting in harmony, sharing the same vision, amid the differences we have as individuals or society, as part of life. This is what we need to start depicting in adverts - a positive image.

Let's not have our racial antennas on high voltage unnecessarily, even when it's not de rigueur.

Creativity should not know any boundaries or have inhibitions.

## **ABOUT BONNIE RAMAILA**

Bonnie Ramaila is an international communication consultant. She previously worked in the private and public sector as a communication expert. She runs a consultancy that specialises in bespoke communication for niche clients and individuals. Services include communication and media advice, facilitation, publicity and strategy development. She writes in her personal capacity.

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