

# Poor brief, real objectives, and the fake budget

By [Lufuno Makungo](#)

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At a casino there are gamblers that you have to teach how to gamble and there are those that already know how to gamble. With trainee gamblers the game is usually very slow and not so profitable for the casino, but with the experienced gamblers the game is usually very fast and also very profitable for both parties depending on who gets lucky.

There are also those gamblers who have been around for long but they are just not prepared to take the necessary risks to achieve their objective of winning big. They would invest the minimum amount but still expect the maximum rewards.

Just to clarify that this insight is not from my experience as a gambler, but from my experience as a croupier.

A gambler who knows what he wants would walk into a casino with R30k and probably within an hour or two he would be walking out. Within that period he has already either lost all his money or won enough for the day. An inexperienced ambitious gambler would walk into a casino with only R300 and he is more likely to be there for the whole day, playing R10 here and R5 there and not winning much more than that in the process.



Image via Fotolia

This analogy perfectly fits one of the biggest challenges we have in the advertising industry where we are quickly running out of quality clients and that's very much reflected in the quality of work and the amount of time spent on that poor work. This is the problem that often gets ignored and the agencies usually take the fall for the poor output over and above not making any profit out of the project.

Every now and then an agency would receive a brief with no budget indication. When you ask what's the budget that's when the stammering begins and people would start looking at each other wondering what to say. They would either ask you to just quote them or give you the lowest amount that comes to mind. "R100k, what do you think? You guys come back with a budget and we will see if we can afford it", just some of the phrases you are more likely to hear. I think if people knew what they were doing they wouldn't be so scared to disclose their real budget.

As a marketer you have to think like an experienced gambler, someone who knows what he is doing. Unlike a gambler as a marketer you are guaranteed some return for the money that you spend. The real budget will always give you more mileage than what you have asked for on the brief. If you give me a R1m budget to do a print ad using a stock image there is no way I'm going to spend all that money on one print ad but I could recommend additional elements to support your print campaign or suggest investing some of it on media.

Put out your real budget and have an open discussion with your agency, you won't regret it but you are more likely to regret poor quality work due to lack of budget. If you can't afford it then don't do it, but enough with fake marketing budgets.

## ABOUT LUFUNO MAKUNGO

Lufuno Makungo is a Freelance Advertising Executive. Email: [Lufuno.makungo@gmail.com](mailto:Lufuno.makungo@gmail.com)

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