eNews weather ads scoop bronze in New York

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e.tv and the eNews Channel have been recognised for their innovative ads at the prestigious World Promax/BDA Promotion and Marketing Awards, scooping a bronze certificate in Best news\information multiple spot campaign at the awards ceremony in New York last week.

The ads feature meteorologist Derek Van Dam, who has become a household name in South Africa over the past year.

With the launch of the eNews channel, the station had to hire someone from abroad to operate the complicated weather graphic systems, the first in SA. So when eNews hired American weatherman Derek, it was feared the appointment would not sit well with a South African audience.

So Group News Editor Patrick Conroy had to come up with a way to introduce Derek to the country in such a way that the public embraced him.

The idea was to be honest about Derek being an American in a new country. In one of the two winning ads Derek gets the names of a key South African province and city wrong. And a cameraman helps Derek say "Mpumalanga" and "Polokwane". This was followed by the line "Derek knows a lot about meteorology, but is still getting to know South Africa". At the end of the ad the cameraman offers Derek a mopani worm, and he eats it not knowing what it is.

Says Patrick: “It was a subtle way of playing a truly South African joke on an American. And it worked! Derek Van Dam became an instant hit in South Africa. The campaign was successful because we were honest about his talents and his shortcomings, and we played a joke on him.”

Today, mention Derek Van Dam in conversation and everyone knows who you are talking about. The weather has since been one of eNews most important slots. Derek has also been excellent at training South African meteorologists so that e.tv and the eNews Channel do not need to always look abroad for the necessary experience.

Brandon Heyburgh (producer, editor and director), Adam Goodman (audio engineer), Dion Smith (producer), Adrian Galley (voice-over artist) joined heads to execute the concept. Tembekile Solanga from the HR department acted as the helpful cameraman. And Marc Mullenberg together with Rob Wrensch did the filming of the ad.

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