

The sounds of digital advertising success

 By Leigh Andrews

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Ogilvy & Mather South Africa's Digital Creative Portfolio was the only South African agency to take home a Grand Prix award over Loeries weekend. It brings youth, music and technology together in a completely new way...

Called 'SoundBite', it's an in-store customer experience that makes use of new technology so KFC customers can listen to music through the palm of their hands. All they need to do is press their elbows down on a design etched onto the table in the KFC store.

We found out more about the KFC Music Concept from Managing Director of Ogilvy & Mather South Africa's Digital Creative Portfolio, Ben Evans...

■ 1. *Everything's digital at the moment. What prompted the decision to go with digital in a different way for this activation?*



Ben Evans

Evans: We fundamentally believe that digitally integrated experiences are right for targeting the youth market. KFC have been progressive partners in considering new ways to use technology to engage and deliver against their business objectives.

Their open-minded view of bringing innovation to their stores to create engaging customer experiences has allowed us to create excitement around the KFC brand.

We see a gap between the digitalisation of the consumer and the general level of investment that brands are putting into the medium. This activation forms a small but important part in our view of a holistic 'KFC to customer' relationship.

■ 2. *What went into creating a first-of-its-kind 'record table' and how exactly does the sound travel up users' arms?*

Evans: The core idea is not technology, technology just allows us to deliver this first-of-its-kind experience. Ultimately, our insight into the core youth audience is that they enjoy local music and, combined with this, we found that many local artists are talented but struggling to get a break with a traditional record label. So we combined these insights to form the idea of using our own tables to play local music on.

The technology we used then allowed us to create a highly engaging experience that we felt customers would not only love, but also talk to others about. Happily for us, we were right! The reactions from consumers has been very positive. We ultimately adapted technology that is already on the market for other commercial uses to support our idea. With our own twist and additions, this became the 'record table'. These beautifully designed table services were designed specifically to appeal to the target audience.



One of the KFC SoundBite tables
[click to enlarge](#)

Behind the design and how it works - we have innovative 'bone technology' driving the sound delivery. This cleverly passes sound waves/minute vibrations up the arms of the listener and into their ears - without the need for headphones. The sound is converted to vibrations. When you put your elbows on the speaker the vibrations transfer into your arms, traveling through the bone and flesh when you put your hands on your ears the vibrations travel

into the ears vibrating the eardrums, just like any other sound. You can put the speakers on anything - windows, desks, etc. - and it will turn it into a speaker.

Then, the electronic ink was used on the tables to avoid clunky buttons and exposed wires, and to provide the ability to interact with the illustrations. All the electrical engineering was done in-house and it was through interactive experimentation and tenacity that we managed to deliver this finished result. Making experiences that have never existed before is never easy, but is a challenge that we have a history of delivering on. A true collaboration between designers, technical developers, creative story tellers, project managers and strategists.

■ **3. How exactly does the sound travel up users' arms?**

Evans: I can only tell you what we have researched - sound is converted to vibrations when you put your elbows on the speaker the vibrations transfer into your arms travelling through the bone and flesh when you put your hands on your ears the vibrations travel into the ears vibrating the eardrums, just like any other sound. You can put the speakers on anything - windows, desks, etc. - and it will turn it into a speaker.



The table in action...

■ **4. Does the issue of copyright/trademark ever come into something like this, where you're creating something new specifically for a campaign?**

Evans: The way we have combined these technologies is unique to KFC, but is not protected via a copyright. All the content played on the tables is shareable if a customer places their cell phone on the table and links using KFCs in store Wi-Fi network. This content has been cleared of copyright by the artists and sharing is encouraged as this is our intended distribution network.

■ **5. Why launch this with KFC in Bloem as opposed to a city like CT or JHB - what was the research process?**

Evans: Bloem is one of KFC's flagship stores - where there is a large local youth audience and where KFC enjoys testing innovation. We are planning to roll out the technology into other stores nationally.

■ **6. Makes sense. Tell us more about the specific musicians involved and how they were selected.**

Evans: We were looking to profile great up-and-coming local artists. South Africa and Africa has a wide array of incredible talent. A few of the featured artists include 2lee Stark, hip-hop artists Ginger Breadman and Priddy Ugly, and Bloem-born Lebo Lukewarm.

■ **7. What's feedback been like so far, from the client and consumers alike?**

Evans: The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Everyone from the marketing team, store staff and their customers have loved the experience. There has also been an appreciation from customers that KFC have created a way to help local artists - and at the same time making an experience that connects with them as young consumers. And then, of course, there's the Loeries Grand Prix win...

Watch the SoundBite case study video embedded below if you're keen to see the work in action before it hits a KFC near you.

[Click here](#) for the full list of Loeries winners for Saturday, and [here for Sunday's list](#):

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ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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