

MTN reveals latest global brand campaign

Whereas the trend for multinationals is to produce generic campaigns for use across their markets, often with minimal or no localisation, MTN has done the complete opposite with its latest global brand campaign, "Welcome to the New World" which was launched last week.



The full campaign will consist of 17 commercials - designed to speak to MTN's individual markets and customers, and capture the essence of each, across Africa and the Middle East.

The television commercials are complemented by a wide range of extensive country - specific print, outdoor, online and mobile campaigns. All executions are in the markets' dominant languages, notably, English, French, Kinyarwanda (Rwanda), Pashito, and Farsi - and features local models and personalities.

Celebrating beauty and uniqueness

Executive for group marketing at MTN, Jennifer Forrester, says the global campaign's objective is to celebrate the beauty and uniqueness of the people in MTN markets, particularly their vibrancy, spirit and creativity.

"We spent huge amounts of time looking at the people, the clothing and the setting, so that we get every bit of detail right. This was very important to us. We wanted the international community to see these countries, the way we see them," says Forrester.

To develop the campaign strategy, MTN roped in its creative agency, [MetropolitanRepublic](#), which also executed the pan-African part of the campaign.

Another creative outfit, [TBWA](#) was brought in to produce the Middle East and North Africa part of the campaign, based on the strategy and creative concept developed by MetropolitanRepublic.

"We were briefed to develop a campaign that not only firmly positioned MTN in the mind of the consumer, but also builds brand affinity with Africa's younger population," says Alison Deeb, CEO of MetropolitanRepublic Group. "We knew we needed to find a big idea that will not only answer to the strategic intent, but also resonate with such diverse markets, taking cultural, language and religious diversity into consideration."

She says a key challenge was obtaining the buy-in from all 21 of MTN's diverse markets.

"This was a real challenge because we were not always able to engage with the operating companies face-to-face due to time considerations and language differences."

Deeb says a combination of market research that indicated MTN's customers are incredibly proud of where they come from and MTN's business strategy - which centres on sustainable growth in the digital space - gave Metropolitan a sound basis.

Change is good

The agency went with the rationale that change is good.

"In MTN context, it is the now non-existent belief that there's a so-called 'first world' that leads the way, and a third world. For MTN, there's just one world and it's a brand new world made possible by its innovative products and services - particularly the digital space."

Forrester says the campaign communicates the beginning of a new chapter for MTN, both as a business and brand. This year, the mobile operator became the first African company to crack global research group Milward Brown's BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands listing, coming in at 88th position.

"Therefore instead of being just a global brand, we wanted to start behaving like one,' says Forrester. "For us, it was important that we launch a brand campaign that would be part and parcel of MTN's long term strategy, as well as move MTN from its current reality to a desired and defined future state. We believe this campaign achieves that."

Deeb says there are few multinational companies that have managed to take a central idea from business to brand, and all have the same idea celebrated at an individual country level.

"With this campaign, if you are sitting in Uganda, you will get to feel that MTN gets you in Uganda. The same applies to the Middle East markets. I think MTN has really struck on to something very unique," she says.

Adds Forrester, "There are thousands of songs about New York, which to most people is where everything happens," says Forrester. "We want people to also have that same feeling about our markets, where they write about Kampala in that way. Lagos, Accra or Khartoum; because we feel that this is where the new world actually is."

The campaign will be rolled out in all of MTN's 21 markets, starting with the English and French Pan-African markets early December, followed by Middle East in early 2013.

View the MTN global brand campaign at www.mtnnewworld.com

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