

What makes great advertising?

What makes advertising stand out amid the clutter of all the different channels and devices on offer to consumers today? It isn't just one thing, but a medley of virtues that have authenticity at the top of the list.

 By Louise Marsland 29 Apr 2016



Natalie Otte

Authenticity is up there with relevance, which includes functionality and that emotional hook, says Natalie Otte, head of Millward Brown South Africa.

“I wish I could tell you that it was one thing. Lately it's about being relevant. So if you're using humour, babies, a slice of life... it is about being relevant to the target audience. Is it functional? Does it emotionally grab my attention? Does it pull at the heartstrings or use humour? Authenticity is even more important.

“It really is a variety of things, but you have to be relevant to the consumer's lives, as well as the brand.”

Millward Brown released its latest Best Liked Ads list this week from its database of 90 000 television ads released in South Africa over the 32 years since it started tracking television ads. This is probably the biggest advertising database in the world, says Otte, and one of the best repositories of advertising data, containing 1.1 million interviews.

Publishing the list gives Millward Brown the opportunity to celebrate the importance of creativity as seen by the consumer. This aspect is often forgotten amongst all the industry awards (peer assessment). It also allows marketers a clearer understanding of the current media environment and helps them drive their media effectiveness and efficiencies to maximise their media ROI.

The top ads are as follows (Q4 2015):

1. Vodacom: 'Wedding' – Ogilvy & Mather Johannesburg
2. Coca Cola: 'Share a feeling. Share a Coke.' – FCB Johannesburg
3. Telkom: 'Summer Unlimited' – DDB South Africa
4. Toyota: 'Make your mark in the all new Aygo' – FCB Johannesburg
5. Cremora: 'Derby' – Publicis Machine

And the top ads for Q3 are (2015):

1. Telkom: 'The Works for Business' - DDB South Africa
2. Rama Margarine: 'Crush' - Mullen Lowe Johannesburg
3. Spur: 'Main Attraction (rugby)' - The Haas Collective
4. Ultramel Custard: 'Taste of Sunday' - Y&R
5. KFC: 'Emzini Wezinsizwa' – O&M Johannesburg

To get to the Best Liked ads each time (Millward Brown release their findings to the industry every six months), every single new brand ad flighted in South Africa - whether locally produced or from an international brand – is tracked two weeks after launching on South Africa television, whether they are a client of Millward Brown or not.

The Best Liked Ads list is based on its Adtrack newcomer measure, which is the first in-market measure approximately two weeks post-launch for all new brand commercials flighted, with each ad being tested against a weekly sample of 200 people, recruited from major metropolitan areas with strict demographic quotas to ensure a good representation of the TV viewing population.

Fragmentation

The past three decades have of course seen significant changes in SA audience demographics and needs as regards TV viewership, says Otte.

“Most South Africans have access to television now across South Africa and the audience is a lot more homogenous. The big change has been to the number of channels and that you can't target on television as well as you could, as everyone is likely to see it, wherever you put it. You have to really think about how you plan your media. Then there is fragmentation. The amount of new executions out there is immense. It makes it harder to cut through the clutter and get noticed.”

This is evident, she says, in the fact that people's recall of ads they've seen has gone down from 20% a couple of decades ago, to 15% on average. However, in contrast to that, the “liking” of ads has gone up. This can be attributed to the fact that those ads that are liked and recalled, really connect with consumers.

The research house started tracking consumer's best liked ads in 1984 when it was still Impact Research and there were only about 500 television ads released each year on the three or so TV channels available to South African consumers.

By 2016 and its 2500 television ads released each year across a multitude of television channels available to consumers – and an advertising and marketing environment that is cluttered with all types of advertising and new marketing channels.

Africa

Millward Brown is well aware of the amount of devices out there that consumers are watching multi-media content on and have produced a study on multi-screening. This multi-screen trend has been a big learning for their partners and clients, says Otte, as most TV ads do not necessarily just work on another screen.

“Advertisers need to think about the screen to make it work on. You have to be a lot more attention grabbing. It is a different way of thinking about video on the different screens.” Millward Brown is looking into adding online dashboards for clients and adding other media channels to their tracking tool, like mobile, online, radio,

and outdoor. “At the core we need to keep our research consistent and up to date because of our database.”

The continent is also on their radar and they do track ads for clients in various African markets. “We would love to measure the rest of Africa. We do use some of the learnings gained in the South African survey for some of our clients. We have built up knowledge on what works in the different African markets.

“But what we found was that you need to be careful as only a very small proportion of TV ads are able to travel to transcend cultural barriers.”

Otte says ads that can transcend country borders are those where the brand is at the same life stage across borders, for example, established in the various markets; it has to tell a universal truth that is recognisable anywhere; and the brand promise needs to be functional in the need it is fulfilling.

Global car and soft drink brands are often examples of global advertising that transcends borders in need of fulfilment and aspiration.

**Millward Brown's Best Liked Ads list celebrates South Africa's favourite TV commercials. The full list of winners, with links to view, is available in the [Millward Brown press office](#) on Bizcommunity.com.*

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