

Nedbank launches campaign urging South Africa to take money seriously

South Africa has one of the lowest savings and highest debt-to-income ratios in the world. Nedbank wanted to take a stand and create social consciousness around excessive consumerism and irresponsible money behaviour.



To achieve this, integrated brand and communications group Joe Public United collaborated with Romance Films to bring a new campaign to life. The aim of the campaign was to subvert signals of advertising to get people to think more critically about how messages try and exhort them to spend more.

As a result, an anti-advertising campaign was created through a series of fictitious product commercials. Instead of selling products, the campaign strikes the conscience of South Africans around the critical need to #TakeMoneySeriously by joining Nedbank.

Xolisa Dyeshana, chief creative officer of Joe Public United, said, “As a bank that wants to use its expertise to do good, we, together with Nedbank, found that this is a golden opportunity for us to draw attention to the reality of overspending and irresponsible borrowing, as well as the urgent need to save and invest for the long term. Therefore, we had to ask ourselves how we awaken a social conscience of ‘investorism’ rather than consumerism? The result is a thought-provoking campaign that takes the very same advertising messages that usually encourage spending and, instead, use them to stimulate critical thinking and challenge underlying presuppositions around banking and money.”



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Directed by Greg Gray, each of the five films in the campaign appears to be a familiar commercial: a luxury car on the wide-open road, a basketball player with cool new kicks, the shiny features of the latest smartphone, the sophistication of the cocktail lounge, the sensuality of perfume. Tropes that advertisers usually make use of so consumers understand and respond to it. However, as each film progresses, the allusions to unchecked spending gradually become more pronounced. Explicit references to banking clichés are intentionally held back to build interest, intrigue and impact before revealing that this is, in fact, a commercial for a bank.

The fully integrated 360-degree, through-the-line campaign will continue to roll out across all mass media platforms, digital media, outdoor advertising and PR. This is in an effort to help people understand the impact of their money choices, good and bad, to offer alternatives to old spending patterns, and ultimately, to #TakeMoneySeriously.

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