

# Re-think drinking and driving

 By Jessica Tennant

24 Dec 2018

In time for the festive season, Riverbed launched a campaign on behalf of the Association for Alcohol Responsibility and Education (aware.org) to continue the conversation around drinking and driving in South Africa.



Social media posts started to appear announcing the launch of the One on Nicol pop-up drive-through bar on William Nicol Drive in Sandton – some seemed excited by the opportunity to stop for a quick drink on the way home from work, while others were outraged.

On the day of the launch, it was revealed that the pop-up bar had been a ruse to set the scene for the ‘Re-think’ campaign, which aims to get people to reconsider their drink-driving choices.

The activation has proven to revive the conversation around drunk driving in South Africa and get people to reappraise their own denial and double standards around casual drinking and driving.



“When the brief came in for aware.org’s festive season campaign, we knew that a traditional radio and OOH approach wouldn’t be enough to achieve our campaign objectives, especially for a well-trodden issue like drinking and driving,” says Riverbed ECD, Bridget Johnson. “Getting attention at a busy time of the year, on a familiar issue would be tough, so we chose a route that was truly social media-led, allowing the campaign to be defined by our audience.”

“As a large-scale festive campaign running until mid-January, so far ‘Re-think’ has been an ideal opportunity for us to demonstrate our company commitment to creating brand experiences people want to spend time with,” adds Monalisa Zwambila, Riverbed CEO. “It wouldn’t have been possible, however, without the vision and partnership of a brave client, Ingrid Louw, CEO of aware.org.”

The pop-up bar was televised live on eNCA, with interviews on SABC, 702 and other influential platforms on the day, while unprecedented social media interactions have been recorded with a still-climbing PR reach.

Johnson goes on to share more of the thinking and re-thinking behind the campaign...

#### ■ **What was the brief/key insight?**

**Brief:** Approach the issue of drinking and driving/walking in a way that will have an impact on an issue that’s very familiar to a jaded audience.

**Insight:** As much as the public at large disagrees with drinking and driving and when asked will condemn it, the majority of us still get behind the wheel when we’ve had one or two.

### ■ **How did you come up with the idea?**

We wanted to really make an impact, to get people to 're-think' this year and start to take personal responsibility for drinking and driving. We felt strongly that, although risky, if we held up a mirror to our own denialism around drinking and driving, it might be the most effective way to start to change behaviour.

### ■ **Why did you decide to go the social media route in allowing the campaign to be defined by the audience?**

We knew that social media allowed us to actively and immediately involve our audience, giving them the power to define the campaign. We needed to be prepared for all the reactions we might have received, but the many sleepless nights of anticipation and preparation were worth it.

### ■ **What was/is the objective?**

The primary objective is to inspire people to change their own behaviour and take personal responsibility, rather than comment on society at large. The campaign launch, however, was just the beginning of the campaign. The follow-up phase helps to reinforce the conversation and educate people around drinking and driving/walking along with ways to change behaviour. Messaging appears everywhere from shebeens and taverns to widespread OOH, online and traditional media.

### ■ **What has the response been?**

The response has been phenomenal. The campaign was trending no.1 in SA on Twitter on the first day of the campaign. Our launch was televised live on eNCA, and later covered on SABC news, 702, Soweto TV, News24 and many other broadcasts and online channels. Most gratifying has been the response on social media indicating that the campaign has been well understood and prompted some to 're-think'.

### ■ **What's next?**

We now move into phase two of our campaign, which will see much media support invested in spreading our 'Re-think' education message.

### ■ **Anything you'd like to add?**

It is always exciting when you are doing important work for a cause, which affects all of us, and you are able to track sentiment and engage reactions immediately. It has been a true demonstration of our mission statement – to create brand experiences people want to spend time with. Working with a tight, motivated team internally, alongside a brave and trusting client, have been additional bonuses.

## ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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