

The power of partnership

Issued by [Shayne Mann](#)

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When SAB first approached Mann Made Media with the idea of creating a nationwide Tavern Rally aimed at promoting certain best-practise executions in these retailer outlets, we were excited by the opportunity to bring their commitment to their customers to life in a dramatic and engaging manner.

One of our first tasks was to create a theme and visual identity.

Often a creative team will come up with a theme and a design that is widely admired within the agency, but that has little or no relation to the message and the audience for which it is intended. At Mann Made Media we spend a lot of time getting to understand the character of the audience for which we are designing an experience or campaign, and only then do we indulge in the creative pursuit of the most elegant solution.

So, together with our client, we set about the task of aligning the creative opportunities of the brief with the long-term communication strategy of SAB.

The basis of the Tavern Rally was going to be built around a quit pro quo of give and take: SAB was promising three things: superb beer brands, exciting promotions, and the kind of real business support that only SAB can deliver to the industry. SAB was asking the taverner for three things in return: price it right, promote it right and stock it right.

The key insight was that when each player in this newly defined relationship delivered on their agreed commitments, then both would benefit. There was a mutuality here that sat firmly within SAB's corporate strategy of being a 21st century competitor.

Added to this was the fact that the Tavern Rallies was only one of a whole set of initiatives designed to bring value to taverners and South Africa. Other programmes that we were being briefed on included the Zenzele Share Ownership communications and the Responsible Trader Programme.

When we looked at all of these initiatives, and we spoke to the different players within the different departments at SAB, we agreed that what was needed was not a series of slick but separate themes and designs for each project, but rather a unifying banner under which all of these new SAB investments could be understood as a total commitment to partnership and category leadership.

The essence of this new relationship was the pursuit of partnership, and it was by honing in on this core objective that we arrived at the solution and coined the theme, 'Perfect Partnership'.

But how best to portray the emotional power of partnership? In answer to this we researched and created 'a taverner just like you'. SAB perfectly personified the world of the audience. He was able to talk to our audience and share with them insights and information from a common base, from shared experience, from a place of mutual respect, from a perspective that used colourful characterisation and emotional connection to achieve meaningful corporate communication.

It is always gratifying to work with a client that has a powerful brand, clear vision, sound strategy and the highest expectations of their own team and their agency. This is how the best client-agency partnerships can produce the best experiential campaigns, because this level of mutual trust and respect pushes both to exceed their highest expectations of each other.

Today, two years after we introduced the theme of the Perfect Partnership, we are very proud that it is being championed

at the highest levels of SAB, and continues to serve as the umbrella concept that defines all retailer communication programmes.

So, we say cheers to all such perfect partnerships!

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