

This is an era of advertising evolution

 By [Tinyiko Maswanganye](#)

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Advertising has changed. The consumers have changed. The audience preferences have changed, too. The most remarkable change has been the shift by brands to direct the attention to the majority.

In the past adverts were generated and conceptualised in English then translated to other South African languages. Every concept was done with white mentality and black people were expected to adopt. Although great adverts were created not many conceptualised black people culture, daily lives, language and communication.

Most black people speak and understand what is called "tsotsi taal". This language is combination and mixture of Afrikaans, English, African languages and slang developed in the streets and it is understood by many people in the urban townships and rural areas.

Recently, many brands have realised that there is a need to communicate with black market in *their* language in the context of *their* culture. The pioneer in what was seen as a risky advertising expedition would be Vodacom with their versatile "yebo Gogo" tag line. Many brands followed and many are following.

"Akusheshwe" by Eno, "Mghongo by Sony and the most successful of them all being MTN with "Ayoba" during the 2010 World Cup. Many things we would learn from this and some of them are:

1. Black people need to be communicated with in the context of their cultures and languages.
2. Black people have spending power, so effective targeted advertising towards them is required.
3. This is the time of advertising evolution.
4. Size one fits all approach is outdated

Previously, there were brands that were "traditionally" black. The majority of the sales predominantly came from the black market. As soon as the advertising and media planning changed the focus, the sales also went down. The pointers are that realignment is needed.

The high volume of malls mushrooming in the township suggests that focused advertising customised for township and rural areas folks is required and the communication needs to be done in the language that reflects the lives and culture in order to resonate with them.

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