

Advertising industry *must* support local musicians

 By [Bonnie Ramaila](#)

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I am dreaming of a day when the music and the advertising industries would consistently work together like hand in glove. In the early 80s, most adverts' musical scores were freshly produced by either budding musicians or established musicians themselves. This brings to mind adverts such as Body Mist, Jungle Oats, Cadbury Chomp etc.

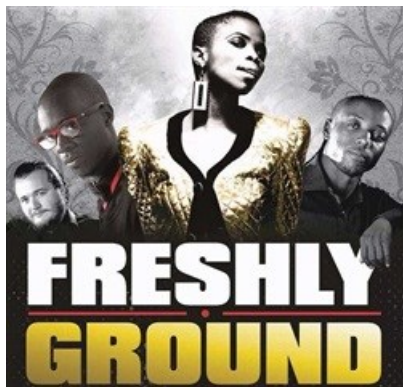
The musical scores were very relevant to the brand and original, I can still remember the lyrics and the melody to all the three ads - as I used to sing along. When I listen to background music of most adverts now, I realise that most of it is library music - when our country is full of talented musicians who are more than capable of producing music for the various TV commercials.

Clients spent thousands of rands and renewal fees on library music and we don't even know who produced it. When one travels abroad, you will never hear foreign adverts playing a Zonke or Karen Zoid song as background music to their adverts - they utilise their own music to popularise their products and, chances are, the music utilised in the ad was produced by their own artists, even if it's old songs.

Benefits for music artists and groups

In as much as some pay-off lines of certain brands or products are similar to circular musical hit songs, and some hit songs are used to drive a certain message of a product or service, we could start using our own musical hits produced by our South African artists to drive or popularise a message of a brand, product or service to the target audience. Various music artists and groups could benefit out this collaboration.

I can actually even picture a Loerie category of the best musical score for a brand, product or service by an artist or group or even an MTN award. Imagine that.



We do have corporate clients like Nedbank who once utilised Freshlyground and Cell C utilising Zola and Zakes Bantwini, but for the number of adverts produced in our country year in and year out, and artists, it's embarrassing and not looking very rosy when one thinks of the client's budget for campaigns.

The musical score does not have to be a 10 track CD or a 3.30 minute song... background music that is 30-45 seconds long would also drive a message home.

Long-term collaborations

What I envisage is long-term collaborations, on long-term campaigns with artists and corporate clients across all sectors of brands, products and services. The profiling of that artist or group vis-a-vis clients product or brands should ideally have synergy. I take cognisance of the fact that some clients would shy away from having celebrities as 'brand ambassadors' for their products, lest they (celebrities) be implicated in some unsavoury shenanigans that could jeopardise or dent the image of their brand or company, but in the case of musical scores there would be no stigma attached to it.

We all know that our music industry in our country is very erratic. Great musicians sometimes struggle to make ends meet. Therefore, opportunities like these would be very encouraging for them to work hard and put their creativity to good use.

Thus, I am posing a serious challenge to the advertising industry creative teams to start thinking and linking the campaigns

that are Proudly South African to Proudly South African musicians to work together in creating great brands, and music.
Enough said.

ABOUT BONNIE RAMAILA

Bonnie Ramaila is an international communication consultant. She previously worked in the private and public sector as a communication expert. She runs a consultancy that specialises in bespoke communication for niche clients and individuals. Services include communication and media advice, facilitation, publicity and strategy development. She writes in her personal capacity.

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