

Boa Mzansi. Speak South Africa(n)!

DStv and Ogilvy Johannesburg recently teamed up to create “Boa Mzansi” [Speak South Africa(n)] – a joint project aimed at fostering creativity amongst African language-speaking students, as well as reaching out to consumers in their mother tongue and strengthening the brand.

Ogilvy Johannesburg account director Thandi Mnguni says this initiative is a first for the industry. “Ogilvy Johannesburg always strives to add real value to its clients and understanding how important it is to communicate in proper mother tongue to consumers is vital. The idea was conceived because finding copywriters willing to originate ideas and scripts in the various local languages is often challenging,” she explains.

DStv decided to address this dearth of “mother tongue” copywriters by briefing students to work on a DStv Compact radio campaign in SeTswana, Pedi, Xhosa, and IsiZulu. “By originating scripts in the various mother tongues, there is much more chance of capturing cultural nuances that are otherwise lost in translation,” says DStv compact brand manager Georginah Machiridza.

Real life experience

The students hail from the Imagine Lab, a Vega School initiative that offers previously disadvantaged students a bridging course into advertising. Boa Mzansi was an opportunity for the students to get real-life experience working on an actual brief for a top brand and in conjunction with one of SA's leading agencies.

DStv marketing manager Lefeedi Maja says the initiative is multifaceted in that it allows DStv to give back by nurturing talent, giving young black creatives an opportunity to showcase their creativity, and work with some of the most accredited creative directors in the industry. “In addition, it allows the industry the use of vernacular conceptual copywriters,” she says.

Twenty four students from Imagine Lab's Alexandra and Sandton campuses were selected to work on the brief. They were divided into four groups, each tasked with conceptualising and writing a script in their mother tongue. On completing the work, a review was conducted by Ogilvy Johannesburg creative group head, Zwelakhe Tshabangu, who then helped them perfect their scripts and ensure they met the brand's communication objectives.

Freelance rate

The ‘winning’ team members were paid a freelance rate for the time spent on creative output. The best scripts were presented to DStv, the spots recorded and then aired on the top African language radio stations. In addition to this, Ogilvy started a mentorship programme and has recruited a Vega student, Refiloe Tsikane, for a period of 12 months.

Creatively, the project was led by joint creative group heads, Zwelakhe Tshabangu (copywriter) and Tetteh Botchway (art director).