

The message was lost in the title, I think



By [Tebogo Koena](#)

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It takes time to craft a message, even more so when it is meant to kick-start dialogue. I'm thinking of the manner in which this song "Blacks R Foolz" was received. There were many positive reactions, especially on social media platforms, on the one hand. On the other, there was negative feedback on the song, mainly due to the title. (video)

It is my view that the message in the song was lost in the title. As a result of the title, a lot more people who should have listened to the message attentively, did not, as they were put off by the title.

What's in the name?

In branding, naming is at the core of an offering, which then eventually becomes a brand. In life, parents do not [or should not] name children just anything that comes to mind, as the significance of a name is well understood.

Naming is a very important process, as a name sells the message without even having to go to extremes of figuring out what the message is all about.

Habit is not good at times

However, perhaps we have become such creatures of habit that we judge books by their covers, and this is the reason that we are first to criticise, comment and phone into radio stations without having to have read, listened to, asked or discussed first whatever it is about which we are calling.

This habit is similar to when we sing our lungs out in the shower and even take a bow, then go to *Idols* auditions - only to not even make it through the door. What follows next is we become so distraught, to a point where we want to tear ourselves apart.

Turned off by the title

[Slikour](#) has said in numerous interviews that he's had the song for three years or so and the title was the only outstanding element to it. His reasons for the title were to make people notice, listen and discuss the content.

At times, one never knows how a particular exercise will go; however, in a country such as ours, where there are still many sensitivities around millions of issues, Slikour should have used another title that would've enticed people [those offended by the song] to want to find out more, instead of switching off.

Communication basics

Perhaps it was some sort of an oversight on Slikour and his team's part. In my opinion [which is not fact], the naming of the track shows that perhaps Slikour did not take into account some of the basics of communicating a message: Is the delivery method relevant? Will the audience understand the subject matter? And will they be able to respond favourably?

Communication is all about the sender, the receiver and the influences that occur in-between. The impact of the message on the receiver should always be envisaged through an emotional lens rather than just putting a point across.

Controversy with a purpose

Getting people's knickers in a knot will not do justice to the immense work that goes into putting together the message. The outcome that you are anticipating will also not be as expected. Then the exercise becomes a futile one.

When people feel insulted or attacked personally, they switch off and see no reason to work with you as the sender in tackling the subject matter. Think of the people you want to talk to: how will your message, track, performance or art make them feel?

Controversy and dialogue are two separate objectives. One could be a vehicle to carry out the other, however, and it should be done in a more tactful manner.

Judging from the reaction to Blacks R Foolz, it shows that we still want to treat issues with kid gloves. Do you feel the same?

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ABOUT TEBOGO KOENA

Tebogo Koena is a brand builder who has been in the advertising space for eight years. He used to work at The Jupiter Drawing Room (Johannesburg). His experience stretches across automotive brands (Mercedes-Benz and FIAT) right through to the FMCG sector (Coca-Cola, Philip Morris and Plascon, among others). Tebogo is also a budding writer and commentator. He writes here in his personal capacity. Email Tebogo at tebogo@thezeitgeist.co.za and follow [@GOTG](#) on Twitter.

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