

No, no, no comrade, that #FNB campaign is unacceptable...

 By [Rose Setshoge](#)

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So, First National Bank (FNB) received an incredible volume of publicity since last week; trended on Twitter, dominated other social media conversations, headlined peak hour news, talk shows opened lines for debate and met with the ruling party due to the 'You Can Help' campaign. Honestly, what more can a brand possibly ask for?

The government contributed to making this campaign a successful and memorable one. It would be interesting to know the value of publicity FNB received to date or how many consumers actually switched banks, as this is important to them. Had the government not responded to this campaign, it would have been like any other.

Three important lessons that marketers should gather:

1. A year's worth of public relations in few days

The media is still tracking every brand's action and finding news outlook out of each: its advertisement placement, rumours about the CEO resigning that started on Twitter, even the department of education were linked to the whole saga. The Minister of Basic Education made a comment after the SMS leak: "We distance ourselves from this leak because it is a serious matter and **we will approach the relevant security agencies to investigate.**" The Basic Education institutions opened about three weeks ago; surely there are more pressing matters.

2. Advertising plus politics is definitely news

It has become evident that if the advertising message is somehow linked to political personalities or issues, the brand is bound to get additional free publicity. This is an opportunity for brands to play on government's insecurities. In other words, create a platform for political parties to debate, and your campaign will be successful. However, this has to be done in a way that your brand doesn't get harmed in the process, which is obviously risky.

3. Research is important to back up your campaign

So, this happened in the process: The advert appalled some people emotionally, facts and figures were presented, the government commented on the advert and wanted it off air, then the nation paid attention and FNB was part of many conversations. Current and potential FNB's consumers took time out to understand FNB's messaging due to the unnecessary publicity. They read and listened to their peers' opinions regarding the campaign and possibly FNB's products and services. Because research was conducted, a significant number of people seemed to be on FNB's side.

ABOUT ROSE SETSHOGE

Rose Setshoge's wealth of talent includes marketing, communications, journalism, advertising and research. She completed a media planning course at the AAA School of Advertising. She is senior marketing manager at Hyphenica and writes on her personal capacity. Email Rose at setshoge@yahoo.com and follow [@RoseSetshoge](#) on Twitter.

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