

DDB forms regional footprint for global organisations



By [Richard Clarke](#)

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Recently DDB South Africa extended their reach into one of the last markets left in the world that is really open to creative and innovative expansion.

By identifying an opportunity to utilise their African knowledge and skills base they are proving the ability of Africans to add something unique to a global advertising mix.

Although it operates on a different level the idea of working from an African angle is similar in focus to marketing and communications networks run in the townships to empower black entrepreneurs.

Mike Frampton, CEO of DDB South Africa, says, "DDB Interstation has been formed as a separate division to coordinate our clients positioning in the African region and integrate that within their global positioning."

According to Gary Bergh, Marketing Director of Energizer, "We are a global brand, with a presence in countries with diverse cultures and belief systems. In each of these countries we rely on advisors who have proven experience in varied environments."

"When we evaluated an advertising agency for Africa, DDB SA seemed a natural choice as they have a network that can support our push into the sub-Saharan region and beyond. We can rely on them to provide us with local knowledge which enables us to develop advertising which is both appropriate and effective in each of our markets," says Bergh.

The latest move by DDB has resulted in an associate agreement with Hash Three in Zimbabwe that brings their African connection into the double digit zone.

Their presence now stretches from South Africa right up North including Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. Mozambique and Zimbabwe are the Southern connection with Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria forming the West African contingent. Completing the story so far is Kenya representing East Africa.

Frampton talks of specialising in a market that most of the rest of the world still see as an homogenous entity. The African continent is still lumped together by many U.S. as well as European and Asian organisations and marketers.

This is reinforced and amplified by strategies by international organisations that fail when no proper research had been done prior to going to market.

"There is a distinct lack of understanding and feel, in the first world, for what we see as a crucial growth market," Frampton says, "we have achieved some global accounts, like Energizer, where the critical factor was our regional stance with regard to creating a springboard into Africa."

Ethnicity, culture, language and religion are all stumbling blocks for an organisation unprepared for the diversity of the African continent.

Local knowledge is paramount in this battleplan DDB have positioned themselves as the regional gateway offering global clients an understanding and insight into a market that has it's own identities far away from the established countries of the First world.

ABOUT RICHARD CLARKE

Richard Clarke founded Just Ideas, an ideas factory and implementation unit. He specialises in spotting opportunities, building ideas and watching them fly. Richard is also a freelance writer.

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