

Confed Cup time to rebrand Bafana?

When Bafana coach Joel Santana declared his Confed Cup ambitions at the LOC marketing press conference on 20 November 2008, the media were stunned by his prediction that Bafana be crowned champions of the FIFA Confederations Cup 2009. But this was a declaration of his brand promise for the Confed Cup...

 By [Dr Nikolaus Eberl](#) 4 Jun 2009

Speaking through an interpreter, Santana told the audience, “We are here to win and take this prize. We will have a great campaign in the Confederations Cup to give honour to our jersey. We are preparing ourselves well, working 24 hours a day.

“It will be a big test, but we are preparing ourselves, our spirits and our will to win. The national team has a strong desire to get somewhere. If we are not able to show we are the best team in this Confederations Cup, then we will show we are the best at the World Cup.”

Brand promise

In other words, this was the brand promise - fielding a winning team that will play their hearts out and make the nation proud. It was Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson who recently defined this trait to be the key touch-point of a winning football brand. When asked about the prospects of his Argentine striker Carlo Tevez remaining with Manchester United, Ferguson replied, “The fans love him. The fans love triers. When players try, the fans love that.”

Trying their very best was the reason that the fans rallied around the German team at the previous Confederations Cup held in 2005. It was then that German coach Klinsmann declared that “winning next year would give us the chance to show the world who we are. We have the opportunity to redefine Germany - to create a national brand.”

Previously labelled the worst performing German team of all times, the German team proved to be a box office hit, with the hosts demonstrating over their five games that they were a force to be reckoned with at the following year's FIFA World Cup. The FIFA Confed Cup report noted that “German coach Jurgen Klinsmann had a young and hungry crop of players at his disposal whose refreshing attacking football inspired and enthralled the home fans. Klinsmann's clan came out on top in a thrilling third place play-off with a 4 - 3 victory over Mexico to leave the host nation licking their collective lips in anticipation of next year's global showpiece.”

Brand damage

On the other hand, Santana alluded to the brand damage the Brazilian team incurred at the 2006 FIFA World Cup: “Brazil won the Confederations tournament, but found themselves in bad shape for the World Cup with a team led by golden oldies Cafu, Carlos and a fat Ronaldo. With inflated egos, they pompously went to the World Cup and failed dismally.”

What will it take for Bafana Bafana to rally the nation behind its Confed Cup performance and win the 2009 world cup of the hearts?

ABOUT DR NIKOLAUS EBERL

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