

Flying high

Fred had obviously just got back from the bush. His short trousers, bush jacket, dusty boots and (more than normal) disheveled hair, said it all. As he sat there, Klippies and water, no ice, in hand, I could not help but think of "Kortbroek", now aptly renamed "Sonderbroek".

 By Fred Says... 29 Aug 2004

"What happened to the SAA account?" he asked, as I ordered my Windhoek Lager.

"They did not pitch," I said. "Everybody got to the briefing to be told they were not ready. It is in holding pattern."

The conversation then drifted into the subtleties of the agency pitch, how it worked and how clients go about choosing their communications partners.

Bottom line, in any pitch, we concluded, is that there is always an agency with an "inside track". This "inside track" was, in the old days, often to do with the agency's Broederbond credentials rather than the work it did especially when government (or parastatal) advertising campaigns were concerned.

Now days the inside track is often to do with more than just black empowerment. As the boeties had their way, so now do those with "struggle credentials" have theirs. Just being black empowered is often not enough. As the National Party and the Broederbond imposed their will to ensure Afrikaner success, so now the ANC does the same for those that were loyal and committed to the struggle. The result then was an Afrikaner elite and now a black (read ANC) elite. It seems to be in the "nationalist" vein and name. Just being "white" then was not enough and just being "black" now, is not enough.

We questioned why else the Herdbouys had lost the SAA account having so recently been appointed. Was the team's struggle credentials not up to standard? Certainly the SAA advertising, conceived by them, was pretty good stuff. Or, was there a more sinister plot?

As I left, I mused that the "boetie-Nats" and the "Afri-Nats" know each other well; they have learned from each other. They share common goals, albeit for different people, at a different time. What started as an attempt to provide a "soup kitchen" for the poor whites then, and the previously disadvantaged now, soon becomes a "gravy train" (or plane) for those with an inside track. Some will even lose their trousers (and the party) to get onto it.

As I left, I mused that there was, in all likelihood, no senior manager left at SAA to answer any questions regarding the status of their advertising account.

ABOUT FRED SAYS...

With piercing blue eyes, a full set of clean underwear, his own hair - although it's mostly on his manly chest now - and stealth-like in his entry into his favourite bosveld watering hole, 'FRED' is clearly a legend in his own laager. An insider with so many years experience in the industry that he's forgotten where time began and advertising ended, he will be writing for Bizcommunity.com weekly to bring us the industry news you thought was safely swept under the rug, lurking there with the rest of South Africa's scandals and dirty laundry! If you'd all correspondence with Fred can be sent via the editor@biz-community.com
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