

TBWA\ team recounts making of 2010 UMU campaign

Launched in November last year, simultaneously with the 2010 Bafana Bafana jersey, the Adidas Unite Mzansi Unite (UMU) campaign has already wowed millions of soccer fans across the country, collecting so far close to 80 000 signatures for the 60m x 48m giant jersey from Bloemfontein to Cape Town and Eastern Cape. Bizcommunity.com interviewed the TBWA\ architects behind the campaign.

 By [Issa Sikiti da Silva](#) 10 Feb 2010



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The TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris Cape Town creative team, made up of MD Nicky Swartz, Lisa Finkelstein, Roxanne Ammerman, Khanyisa Guga, Damon Stapleton, Adam Weber, Christian Boshoff (senior art director), Shelley Smoler and Raphael Basckin, says they were inspired by the Korea Republic soccer passion during the 2002 Korea-Japan FIFA World Cup and what was described as their [“Sea of Red”](#).

Platform to unite

The campaign serves as a platform to unite South Africans behind the 2010 FIFA World Cup and for the fans to register their support for the national team.

“These are the extraordinary efforts of a nation taking their football team to new heights, and the question arose whether we could do as much in South Africa,” Swartz says. “And so the notion of a ‘Sea of Yellow’ was born. And obviously the idea that sits behind that visual imagery is the idea of unity.”

“UMU effectively serves as the rallying cry to bring South Africans together behind one the most extraordinary events of our country's recent history. It says, ‘No matter where you are, no matter who you are - this is our moment.’”

Challenges during conception

While some have described the campaign as ‘very innovative’ and ‘entertaining’, they were probably not aware of the amount of challenges the creative team faced during its conception.

“Working extensively with Adidas Global and local teams, John Hunt was instrumental in bringing together SWAT team to work on this brief. This meant that we literally had teams from, firstly, around South Africa and, secondly, teams from other parts of the TBWA\ global network brought together to work as a team.

“On our own way, we were trying to live the Adidas notion of ‘unity in diversity’. The team was certainly

diverse. And Adidas were an integral part of that team. They walked the journey with us, every step of the way.”

Precedent

On the giant jersey, Swartz says the team had a precedent to work with.

“The 1995 Unity moment involved a jersey as a key icon. The aim of the campaign was not to replicate that but to access our history in an interesting way. In football too, the jersey acts as a symbol that says ‘we belong to the same side’. But the jersey in itself was not the genius moment. For us the genius moment was deciding on how we would get as many South Africans as possible to share that experience.

“To effectively give them access to this historical event, irrespective of where they lived. We really wanted South Africans to feel that they could participate in the world cup. And having the giant jersey travel to outlying and urban centres allows people to ‘touch’ this icon for themselves.

“The conception of the idea was the result of the SWAT team efforts. At TBWA\ we like to talk about ideas as ‘our ideas’, rather than belonging to an individual and in this way, we acknowledge the input of many collaborators.”

‘Another inspirational move’

And Swartz says the team is plotting ‘another inspirational move’ as the world cup draws near, saying: “We like to surprise and delight the audience with new developments as they appear.

“We have in this campaign a ‘perfect storm’ of inspiration. Adidas is one of the sexiest brands on the planet. Football is the sexiest game in the world - that’s inspiration enough for most. And then of course, there’s the sheer excitement and stimulation that comes from the world cup. What more could we ask for?”

“Saying that we believe it’s really important that people in our business live in the world that they have an innate sense of curiosity and fascination for the minutiae and the expansive. That they always simply look around themselves.”

Track the campaign:

- Adidas: www.adidas.com/unite
- Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/adidasunite/
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/adidasunite
- Twitter: [@adidasUMU](https://twitter.com/adidasUMU)

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Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer. [View my profile and articles...](#)