

Some views on the FNB 'You Can Help' campaign

It all started on 9 January 2013, when FNB created an event on [Facebook](#) titled "You Can Help with not much more information than that. From this initial stage they started seeding the URL www.youcanhelp.co.za and at this point there was only a landing page with the functionality to provide your cellphone number to get a reminder for the live broadcast on 17 January 2013.

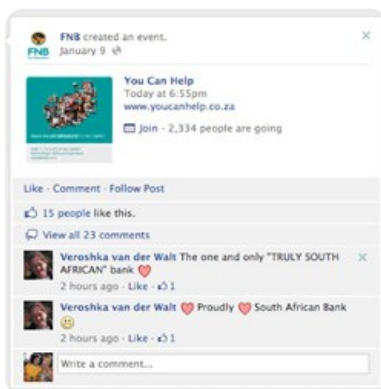
By [Mark Schefermann](#) 25 Jan 2013



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FNB then used all their digital properties to create awareness about this live broadcast, encouraging Fans and Followers to set a reminder to hear a message from the children of South Africa.

Just before 1600 on 17 January everyone who had requested a reminder received an SMS with the relevant information about the live broadcast. This was a very innovative system and I would love to see the viewership stats for those 3 minutes.



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The commercial was broadcast live across various channels namely: SABC 1, 2, & 3, e.tv, Mnet, eNews, Mzansi, Vuzu, kykNET and SuperSport (a very impressive media buying and technical achievement and I am sure it wouldn't have come at a small price). What was more impressive is the fact that it was streamed online, all in real time. I am not sure what they would have done if it started raining? The concept behind the commercial was the following: "The campaign carries a message from the voices we seldom hear, the children of our great country". If you didn't manage to see the commercial please see the video below. The young girl did exceptionally well knowing that she was on live television with millions watching her, surpassing any speech day or debate I'm sure.

Due to this being a live broadcast across so many channels, you can just begin to imagine how many people this commercial reached and of course created interest and curiosity to go and visit www.youcanhelp.co.za. The new blog suddenly received thousands of hits and because it was a launch there was no opportunity for testing and as with any new website or technology you will always find your odd bug here and there but they were quickly attended to and fixed. Throughout this entire period they had their social media team at full alert answering any queries and engaging where possible. #FNB immediately started trending on Twitter post the live broadcast.

Twitter conversations and excellent RB Jacobs support...



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At the bottom right hand corner of the blog there was a login icon, this opens up a window that allows users to login using either LinkedIn (is there a hidden HR agenda in there), Twitter or Facebook. Sadly though this functionality wasn't working and now it looks as if it has been removed from the blog completely. On the right it asks a user to "select the profile you would like to log in with: instantly, daily, weekly or never", I'm not 100% sure what that means?



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It is going to be interesting to see the long-term strategy for this blog, there is already a "switch" banner on the homepage so there is definitely an acquisition element to it. There are already some interesting sections to the blog like "contributions" and "statistics/infographics" and one can only presume that in the future they will use this blog to seed financial educational type content, feel-good stories and additional infographics.

Personally, I think a blog for a bank is a great idea as long as you have a solid content strategy. Banks often forget that they have the most qualified individuals and insights sitting within their walls. They are the people that we turn to for financial advice or at least that should be the case but all too often we do our research on other websites and blogs because they have better content, tools, information and support. Banks should become the [Zero Moment Of Truth \(ZMOT\)](#) hub for consumers when it comes to financial products.



[click to enlarge](#)

What was quite peculiar about the ending of the commercial was the VI (Visual Identity), this sign-off version looked very different to what they have used in the past. It also looks like the new pay-off line or theme for FNB in these early stages of 2013 is "Happy New Bank".



Another aspect of this campaign that was really impressive was the fact that they managed to get the YouTube play list loaded minutes after the commercial went live, featuring interviews with some of the other children. There is also a nice clip of the "behind the scenes" making of this commercial (content that viewers want to see on YouTube versus the usual TVC).

Behind the scenes

There is also a very interesting infographic based on a MXIT survey's results. In total, 4,307 unique MXIT users completed the survey and answered a total of 68,912 questions.



[click to enlarge](#)

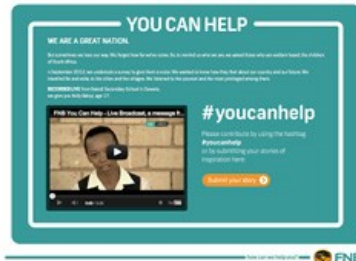
After going live and everything as far as the public could see went according to the plan like clockwork, I don't believe FNB anticipated what was to follow.

The ANC took the campaign very personally and were under the impression that this was not a marketing campaign but rather a political statement that was bordering on treason. I personally feel everything has been thrown out of proportion, at the end of the day this is a "feel good / warm fuzzy feeling" brand campaign. The fact that there is a "switch" banner on the home page shows that there is an underlying acquisition element to this campaign.

From the start it was always going to be a risky campaign, using children and politics as a communication medium. The Ad did come across as being very scripted and "emotionally loaded" which didn't help the situation, even the final commercial came across almost too edited (it didn't feel like a live broadcast). I remember I still looked outside to check the weather. This could also have influenced the reaction from the ANC.

What is also interesting to note is the fact that the actual website has evolved since launch, there is no longer a "thought leader tab", they have added an additional section called "research report" and the login functionality has been removed completely. The "contact us" link has changed to "share your story", the "dashboard" link has changed to "contributions" and at one stage there was only a landing page live on the site. The question is, did these changes happen due to technical issues or because of the response from the ANC and the public?

Landing Page that was implemented for a while.



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In summary, a very impressive technically implemented campaign from FNB, it has definitely generated a lot of interest, PR and controversy. It was a great example of the [Interactive Brand Ecosystem](#) in practice and I look forward to following this blog and seeing how it evolves over time. I can only hope that FNB don't try to use it as an acquisition channel and deviate from the initial sentiment behind the concept. #youcanhelp #littlehelps.

ABOUT MARK SCHEFERMANN

My knowledge and enthusiasm for the digital world enables me to think creatively and challenge briefs. My passion is strategy and showing how digital can open new opportunities for clients. Well conceived digital strategies and campaigns will push brands ever forward in the consciousness of their audiences and lead to long lasting adoption, advocacy and allow them to forge individual relationships with their audiences.
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