

## Slogan change uninspired

The decision by Standard Bank to change its corporate slogan is marketing lunacy. 'Simpler. Better. Faster.' is to be replaced with 'Inspired. Motivated. Involved.'... so incredibly contrived a corny, one cannot help wondering if this is some sort of April Fool's joke.

 By [Chris Mberdyk](#) 4 Apr 2006

But it isn't. Rumours have been flying for months that Standard Bank intended kicking 'Simpler. Better. Faster.' into touch and replace it with something a lot more relevant.

### Extensive research

Of course the bank's marketing department will argue that it has done extensive research and that this showed an overwhelmingly positive response to the new slogan. But then, that's what marketing departments always say, isn't it? And corporate history is littered with thousands of examples of marketing blunders being launched on the back of so-called extensive research. Quite apart from which, a quick whip around a few bank employees and some marketing colleagues of mine did not deliver up a single even vaguely positive response.

Standard Bank's move follows Toyota SA's decision almost two years ago to dump its 'Everything Keeps Going Right' slogan for something almost as equally contrived as Standard Bank's latest effort. And how many people after all this time can actually remember what Toyota's new slogan is? ...I rest my case.

### Promise to consumers

So, what has prompted Standard Bank to replace what most marketers believed was at least the best slogan in the banking sector? Certainly, 'Simpler. Better. Faster.' met one of the modern marketing pre-requisites that of at least promising something to customers. Something not many corporates are able to come up with.

Of course, bank staff did get ribbed pretty mercilessly by customers when service fell short. There were a lot of jokes about 'Simpler. Better. Faster.'... But, at worst, it kept staff on their toes.

My bet is that the main reason why the bank had changed its slogan is probably because the marketing department desperately needed to justify its existence. This is nothing new and certainly not something confined to Standard Bank. It is the culprit that crops up more often than one can imagine.

The top management of most banks and other companies, that have only recently been forced to embrace marketing because of their transition from a nice cosy protected industry to something a lot more competitive, are not marketers and more often than not have no interest in marketing. They do not understand marketing.

### Measure effectiveness

They are cynical of the return on investment value of the millions of rands marketing departments spend and as a consequence, tend to question a lot of things marketing departments do. Especially marketing departments that are unable to measure the effectiveness of marketing.

Secondly, Standard and a lot of other banks, clearly tend to make marketing decisions by committee. Advertising particularly, is run through an internal approvals committee and very rarely properly tested out in the target markets.

All of which ends up with some very subjective decisions being taken. And some pretty mediocre and compromised marketing.

## **Committee decision**

There seems very little doubt that Standard Bank's new slogan, "Inspired. Motivated. Involved." was something devised by a committee. It is clearly a worst possible compromise and pretty darn meaningless when you think about it.

While "Simpler. Better. Faster." was some sort of promise, albeit a very ambitious promise, "Inspired. Motivated. Involved." is just plain and simple bragging.

And if Standard Bank had even the tiniest little clue of what marketing was all about, it would have realised that this new slogan is about as outdated as the good old "we care" claim that most companies have now dropped due to consumers simply not believing it anymore.

## **Understanding marketing**

It is sad that the top management of big corporations, banks in particular, have not taken the trouble to understand exactly what marketing is all about. To realise that it is not about magic, gambling big advertising budgets, advertising by committee and slick slogans, but rather a system of checks and balances to ensure that money is not wasted and ROI is measured.

Strangely enough true marketing is a discipline that has more chance of being understood by an ordered accountant than an advertising creative.

There is no doubt in my mind that Standard Bank's new slogan is ill-considered, contrived and change simply for the sake of change... No other reason makes any sort of marketing sense.

## **ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK**

Apart from being a corporate marketing analyst, advisor and media commentator, Chris Moerdyk is a former chairman of Bizcommunity. He was head of strategic planning and public affairs for BMW South Africa and spent 16 years in the creative and client service departments of ad agencies, ending up as resident director of Lindsay Smithers-FCB in KwaZulu-Natal. Email Chris on [moerdykc@gmail.com](mailto:moerdykc@gmail.com) and follow him on Twitter at [@chrismoerdyk](https://twitter.com/chrismoerdyk).  
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