

Repositioned Club Med opens up a world of choices

By  Cari Coetzee

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Club Med recently [unveiled its latest campaign](#) - highlighting the brand's manifesto and encouraging travellers to tap into their most amazing self. We spoke to Olivier Hannaert, MD of Club Med Southern Africa to find out more about the Club Med brand and its latest campaign.



Olivier Hannaert

Tell us about Club Med's latest campaign, the signatures videos, and what's behind it

The new campaign highlights Club Med's manifesto of a world of choices and signature experiences while affirming our latest brand positioning of "worldwide resorts, all-inclusive experiences." The campaign is a lot more emotive and experience-driven to what we have done before, from a marketing perspective, and embodies and illustrates Club Med's double commitment ever since it was created in 1950:

- To serve customers by continually anticipating their expectations through the professionalism and care of its GOs (Gentil Organisateur) and the unique experience offered by its resorts;
- To help customers rediscover themselves by reconnecting with family and friends, experiencing the exceptional, doing things they thought out of their reach, and being as active or as laid back as they desire. In other words, to astonish and amaze customers through unforgettable moments.

This is a logical step for our brand, particularly within markets in which the brand needs to increase awareness. The time was right for a new brand positioning for Club Med within the South African market as the brand has experienced strong growth since the last brand repositioning two years ago.



The campaign seems to place a strong focus on women. Why is that?

Research we conducted globally showed us something very interesting. In most cases, globally, it is women who must often make the key holiday decisions and achieve the impossible in reconciling conflicting needs when it comes to planning and executing these holidays. So it seemed natural for Club Med to base its new communication strategy on/from a woman's perspective. Club Med stands out in the tourism industry, globally, by placing women at the heart of our new campaign.

What is Club Med's brand manifesto?

The [manifesto video](#) created by Fred & Farid, features a series of breathtaking visuals from exotic locations around the world, showcasing a myriad of activities. The visuals are accompanied by the narrative of

a woman who is having an internal dialogue with herself, struggling to decide on what she should do today - because there

are so many experiences to choose from. By the end of the manifesto video, it is clear that all of these choices and experiences are available to guests at Club Med resorts around the world.

This video perfectly illustrates the key basic needs that our clients expect from their holiday (and will receive from a Club Med holiday), namely:

1. Relaxation
2. Quality time with family and loved ones
3. Rediscovering their passion
4. Discovering the world, and of course, new cultures

Fred & Farid came up with an authentic, highly emotive storyline, consisting of a series of fragmentary moments that reflect the experiences to be enjoyed in our resorts.

■ Explain your specific brand management strategy. How does it tie into your company's overall marketing/corporate communications?

From the very beginning, our focus has been on providing clients with incredible and memorable holiday experiences. Club Med has always been a pioneer within the travel industry, and as such we ensure that we constantly innovate and find new ways to provide clients with a worldwide playground for them to rediscover, recharge and just reconnect – by themselves, or with their loved ones. We have not changed our heritage or our brand, we have just enhanced it. With the ever changing needs of our clients, we have had to adapt and listen to them, but doing this in a way that we still remain true to our brand.

■ What are the main challenges and/or opportunities for the Club Med brand at the moment?

When it comes to travel, you are selling an experience, and with that, an emotion and a feeling. In the past, the only way to show a client exactly what they were in for (before they booked their holiday) was by means of brochures or pamphlets and websites. These days, clients want to see and experience something for themselves - not only having us sell it to them. That said, virtual reality is such a powerful tool, particularly from a marketing perspective within the travel space, and is something we are driving big time. It's an incredible way to have consumers "go on a holiday" or "travel with us" and get a taste of the Club Med experience, before booking a holiday.

Another challenge is persuading South Africans to explore new and exotic destinations around the world besides "the usual" destinations. There are a handful of typical destinations that come to mind when you ask South Africans about holiday options, but there are so many they may not have considered yet – like Bintan Island, the Alps; Portugal, Sandpiper Bay, China, and Japan (which has snow and some of the most beautiful beaches). And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

While I note this as a challenge, it also becomes a great opportunity for us because we have over 50 resorts in some of the most beautiful sun and snow destinations around the world. We have so much to offer the South African traveller who is looking to truly make the world their playground and explore more than "the usual."



▣ ***What's on your wishlist for brand objectives for Club Med in 2017?***

We hope to see more South Africans booking ski and snowboarding holidays. We're already seeing an increase in the number of South Africans booking snow holidays – particularly couples (some even going skiing or snowboarding on their honeymoon) and families who take advantage of the fact that kids stay free at select Club Med snow resorts where we have Club Med kids' club and ski lessons for the little ones.

We also hope to see more South Africans organising group golfing trips around the world with us. We have golfing resorts in the USA, Asia, Mauritius and Europe. Our golf resort in Portugal overlooks the Algarve, which makes for an incredible backdrop, and all of these resorts are great for individuals, groups, and families so everyone will have something to enjoy while the golfers spend their days on the course.

▣ ***What do you love most about your brand?***

The culture of Club Med is multicultural, friendly and innovative. I also love how we keep things interesting by opening new resorts in exquisite places each year to offer our clients more opportunities to explore more beauty and diversity in the world. Our clients are at the very core of the business and all that we do, which is another thing I love.

The fact that we offer something that no other travel brand offers – the all-inclusive food and drinks, the GOs and the vibe at every single resort, the Club Med kids offering – is something else that I adore about the brand. With all of these things, it's so easy to be passionate about the Club Med brand.

▣ ***What do you love most about the South African consumer?***

South African consumers are always keen to try new experiences, which is great for us because we have a world of travel options and opportunities (literally) for them to try.

ABOUT CARI COETZEE

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.

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