

# Lekker not to read a billboard!

 By [Bonnie Ramaila](#)

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As you drive along the N1 North or N14 towards Pretoria, there is a huge 94.2 Jacaranda Radio billboard of their recent campaign 'lekker *to be here*' - termed LTBH.

Frankly, I don't think it's a lekker campaign; as I could not read the small copy they have on their billboard. As I tried to read the message, my attention was distracted and, of course, I was driving at the same time - so I was given a rude awakening by a fellow motorist who honked his horn, signalling that I should move it. I could not blame him.

How did that billboard even make it up there? The text is shockingly small, the message is lost *in transit*, the copy is long and you can't even complete reading the message as you pass. There are too many characters on the billboard and some letters seem as though they are pasted on and could fall off anytime. The font is not reader and 'freeway' friendly. I am not too sure what message they are trying to communicate. That's bad.

## Where less is more, and big and bold is best

The last time I checked, a billboard had to have a word count of 8 or less, and the words should be big and bold. The principle behind this is that it should take you no more that 3-5 seconds to read the billboard as you drive past and so you get the message instantly. The advertising rules and regulations are there for a reason and should be adhered to.

It is waste of budget and creative effort to do such a campaign on billboard, unless this is the type of response that they wanted to solicit from their audience. Firstly, if a campaign has *inter alia*, a billboard as part of the media plan, you need to tailor the message for billboard to be simple, catchy, and memorable. One should get the message across within a few seconds - either a call to action, or to inform the audience. Campaigns like these should be thought of in a broader creative sense and context especially now that we have social media - or just limit it to print media. Unfortunately the message will get lost and defeat the purpose of the campaign if it cannot be read in its entirety and in a few seconds.

Billboards are for creating awareness or as a call to action to direct the audience to other mediums that will provide more information.

## Short, sharp and snappy

Who or which agency did the campaign? Did a copywriter do that? Didn't they learn about 'alliteration', which comes in handy when you are a copywriter in advertising? Where did they study? Who suggested a billboard as a medium? Planner or buyer?

Maybe they should have employed the services of a sub-editor from a newspaper to do the copy for billboard in a 'headline format' for them - these subs (as they call them in the newsroom) certainly know how to nail those thought-provoking and eye-catching headlines in a way that it compels one to buy the newspaper to get the whole story. I am sure the copywriters could learn a thing or two.

I wouldn't be surprised if this billboard ends up as being a contributory factor in causing accidents on the road, as motorists while passing the billboard, try to read that long message, and end up being a hazard. I'm just saying!

## For more:

- Bizcommunity: A lekker [response](#) from Jacaranda FM.

## ABOUT BONNIE RAMAILA

Bonnie Ramaila is an international communication consultant. She previously worked in the private and public sector as a communication expert. She runs a consultancy that specialises in bespoke communication for niche clients and individuals. Services include communication and media advice, facilitation, publicity and strategy development. She writes in her personal capacity.

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