

The magic in understanding the brief - Bringing the latest and greatest content to life

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No one can deny that advertising has a deep impact on the minds of the viewers. This is especially true in a time where the majority of viewers have little or no time at their disposal to try and make sense of a commercial or its intended message. Creative Director at Ogilvy & Mather Johannesburg, Grant Sithole, shares his views on the magic involved in crafting and delivering a powerful and memorable commercial. Having recently executed Dstv's latest "Power" and "What do you see?" adverts with Creative Director of Ogilvy & Mather Cape Town, Jacques Massardo, which features Gabriel Macht, Massardo gives his insights into fully understanding a client's brief to deliver world-class content.

What better way is there today to grab viewers' attention than telling a great story, not a long-winded, complicated tale involving numerous characters but rather a short, 'catchy' narrative that will leave your audience feeling connected to your message and ultimately your brand.

The most effective TV commercials are created in such a way that the audience remembers not only understand the actual advert, but rather the brand and the message behind the ad. The starting point to creating a great commercial is to always remember the one golden rule, the final product must spark a connection between the brand and its audience.

"The key behind every commercial created at Ogilvy is designed to grab your attention and leave a lasting memory long after you've left it behind," says Massardo.

He goes on to explain that often, the most powerful spots capture a viewer's attention by eliciting an emotional response. Those in the inner circle of the advertising world expertly refer to this as 'the psychology of persuasive advertising'. There are several ways to achieve this, continues Massardo:

"Some brands use humour, others tell poignant stories with emotional depth. Sometimes brands challenge viewers by being provocative. What is true is that now more than ever before, brands are adopting a point of view on the world or some aspect of the world, and using that to connect with consumers who are open to that point of view."

It was from this perspective that the latest DStv Premium series of commercials came to be. "The brief from client was simple: remind people that DStv Premium is still the best viewing platform for up-to-date, quality on-demand content. Creatively, the team needed to set itself apart in order to quantify the brand's differential point of view."

In an effort to bring viewers the best curated entertainment, DStv Premium opted to do something very different by introducing a brand ambassador. Through a rigorous process of shortlisting potential brand ambassadors, many renowned names were considered and eventually the list was narrowed down to Gabriel Macht who plays the quick-witted and charming lawyer, Harvey Specter in the series Suits.

Commenting on Macht's selection as the new brand ambassador, Massardo affirms that having celebrity backing can increase brand awareness and bestow desirable qualities upon a product or message. "In an age where 'binge viewing' of series seems to be the 'it' trend, matching the right personality to a brand and its target audience seems to be the most important factor. This proved to be a winning formula for us."

"Macht has done many movies before but was never really recognised until he was in the now popular series. From the onset of discussions with Macht and the team representing him, it was very clear that we couldn't represent him as a Suit character for our brand ambassadorship. We had to find other ways of including him in telling our stories. His on-screen character is great at constructing watertight arguments and nobody can deny how very convincing he is."

The process culminated in a series of themed commercials, with the first chapter of these aptly titled “*You*”. This chapter was all about how consumers as individuals can relate to the latest and greatest content that DStv has to offer. It was all about the consumer and how they experience great TV and how it shapes their lives.

The second chapter, which was a continuation of the first, was “*Power*” and it was written as part of the same narrative – all about the latest and greatest in television – however it was focussed more towards how consumers would relate to the brand ambassador and his on-screen character. In the series, Harvey Specter is all about power, it is power that makes his world go around and the power of the office which he holds in the law firm which he is a partner in.

The “*Power*” narrative encompassed everything about the latest and greatest concept but it also borrowed on the characteristics of the show without it being blatantly about the show. In essence, the entire commercial is about how the power of great TV can change your world.

DStv Premium has successfully managed to carve out a niche for itself by bringing viewers the best in local and international content and entertainment on one platform. This is further encapsulated in their positioning line 'Know Best'. For the “*Power*” narrative, it was necessary to make a strong case and construct an argument for this point of view.

What the team set out to do with this narrative was to immerse consumers into the commercial. As opposed to speaking to them, they had to live the ad because everything that was done and narrated in the commercial spoke to how great TV gave ‘you’ the ‘power’ to enjoy great entertainment.

The underlying theme in all these commercials centred on the latest and greatest content. The entire campaign was around immersing consumers into the world of DStv. For the first time, the brand wasn’t just speaking to consumers, it was trying to get consumers to actually live the life of its entertainment brand. With DStv Premium, consumers get the very best of content, through innovative channels such as Express from the US and Catch Up. This gives consumers the power to have great entertainment and power to speak about this great entertainment first hand.

The whole idea behind these series of commercials was to bring the consumer into the world of DStv. It was all about bringing them into this world from their own perspective, through the “*You*” chapter, and bringing them into this world through the brand ambassador’s perspective, through the “*Power*” chapter.

An important part of what DStv does for its consumers, is that it helps curates the very best content. What the creative team accomplished with the other elements supporting the TV commercial was to educate consumers on how they can curate their own best content on their platforms. Supporting this, a great digital campaign around curation was created which placed really good content as display ads on the web around relevant topics. This supporting element ensured that whatever consumers searched online, they were served up content that mirrors their very own interests.

“At Ogilvy & Mather Johannesburg, igniting brands is our business. With the best creative minds in the industry, we always aim to bring to life work that is both impactful and unparalleled. This campaign is testament to our creative approach which allows us to think outside conventional borders,” concludes Grant Sithole, Creative Director at Ogilvy & Mather Johannesburg.

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