

Produced from home: South Africans stand together in new remote TV ad

Issued by [Ogilvy South Africa](#)

21 Apr 2020

The challenges of the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions have brought out the indomitable South African spirit, as people find creative ways to stay connected, support each other and express themselves.



The creative industries are no different, with agencies, producers and art directors having to find innovative solutions during these times of quarantine, isolation and social distancing.

A new high energy Vodacom TV commercial has done this with a twist, showing how South Africans stand together even when we're apart – and the whole commercial was put together by working remotely!

The entire Vodacom 'Stand Together' TV ad was produced in creatives' bedrooms, directors' gardens, editors' garages and producers' bathrooms. In the true spirit of lockdown togetherness, no one left their house once during the entire production.

The TV commercial shows a cast of ordinary South Africans starting the day in their pyjamas and dressing gowns, making coffee, firing up their laptops and getting connected.

While kids, parents and grandparents play and learn together, they connect with friends and colleagues online, celebrating birthdays and special occasions. Home workouts, cooking videos and backyard braais keep the vibe alive, as people make the most of their home life while sharing it all.

In the evening, it's time to relax together, over a movie, a web hangout or a game of web-chat chess. Work presentations are honed, and dozens of home musical performances are rocked, as wacky South Africans unite over the country's favourite network.

"Our brand is at its best when it helps South Africans tell their own stories," said Abey Mokgwatsane, Vodacom managing executive: brand and comms. "This is a story of hope and connection and I thank South Africans for inspiring each other to beat corona."

Matt Berge, creative director at Ogilvy, the agency that made the ad, said it came together in a matter of days, with director Markstry briefing a diverse group of casting agencies and TV-literate collaborators, gathering footage and then editing it together.

“We’re proud of how it captures South African cultural touchpoints, with braaivleis, hadeda birds and the attitude of our uniquely vibrant people,” he said. “We wanted to create a high energy piece celebrating the South African spirit, and how we stand together, even when we’re apart,” he said. “The twist was that we weren’t just going to show it but prove it.”

Ogilvy chief creative officer Matt Barnes said that despite the obstacles, the results were amazing. “I think most brands would be proud to make a commercial like this under normal conditions. The fact that the team pulled this off under Covid-19 is bloody amazing, but not at all surprising.”

The Vodacom ‘Stand Together’ TV ad was made by Ogilvy Johannesburg, with TV producer Helen D’Hotman, creative director Matthew Berge, copywriter Clint Bechus and art director Anke Grater. The ad was directed by Markstry for production house The Star Film Co, with executive producers Adam Thal and Ksenija Strydom-Micic.

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