

New creative mediums can help bring back warm and fuzzy

 By [Devon Meerholz](#)

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Standard definitions of creativity often refer to the creation of something new and potentially valuable. This focus on the obvious creation aspect of creativity neglects the fact that creativity can exist in not just the creation of something but equally in the execution of something.



Image by [Omar Medina Films](#) from [Pxabay](#).

In advertising, when we are speaking about execution we are usually referring to how some creative campaign is delivered across a certain medium. I think many of us would agree that the creative execution of campaigns delivered via the outdoor medium has historically been a place where creativity could flourish.

We can immediately think of billboards that were so well integrated into their environment that some of them, at some point in time, looked as though they were on fire or not even billboards at all. I wonder how many members of the public realise that some billboards have even served as fully-functioning mobile stations? Take a closer look at that car park structure when next you're out and about shopping and sanitising.



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What next, where next?

Understanding the creative possibilities of the medium, or platform, the question soon becomes "what next?" or rather "where next?". For me, the new creative outlet is surely YouTube. From a fringe platform where the early adopters would post their own home-made creative executions, this video-sharing platform is today central to any ad mix wanting to reach today's consumers. Everybody's either on YouTube or has clicked on a Google search result that sent them straight to a YouTube channel.

Now, the beauty of YouTube for the creative process lies in the relatively new phenomenon of contextual advertising. This outstanding bit of creative kit means campaigns can be developed where trigger moments are set. This simply means that when an on-screen moment occurs, and it could be a goal, a kiss, a handshake, or anything, the client's ad that speaks to that moment is triggered. You'll agree the opportunities are endless.



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With this awesome creative superpower, however, comes the responsibility of safeguarding the neighbourhood. Should the ad community engage in lazy executions replete with bland ads reeking of shampoo-style globalisation, we are going to see consumers switching to ad-free YouTube premium en-masse. For the sake of the awards evenings yet to go virtual and the agency mergers yet to be inked, let's do our very best work for this new creative medium.

Warm and fuzzy

Guiding us should be our roots. Some of us may remember a time when the viewer actually looked forward to the appearance on screen of a particular television commercial. Brands like Sasol, VW, and a host of others became much-loved features of the local business landscape largely due to outstanding creative executions delivered via TV. But for a few notable exceptions, South African video advertising is missing the warm and fuzzy. And it's been missing since the early 1990s.



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Let's use state-of-the-art mediums like YouTube and its contextual advertising ability to produce some outstanding work post-Covid. Now more than ever, we need the warm and fuzzy. Go to it!

ABOUT DEVON MEERHOLZ

Devon Meerholz is Chief Creative Officer at IMmobile, a global software and solutions group with a presence in over 60 countries worldwide. Devon's unique approach to creativity is put to good use at IMmobile's Johannesburg office. Here he works with a multidisciplinary team to develop SA-specific mobile initiatives from bank statements to cross-platform personalised marketing videos that enable the company's clients to speak to current and potential customers in more visual, appealing and creative ways.

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