

# How Carling Black Label Changed the Game

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***This month's Marketing Mastermind is Khwezi Vika, Carling Black Label brand manager for South Africa and Africa. He discusses the innovative game changer of a campaign that invited football fans to literally change the beautiful game.***



*Khwezi Vika*

## How did this idea come about?

The Carling Black Label Cup has been around since 2011 with the aim of empowering the voice of fans, through the *Be the Champion Coach* campaign, to shape the starting line-up of two of the biggest football clubs in South Africa – Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates.

After a hiatus in the Carling Black Label Cup in 2018, we wanted to come back with a bang. We wanted consumers who love the brand and who love football – our Champion fans – to get excited for the 2019 Carling Black Label Cup. We decided that the only way to do this, was by changing the game, which we literally did.

The core creative idea was *Change the Game* and it was about shaping the future of football, by getting Champion fans to vote for changes in the line-up and the rules of the game.

## Did people really want to change the game?

The game of football hasn't changed much over the years, but it turns out that there are many Champion fans who would change it if they could. So, we incorporated something new for the 2019 Carling Black Label Cup, in addition to letting fans select the starting line-up.

We spoke to analysts, the Champion fans themselves, and expert coaches, to identify potential changes to the beautiful game. We used this feedback to give Champion fans a list of seven "Game Changes" that they could vote for via social media and USSD, with the top three being implemented on match day.

These included:

- Selecting the starting line-up,
- Nominating the captain for match day,
- Choosing Man of the Match,
- Making a live substitution on match day,
- Selecting rolling subs,
- Putting a mic on the ref, so fans can hear what he's saying, and
- Issuing a Yellow Card time-out to players who infringe on another player.

The most popular selections were choosing a captain, choosing Man of the

Match, and making a live substitution. Fans didn't want to change the rules, which was great feedback for us. It shows that fans love the beautiful game the way it is, but they want more power and control over the teams.

## How did you get the message out to the right people?

In changing the game, we had to get the right message to the right people. We achieved this using new technology and social media – specifically Facebook and Instagram – over and above the traditional platforms of television and USSD.

Our key objective was to reach a younger audience, specifically 18-to-30-year-olds, using mass personalisation at scale. We created personalised digital content that was delivered directly to Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates fans, as well as a broader audience, working closely with Ogilvy to create the core idea. We also worked with Facebook Creative Shop to make sure that our targeting reached the right consumers.

It was important that the content we created excited fans, especially since we weren't active in 2018. We live-streamed the game on Facebook and Twitter – the first time this had been done in Africa – in addition to broadcasting it on the national broadcaster, SABC, and SuperSport.

We got a lot of engagement from Champion fans via the Facebook and Twitter streams. Facebook, in particular, allowed us to distribute personalised club content (based on team preference) to high affinity audiences, which resulted in higher levels of engagement.

## How did people vote?



The great opportunity afforded to us through Facebook and Instagram was that we could engage and interact with Champion fans as the game was happening, which is something we haven't been able to do in the past. Previously, fans would have to SMS their votes. This year, we could run live polls, giving fans the opportunity to comment and vote on their favourite game moments as they happen.

For example, when they saw the spectacular goal by Theminkosi Lorch, we got a lot of responses from fans saying they wanted him to be

named Man of the Match. And he was, based on the feedback from fans.

Fans could also submit their team and line-up votes via a USSD code found on Carling products and could choose in-game substitutions through SMS and social media. Votes were registered throughout the campaign and, on match day, the most popular Game Changes were incorporated into the match.

If you read nothing else:

The goal of the Carling Black Label Cup campaign was to engage fans of Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs and to increase viewership of the 2019 match, especially among younger viewers.

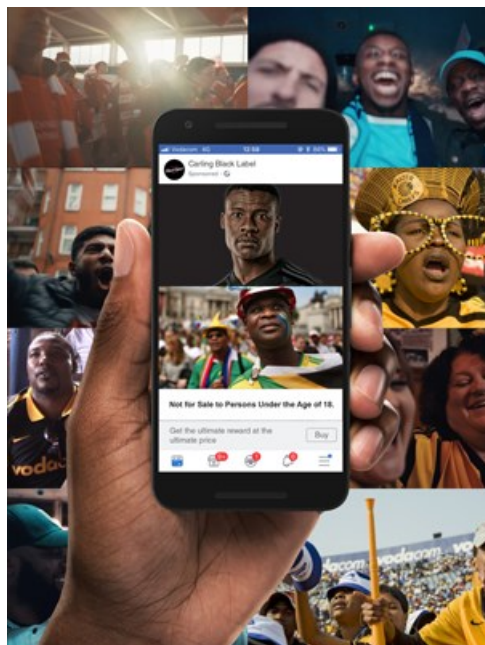
The campaign used Facebook and Instagram to deliver personalised content to Champion fans, with a specific focus on 18-to-30-year-olds, over and above the traditional television, SMS, and USSD platforms.

The *Change the Game* campaign invited Champion fans to vote for team and rule changes, which were incorporated, in real-time, on match day.

The results:

- The campaign reached 90% of its target audience, including 5.8 million unique users.
- Reach among the target 18- to-30-year old audience increased 29% and brand meaning among these consumers increased by 15 points.
- Carling Black Label's Brand Power increased from number 3 to number 1.
- Match day attracted 1.8 million more young adult viewers than an average PSL game.
- Sales of Carling Black Label increased 7%
- Earned media return on investment increased seven-fold.

## **That's exciting, but ultimately, what results did this deliver for your brand**



The results were phenomenal. Ninety percent of the South African legal drinking age target audience was reached through Facebook and Instagram, which speaks to what social media can do for brands. On these platforms alone, we reached 5.8 million unique users.

We recorded unprecedented engagement and a 7% increase in product sales – the highest volume growth in 10 years for the same period.

We also saw a 29% increase in reach among our target 18-to-30-year old audience (from 11.9% to 15.4%). Brand meaning among these consumers also increased by 15 points.

Carling Black Label's Brand Power, or brand equity, catapulted to number 1 in its category, from number 3. The fact that we constantly engaged with fans on social media kept the brand top of mind. On match day, we attracted 1.8 million more young adult viewers than an average Premier Soccer League (PSL) game.

Another amazing achievement was that we generated seven times earned media return on investment. Now that's catastrophic.

## **You mentioned this was an integrated campaign, so how did you measure success across channels?**

We partnered with Kantar Millward Brown to measure the impact that we had with the Carling Black Label Cup campaign over the different platforms that we used.

We used television, Facebook, and Instagram to reach Champion fans. We saw an incremental growth in viewership via Facebook and Instagram, of 16.6% and 6.8%, respectively, on top of the reach we traditionally get through television.

In fact, we found that Facebook is six times more effective at building additional reach than television.

## **Amazing campaign with amazing results! Tell us the one thing your team learned from this?**

The Carling Black Label Cup for 2019 was phenomenal. We realised the power of social media and what we can achieve using Facebook and Instagram to provide personalised content to Champion fans.

## **About Khwezi Vika**

Khwezi joined Anheuser-Busch InBev as Carling Black Label brand manager for South Africa and Africa in March 2019 and was instrumental in the brand's successful Carling Black Label Cup campaign. Before joining Anheuser-Busch InBev, Khwezi worked as an events specialist at South African Breweries for over seven years. It's safe to say that he knows beer, and he now brings his extensive commercial events experience to bear on the beautiful game.