

# Why do creatives copy and paste creative concepts?

 By [Bonnie Ramaila](#)

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In my advertising days I have been exposed to a considerable number of concepts: some were mundane, some not-so-bad and some never saw the light of day past the creative department. Lately, I have observed a handful of the same creative ideas on TV, which have been tweaked here and there to suit the 'concept', with the hope that the message or objective will be achieved. [video]

One thing I can't wrong our creative industry with is the attention to detail when an idea goes to production. Most directors' treatment do justice to most creative ideas. But now there is this one creative idea that has been reengineered over and over again.

## First saw this idea last year

I saw first this idea last year with the Nedbank 'savvy' ad, wherein a hip guy was walking around, talking about this not-so-new product and its whole enchilada. Next was the latest Castle Lite ad with a similar execution, and hot on its heels is the Steers's 'hooaha' ad.

I could pick up some similarities in the creative idea and execution of these three ads (although tweaked to suit the product). Then my mind, as usual, started spinning like a top.

### **Were these done by the same team?**

I couldn't help but wonder if these ads were not done by the same creative team from the same agency. Normally, I do not bother finding out which agency has done the work. What's important to me is the unique, fresh, creative idea that not only sells the product but also builds brand affinity. The message must be simple, clear and understood within the first few seconds of seeing the ad.

Why do creatives copy and paste creative concepts? The takeout of the latter ads is lost in the storyline. The objectives of a single-minded proposition and the big idea get completely lost. Consumers tend to look at the execution, listen to what's being said and pick up peculiar expressions. You even find people talking about the '*hooha*' ad and not using the brand name. What a waste!

There's nothing wrong with a funny creative execution, but the objective should not be lost in the idea, wherein you end up liking the ad and not knowing what was being sold or communicated. Like [Vodacom's 'little Marcus the rapper' ad](#) - it's a wonderful execution, I even sing along. For a moment, though, I thought Vodacom were now the new sponsors of the South African Music Awards, because the timing of the ad was around that period and because it had all the artists in it. Oh, what was the message again?

## Ads should not leave you wondering

Ads should not leave you wondering what the message was all about or leave you having a light-bulb moment hours later and going - ohhhh!... so that's what it's all about! As a client, I would never allow my brand or product to have this 'after-effect' on the target audience. Concepts make or break the brand/product, thus clients should ensure that the concept they approve resonates with their brand essence.

Clients must know what is it they want before they brief agencies. FMCGs are, in most cases, easy to sell with humorous concepts, provided you get the right agency that understands your product and what it stands for. Corporate brands such as banks, petrol companies, etc, are more about reputation and building brand presence or creating awareness, hence their huge budgets. In as much as they sometimes have intangible products/services, their reputation is crucial in convincing a consumer to decide whether to use their services or resort to the other one.

I think it's important to ensure that concepts are always original, different, fresh and creative in how they communicate a brand or product. Sometimes our creatives lose it. Despite our country's diversity and rich culture, more often than not they still continue copying and pasting concepts and ideas. This shows a lack of interest and sheer laziness, often evident in the creative execution that is lately coming out of this industry.

And, no, I am not taking the 'client said' story again; it does not hold water anymore. Clients should be told in no uncertain terms that they appoint agencies for their creativity and because they believe in its abilities. The onus should now be upon the creative team to show those abilities by coming up with creativity that's original and different - if you do it right the first time, you have no business trying to convince clients to like it. Period.

## Going to start a movement

Or are the creative ones not yet born? If I see another execution that's similar to the three I have mentioned above, trust me, I am going to start a movement, the '*The Anti-Copy and Paste of Advertising Creative Concept Movement*'.

I have the name now; please, don't make me register it as a political party!

## 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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