

Sticking it to the man with Xtend

In an unexpected and humorous marketing move, a plumbing company in South Africa has partnered with some of the country's top comedy talent to promote geyser heating elements. This unlikely collaboration is a reminder that in a world where even the unexpected can happen, creativity knows no bounds.



Willie and Dan star in the ad. Source: Supplied.

A few years ago, the Xtend team came up with a design for a geyser heating element that saves users up to 1,000 units of electricity per year. "After three years of development, certification, lab and field testing, and installing thousands of Xtend elements, disaster struck: Covid," says Xtend investor/CEO Andrew Koch. Our supply chain and manufacturing processing in China were hit by lockdowns, load shedding (not only a South African problem) and supply chain issues. We had no stock for the six months."

Despair

In the midst of this despair, another director, Richard Pickering, found himself chatting to local comedian celebrity, Stuart Taylor, at his son's school camp out. The comedian explained that the comedy circuit had also been horrendously affected by Covid and the two men decided to collaborate.

“Over a lager they discussed how they could work together, have a laugh and get their livelihoods back in order. It was synchronicity, such a wonderful word, and an even better life experience,” says Richard, “and we were flattered that Stuart wanted to work with us.”

An old university friend Alan Grove, now a London-based advertising executive, came up with their first video script. “When he warned that ‘This must be done by professionals’, we weren’t worried even though our budget was laughable as, with Stuart, we knew we had the best,” says Pickering. “Stuart called in top SA comedy talent Rob Van Vuuren and Kenwyn Davids to star, and Grant Atkinson to edit the new collaboration called: ‘Willie and Dan stick it to the man’. They filmed three hilarious skits about saving money by using energy-saving Xtend elements to mitigate the serious cost of living crisis. “Afterall, South Africans are very good at laughing in the face of crisis,” says Taylor.

Sticking it to the man

Van Vuuren says, “We did the joke about ‘sticking it to the man’ because Xtend draws less power and uses less energy, two to three fewer units per day for an average family. If you use Xtend with solar panels or batteries, it will make your system even more efficient and your home more self-reliant. The more geysers you use with Xtend elements the more the positive impact multiplies.”



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Danette Breitenbach 24 Oct 2022



Taylor adds: “This happened during a time when people wanted to help each other not for the ‘big bucks’ but to uplift people through collaborating. During the pandemic my mantra was ‘collaboration is key’. We worked together to create something cool and fun and they saw the value in it. It was a novel and funny way to market this great product.”

“As a country we face serious challenges and need high quality solutions to address them. We are proud that Xtend is one of these solutions and it is exciting to help address these serious issues in a light-hearted way,” says Taylor.

“If you do the math, customers install Xtend and pay Eskom less, so these videos are brought to you by Eskom,” he concludes in jest.

Credits

- Client: Xtend Elements

- Agency: Taylor Made Productions
- Head of marketing SSA: Jason Pournara
- Marketing and strategy operations lead SSA: Laia Martin
- Senior art director: Grant Atkinson
- Senior copywriter: Alan Grove
- Senior strategist: Richard Pickering
- Account director: Stuart Taylor
- Account manager: Jane Renaud
- Senior producer: Elisca Philander
- Production company: Taylormade Productions
- Director: Stuart Taylor
- Executive producer: Stuart Taylor
- Producer: TMP internal
- Production manager: Zandile Nkayi
- Production coordinator: Elisca Taylor
- Moss DOP: Daniel Albertse
- Art director: TMP internal
- Make-up and hair:
- Post-production: Rolyat Nosnikta inc.
- Editor: Grant Atkinson
- Sound studio: TMP internal
- Sound engineer: TMP internal