

# The creative approach of the South African advertising industry towards the black consumer

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## Abstract

Successful advertising emerges as a creative and effective communication strategy. When advertising to the diverse South African black consumer markets, the creative team must be familiar with the values, needs and aspirations of the potential consumer and their creative ability to effectively act upon the value system of the consumer realises in the design of the advertising message.

This article concentrates on the findings of a qualitative research study to investigate the creative approach of the South African advertising industry towards the black consumer. The need for a receiver oriented creative perspective is established and reinforced through the design of two communication models which highlight practical guidelines to be implemented by the advertising industry.

## INTRODUCTION

The creative team in an advertising agency is made up of artists and copywriters who develop and execute creative strategies under the guidance of a creative director. The creative strategy represents a translation of the product identity, competitive market and essential target consumer information into a communication platform or position that will ultimately accomplish the marketing and advertising objectives of the advertising campaign.



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Ernst (1979:29) describes creativity in advertising as "a juxtaposition of two previously unrelated ideas. With a creative idea, the association, the relationship is unexpected. The creative idea comes after hard work, concentration and total immersion in the product and the problems of the prospect". Bendinger (1988) points out that the greatest challenge in the execution of the creative strategy and the design of the advertising campaign is to combine originality with efficiency. The advertising message must not only emerge as a "juxtaposition of two previously unrelated ideas" but, more importantly, as an effective communication message; a message that will create shared

meaning between the sender (the creative team) and the receiver (the consumer).

Advertising to the South African black consumer market will only have the power to persuade if the consumer can identify and associate with the advertising message. As Ogilvy (1983) states, it is not only WHAT is being communicated but HOW the message is communicated. Thus, it is essential that the creative team is familiar with the intrinsic needs, values and aspirations of the consumer, as moulded by his cultural context, to develop a culture sensitive, receiver oriented, creative perspective in the design of the advertising message.

Making the assumption that the South African black market exists as a homogenous whole is a fatal thought that should not be held by the advertising industry. The black market exists on various levels of sophistication and acculturation as illustrated by the process of urbanisation. As a geo-demographic factor, urbanisation brings about various socio-economic levels due to high unemployment, housing shortages in over-populated townships, lack of educational facilities and poor health and living standards. As a socio-cultural factor, urbanisation is accompanied by a process of acculturation which, as Schiffman and Kanuk (1991) state, encompasses the learning of new or foreign cultures.

The processes of urbanisation and acculturation result in the growth of a cosmopolitan urban community with the different black ethnic groups experiencing constant interaction with one another as well as western cultures. This results in the development of sub-cultures as illustrated by the growth of dynamic township cultures, characterised by unique belief systems, dress codes and language patterns; they show subtle differences

from similar sub-cultures in other townships.

The various socio-psychographic segmentation studies undertaken in the black consumer market by individuals and companies such as Bates Wells (1982), Khoza (1987), Market Research Africa and Hunt Lascaris TBWA (1990), clearly illustrates this diversity. Hunt Lascaris TBWA, for example, identifies six socio-psychographic black consumer groups on the grounds of their "Critical Mass Evaluation" (1990). These groups surface as:-

- the "Good Neighbours", described as young, urbanised black consumers who nurture a community orientation. They have the highest educational level of all the socio-psychographic groups;
- the "Emancipated" who are predominantly urbanised, have a high educational level and have discarded the customs and values of the traditional black cultures;
- the "Antis" who have an average to above average educational level and are characterised as politically militant;
- the "Moderns" who also reject traditional orientations and represent an above average education and income level. As the youngest consumer group they aspire towards an integrated South African society;
- the "Resigned" who represent an older consumer group with a high level of illiteracy, traditional orientation and are predominantly concentrated in rural areas; and
- the "Traditionals" who represent the oldest and largest socio-psychographic consumer group, are characterised as having a strong traditional orientation, a low education level and are spread over rural and urban areas.

According to Morris (1992), the black market represents a market too heterogeneous to justify the use of a single segmentation typology. The ongoing process of acculturation also ensures that life styles and trends are constantly changing. Segmentation typologies enforce the need to investigate and monitor the evolving nature of the black consumer market. The black consumer's level of acculturation and sophistication represent his cultural context and the nature of his values, needs and aspirations.

The advertising industry often makes the mistake of assuming that black consumers aspire towards a white lifestyle. Minnaar (1991) informs us that the black consumer does aspire to higher living standards, i.e., sophistication, and adopts certain Western values in the process; however he values his identity highly so the black culture seems to develop as a Westernised culture with a proud African identity. Sales House illustrates this best in their "Men of Africa" advertising campaign. "Never challenge my courage or question my strength. Never under estimate me or doubt my pride. Because I am ..... a man of Africa."

The cultural context of the consumer must guide the development of advertising as it influences every aspect of the planning of a campaign for the black market. The development of marketing and advertising objectives, product and market analysis, media planning, budgeting and evaluation all form part of the creative perspective of the local advertising industry towards the black consumer and the creative strategy is developed and executed within this framework.

The receiver oriented perspective of the creative team finally realises in the design of advertising to the black consumer. The design of the components in the advertising message, the visual,

copy, typography and layout and all the elements that reinforce the effectiveness of these components, e.g., lighting, music, rhythm, etc., must surface as the result of a culture sensitive perspective and, thus, an effectively persuasive communication message.

### **A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CREATIVE APPROACH OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ADVERTISING INDUSTRY TOWARDS THE BLACK CONSUMER**

This paper concentrates on the results of a qualitative research study to investigate the creative perspective of the South African advertising industry towards the black consumer. The study entailed structured in-depth interviews with twenty creative directors of whom the majority represent South Africa's top advertising agencies. Smaller, successful, agencies who cater for the black consumer market were also included in the study. (Refer to appendix 1).

The following analysis represents an integrated synthesis of the respondents' creative approach towards the black consumer. The various headings are representative of the topics covered in the questionnaire which was based on issues identified in the desk research and was reinforced in unstructured pilot interviews.

#### **1 The proportional involvement of South African Advertising**

Most respondents believe that no product or service can be marketed or advertised as exclusively "white". The FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) product categories, such as bread and milk, are regarded as representative of the basic needs of most consumers regardless of their identity. Furthermore, they felt that the growing impact of the black market on all levels of product involvement will ensure that the proportional involvement of advertising agencies in advertising to the black market

will increase rapidly. The implications of this view are obvious when considering Corder's (1992) claim that by the year 2000 South Africa's population will rise to 48 million of whom approximately 88 percent will be black.

A few respondents pointed out that the level of perception of products as being "culture bound", e.g., maize meal, will diminish as the degree of urbanisation and acculturation increases. This opinion is based on the growth and increase of shared values and needs within the South African consumer market.

## 2 The approach to the value of research

Most respondents view research as a link between the predominantly white creative team and the black consumer market but emphasised the value of their previous experience in advertising to this sector. Research functions as a guide-line in the execution of the creative concept and the creative team's "gut feel", based on previous experience, leads the way. It is interesting that most of the creative directors thought that several myths concerning black consumer behaviour could be traced back to "gut feel" and the "rumour mill" within the advertising industry.

The gravest concern was the nature of the research undertaken in the black marketplace. According to most respondents, formal research (e.g., research undertaken by clients, independent published and unpublished research) exposes the black consumer to unnatural research conditions in which language differences undermine the effectiveness of the findings.

The value of informal research (e.g., field research that involves informal discussions with consumers in their own environment) was emphasised as

it often involves the creative team as well as input from black consultants.

The respondents felt that the creative team must be physically exposed to the market to pick up current socio-cultural trends and execute these trends in the design of the advertising campaign. They specifically focused on young, dynamic consumer marketers. Trends are constantly changing in these markets and need to be monitored to satisfy the needs of potential consumers. Outdated stereotypes can also be identified and discarded in this way.

Thus, most respondents were uneasy about the findings of formal research and valued their own exposure to and experience of the black market to a greater extent. The "gut feel" referred to by the respondents stems from this perspective.

The involvement of the professional black person in the conceptualisation and design of the advertising message

Most respondents believe that there are no "white" experts in advertising to the black market. As two of them pointed out "Through shutting the black man out, the white man has shut himself in. There are no experts, only those who know more; the more experienced". These respondents, however, believe that the communication barriers can be overcome by a sensitive approach towards the cultural context of the black consumer. Some respondents pointed out that black "gurus" are being employed by agencies to help in the development of advertising and such a step reinforces the creation of a subjective approach; the black consultant cannot function as a sounding board for the entire black consumer market. Most also believed that "white" conceptualisation of advertising messages can be prevented by input from a panel of professional

black consultants who contribute from their specific field of experience and cultural context.

All the respondents identified a need for black copywriters and artists in the composition of the creative team. One respondent stated, "There is a need for creative individuals who are well versed in the black idiom". A quantitative analysis reveals that approximately 40% of the respondents' creative teams are all white and only four stated that they have a black artist or creative director active in their creative department. Where there are integrated creative teams, the black professional input comes, predominantly, from copywriters. They also emphasised the point that they value the input of their black creatives highly but the black creative active in agencies must form part of the entire process of idea conceptualisation, not just the execution of it (e.g., translation of copy). One said "the black creative has an awareness that no white creative can hope to experience".

The respondents emphasised the need for integrated creative teams that would represent the values, needs and aspirations of the entire South African consumer market.

#### 4 The impact of cultural differences on the design of the advertising message

Most respondents believe that market segmentation studies and socio-psychographic consumer profiles should concentrate on what South African consumers have in common and not on the differences between the markets. The effectiveness of this approach will, however, be influenced by the following factors:

##### 4.1 The Product Identity

The black consumer's perception and experience of product attributes, benefits and product life cycles may

differ from those of other consumer markets, for example, shaving patterns differ in the white and black markets. These differences impact on the design of the communication strategy and therefore the design of the advertising message.

##### 4.2 Levels of Sophistication

Most respondents pointed out that similarities in the core values and needs of black and white consumers are more evident on higher levels of sophistication and the effects of cultural differences fade as consumers become more sophisticated.

Communication and advertising to lower levels of sophistication (predominantly represented by the black market), requires a more sensitive approach towards cultural differences.

##### 4.3 Media Exposure and Involvement

The cultural thrust of the advertising message is related to the nature and influence of the communication media and the media that specifically fulfil the needs of the black consumer market (e.g., radio) should reflect and satisfy the cultural identity 'of the primary target in their communications.

#### 5 Awareness of the needs and attitudes of black consumers towards advertising and the extent to which this orientation is met in the design of the advertising message

Most respondents felt that the attitudes and needs of the black consumer to advertising directly relates to his level of sophistication and, therefore, his cultural context. The high level of illiteracy and lack of sophistication, for example, suffice as major factors in the satisfaction of needs through advertising.

The respondents identified the use of advertising as a valuable source of educational product information as a

primary need. This perspective was motivated by the high financial risk which black consumers often experience.

Other needs and attitudes were identified as follows:-

- 5.1 Black consumers appreciate the entertainment value of advertising;
- 5.2 Advertising serves as a symbol of attainment in the aspiration towards a more sophisticated lifestyle;
- 5.3 Black consumers hold a positive attitude towards advertising that communicates social warmth (ubuntuism);
- 5.4 The advertising message that identifies and develops the African ethos stimulates the development of positive attitudes;
- 5.5 The black market (particularly the unsophisticated sector) needs advertising that communicates in the vernacular and reflects the values and needs of the potential consumer;
- 5.6 Positive attitudes are held towards advertising that develops a sense of social awareness and investment in the black marketplace (e.g., BP promoting the upgrading of teaching skills).
- 5.7 The black market is more patient and less sceptical of advertising+. Respondents pointed out that this attitude will fade as the transitional black consumer becomes more sophisticated as a direct result of higher levels of education and a developing interest in the mass media.

The advertising messages that result in negative attitude development are those that are perceived as patronising. Most creative directors agree that these advertisements ignore values

and needs by communicating TO, not WITH, the consumer and were identified as a white conceptualised attempt ,at creating attitude change in the black market.

Further negative attitudes spring from advertising that lacks credibility due to the creation of an unnatural and forced context. Respondents focused on advertisements that depict "forced" social integration and interaction between black and white consumers. Advertising thus needs to communicate the aspirations of the black consumer through natural integration and interaction.

Several respondents pointed out that black consumers on lower levels of sophistication are alienated by complex creative executions. A respondent remarked that "advertising in the black market often blurs the competitive edge through complex creative executions". The unsophisticated black consumer needs advertising that communicates product information and benefits clearly and concisely.

## 6 The design of the advertising message

All the creative directors agreed that there are no set guide-lines for the design of advertising to the black consumer market. The execution of the advertising message is influenced by the specific product category, media plan, the consumer's level of sophistication and the allocated budget.

Most respondents believed that visual, i.e., non-verbal, communication of the advertising message to the black consumer is of vital importance and emphasised the KISS theory (keep it simple stupid) promulgated by Ogilvy (1983). According to these respondents, visualisation of the advertising message reinforces the product identity through colour, packaging, typography, layout and symbolism. The

visual complexity of the message must directly relate to the potential consumer's level of sophistication and, as a respondent stated, "the lower the level of sophistication, the greater the dramatisation needed through visualisation".

As previously stated, most respondents perceived the credibility of the context of the advertising message as of utmost importance. They pointed out that role models and opinion leaders used in the communication of the advertising message must represent the product personality with efficiency and credibility. The use of role models and opinion leaders was, in general, perceived as an effective non-verbal communication strategy in advertising to the less sophisticated black consumer. This approach creates a social warmth through personalisation of the advertising message characterising the nature of the black market but the critical value of research into the socio-psychographic user profiles of models and opinion leaders was reinforced. If opinion leaders and role models represent a product under false pretences, its image and reputation will be destroyed by the far reaching effects of word of mouth, e.g., the township network telegraph – TNT.

According to most respondents, the black consumer's approach to multi-ethnic advertising messages in which black and white models appear together in the same social context is directed by a sensitive socio-political environment. One remarked "The black market is more sceptical and critical of mixed socialisation", but all agreed that this approach fades at higher levels of sophistication as black consumers experience natural integrated socialisation. The aspirations of the black consumer must, therefore, be communicated from a credible and natural social context.

Some respondents concluded that the advertising campaign (product) should lend itself to a multi-ethnic advertising message to be effective. One respondent said, "The quality of the idea must suit the product and the target market". Most respondents felt that the need for a sensitive approach to multi-ethnic advertising will diminish with the development of South African youth as a consumer market. The youth market experiences natural integrated socialisation through a free educational system and will overcome predispositions and stereotypes on the path to effective intercultural communication.

The impact of colour and music as components in non-verbal communication of the advertising message was emphasised. According to the respondents, colour communicates the product identity on lower levels of sophistication, e.g., "Super blue Surf". Creative directors do not blindly follow colour associations as being culture bound but concentrate on socio-cultural associations with colour developed in the cultural context of the black consumer. The black consumer's experience will, for example, determine that Rastafarian associations will be held with the use of red, green and yellow in the design of the advertising message. Pretesting of associations with colours used in the advertising message was strongly advised by a few of the respondents. According to most respondents, the necessity for non-verbal advertising is underlined by the communication barriers created by the high level of illiteracy. As a result, the impact of music in the design of the advertising message was motivated by the following:-

6.1 Music is an integral part of black culture. A respondent stated that "Music is much more of a communication activity in the black than in the white marketplace".

- 6.2 Radio has, for many years, been a primary form of mass media entertainment for the black market.
- 6.3 Music communicates the advertising message, non-verbally, at lower levels of sophistication.
- 6.4 Above all, music is identified as a unifying form of communication that bridges the racial divide.

Several respondents pointed out that the choice of music must be directed by the product identity and the consumer's level of product involvement. This approach will prevent stereotyping and misuse of ethnic music in advertising to the black consumer market.

An analysis of the power of the verbal advertising message focuses attention on the black consumer's need for valuable product information. The majority of respondents evaluate the impact of bodycopy on the basis of this specific need as well as the consumer's level of sophistication and product involvement.

In advertising to the illiterate and semi-literate black consumer, bodycopy is often limited to the product name and pay-off line. In this instance, most respondents pointed out that they communicate product information non-verbally. The product identity does, sometimes, enforce the need for copy, e.g., the communication of product attributes and benefits. The following guide-lines were offered:-

- 6.5 the writing of simple, logically structured copy in the language of the consumer;
- 6.6 the product u.s.p. (unique selling proposition) and attributes must be clearly identified and communicated;
- 6.7 the length of bodycopy does not prevent the less sophisticated consumer from paying attention to the advertisement. A respondent

pointed out "the less sophisticated consumer involves himself in a great amount of product detail". This opinion reinforces the unsophisticated consumer's level of risk taking in the process of decision making.

Most respondents felt that there should be no differentiation in the writing of copy for sophisticated black and white consumers as such a step would lead to unfair stereotyping of consumers. Slight nuances may occur in the communication of copy due to the product identity in specific consumer markets, e.g., differences in the product life cycle in black and white markets.

The use of different copy styles and appeals in advertising to the black market is determined by the product identity, level of consumer involvement and cultural context (level of sophistication) of the consumer. Most respondents pointed out that the use of humour, sex and fear in the advertising message must reflect the values, needs and aspirations of the target market. A respondent remarked that "the best advertising strikes at the human truth". A few respondents emphasised the need for research as trends and preferences are constantly changing.

The language used to communicate the advertising message enjoyed high priority amongst most respondents. English was identified as a unifying language that represents aspirations towards a higher level of sophistication especially in the upwardly mobile black consumer. Most respondents thought the stigma of apartheid attached to Afrikaans as a communication medium still results in negative attitudes that often damage the product image in the black market. A single respondent did, however, say that "if the issue? (Afrikaans) is no longer forced, the stigma will fade".



Most respondents viewed communication in the language of the receiver as vital. On lower levels of sophistication, this would imply communication in the mother tongue. The use of everyday consumer language creates a social warmth with which the black consumer can associate. A respondent motivated this opinion with the following; "the use of everyday language functions as an emotional and cognitive link with the black consumer". This approach increases the level of understanding of the advertising message and its ultimate power to persuade.

The need to overcome the high level of illiteracy when advertising to the black market was constantly reinforced; the choice of typography and style of layout was emphasised. Legibility of typography was identified as a prerequisite in the design of the advertising message particularly for the less sophisticated black consumer. Over a period, typography also represents the identity of the product and can function as a non-verbal communication code. The following guide lines were proposed in the layout of the advertising message and these are particularly relevant in communication at lower levels of sophistication:-

- The layout must communicate a logical sequence of events.

The visual complexity of layout must relate to the consumer's level of sophistication.

- The product u.s.p. must form the centre point of attention.
- In communicating to the unsophisticated black consumer, the product must be visually prominent in the layout and must be represented as it will be seen on the shelves.

#### 7 The trend towards social responsibility in advertising

All respondents identified social responsibility in advertising to the black

consumer market as an influential and persuasive communication strategy. Such an approach creates social warmth from which positive attitudes descend. On a basic level, social responsibility represents the communication of valuable and educational product information. On higher levels, it promotes issues such as the peaceful integration of South African society, the development of a non-racial labour market and educational attainment. The respondents all agreed that social responsibility in advertising must be viewed as a long term investment. They do, however, stress that social responsibility calls on the aspirations of the black consumer and, as a respondent stated, "the advertising message will only gain credibility when consumers can hear, feel and experience your input". The marketer must therefore see to it that he delivers his promise and ultimately contributes to the prosperity of the black market. The "Township Network Telegraph" plays an influential role and negative talk will destroy a marketer's prospects. A respondent concluded that "The marketer and the creative team must have the courage of their convictions".

#### 8 Proposed guide-lines for advertising to the black market and the impact thereof on the development of future advertising campaigns

The most important guide-line identified by respondents revolves around the context of the advertising message, i.e., the way in which the values, needs and aspirations of the black consumer are communicated. The respondents emphasised the need for a culture sensitive, receiver oriented approach to the black consumer market.

According to the respondents, a culture sensitive approach towards the context of the advertising message encompasses the following:-

- 8.1 The recognition of the heterogeneous nature of the black consumer market.
- 8.2 The design of an advertising message guided by the black consumer's level of sophistication.
- 8.3 Recognition of the black consumer's pride in an African identity at all levels of sophistication.
- 8.4 The design of an open and honest advertising message through which valuable product information is communicated.
- 8.5 The advertising message must communicate in the idiom of the black consumer, both verbally and non-verbally.
- 8.6 The design of a credible and natural non-verbal advertising context, e.g., the relationship between models and role portrayal of models in the advertising message.
- 8.7 Parity in the quality of the design of the advertising message and communication thereof in the different consumer markets.
- 8.8 Recognition of the black consumer's need for social upliftment. (Social responsibility in advertising.)
- 8.9 Above all, an advertising message that communicates with and not to the consumer.

According to the respondents, a culture sensitive approach towards the black consumer must germinate throughout the development of the advertising campaign but the creative concept should be founded on the shared core values of the South African consumer market; it will thus represent the needs of all consumers. The execution of the creative concept in the design of the advertising message must, however, be directed by the cul-

tural context of the potential black consumer. The advertising campaigns that currently succeed in this and were identified as the Coca Cola "Rap" campaign, Sales House "Men of Africa" and the Sanlam baby campaigns.

Most respondents felt that the above guide lines will gain increasing importance due to the upward mobility and economic prosperity of the growing black consumer market. They specifically foresee the growth of social responsibility in advertising and a greater awareness of pride in an African identity. The creative team will have to stay in touch with the socio-cultural changes caused by the processes of urbanisation and acculturation in the black consumer market. Some respondents did feel that the culture sensitive approach will diminish, long term, as similarities in the core values, needs and aspirations of the South African consumer market will increase with the rise of a new generation exposed to free and natural socialisation.

#### **A critical analysis of the respondents' creative approach towards the South african black consumer market**

The above arguments hold true but the receiver oriented perspective of the creative directors is impeded by their approach to the value of research. The judgement of the creative directors is often subjective; they rely more on informal research sources and personal experience. Formal research does, if correctly implemented, deliver trustworthy, valid and objective results.

The effectiveness of the creative team is undermined by a lack of exposure to natural interaction with black consumers on all levels of sophistication and their "gut feel" also more often develops from a two-step flow process of communication. They are informed by a black consultant and design advertising for the black market from this per-

spective. The situation cannot be easily solved in the short term as the natural integration of the black and white consumer markets is an evolutionary process.

The creative team can bridge the divide by employing and involving more professional black people in the conceptualisation and design of advertising for the black market. The consultants used must be active in the target market and in touch with the values needs and aspirations of the potential consumer. The advertising industry also needs to integrate more black professional copywriters and artists into their creative teams and these individuals must form part of the total process of idea conceptualisation and not just the execution thereof. In doing so, the creative team gains greater insight into the black market and will inherently represent the core values, needs and aspirations of the entire South African market. The lack of black creatives can be solved by the active participation of the advertising industry in the education and training of black advertising people at institutions like the AAA School of Advertising.

### **The creative approach of the South African advertising industry towards the black consumer : A Communication Process**

The following two models illustrate the bridging of the barriers in the development of an effective, culture sensitive, receiver oriented, creative approach to the black consumer market.

#### **1 FIGURE A**

This represents the creative approach of the SA Advertising Industry to the development of an advertising campaign for the black consumer.

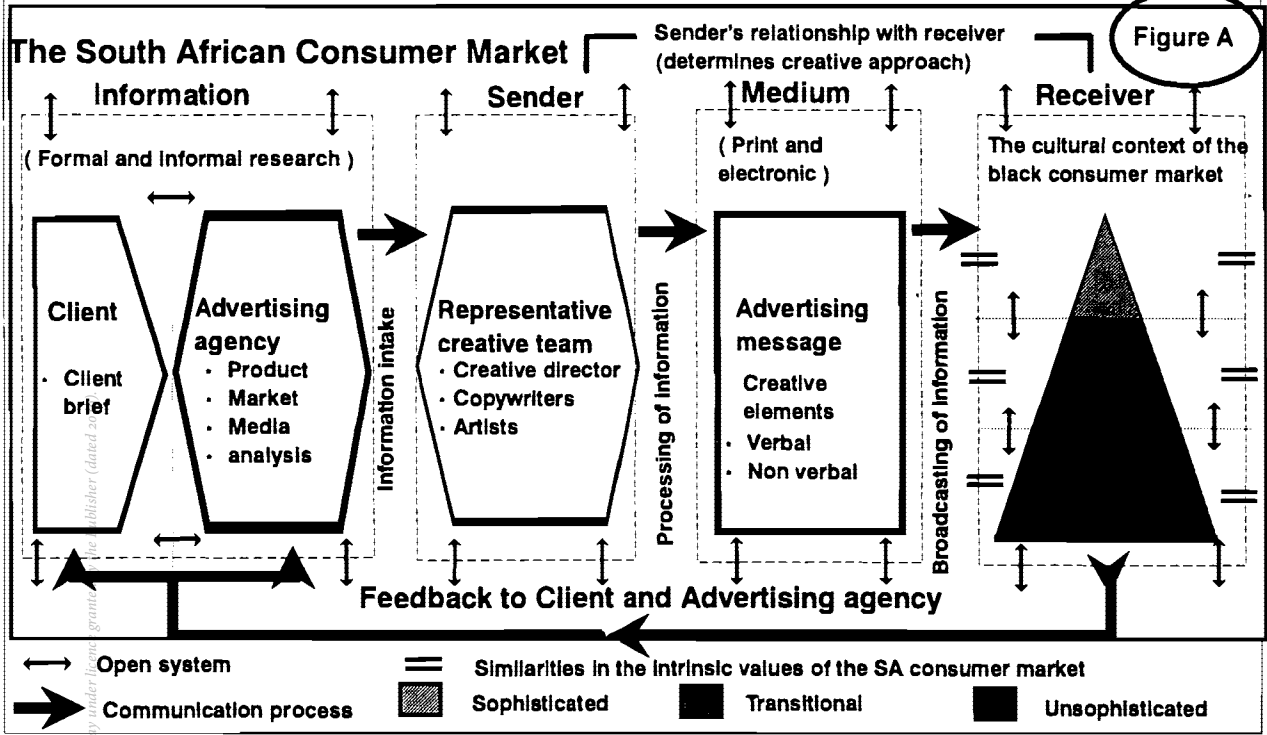
The communication model identifies the components (information, sender, medium and receiver), as open systems that are in constant interaction with one another and in interaction with

the system as a whole. The external environment in which the components function represents the South African consumer market. As the communication model (process) progresses, the external environment is narrowed down to the cultural context of the black consumer. The component information represents the client (marketer) brief as researched and designed by the client as well as the advertising agency's analysis, research and development of the client brief through the processes of product, market and media analysis. The internal response of the client and advertising agency to the campaign will be determined by their approach towards the black consumer market. Both the client and the advertising agency function as gate keepers in the selection and filtration of information.

For this study, the sender of the advertising message was identified as the creative team; copywriters and artists under the guidance of a creative director. The information input received by the sender represents the creative brief as designed by the agency as well as external input that the creative team may draw on, i.e., exposure to the black consumer market and the input of professional black consultants. The sender's relationship with the receiver determines his creative approach. It is this relationship that gives rise to the judgement of the creative team.

The communication process continues as the sender translates the information input into a creative strategy (processing of information) and executes the strategy through the design of the advertising message. The sender therefore also functions as an open system and a gate keeper in the flow of information. The advertising message and the design of the creative elements (verbal and nonverbal) therein reveals the creative approach of the sender to-

# Communication Model of the Creative Approach of the SA Advertising Industry towards the Black Consumer.



wards the black consumer. The creative approach represents the culture sensitive, receiver oriented perspective of the sender and will thus decide the extent to which the advertising message effectively communicates the cultural context (level of sophistication, values, needs and aspirations) of the black consumer.

The advertising message is communicated to the black target market through the mass media (print and electronic). The effectiveness of the media in the communication of the advertising message will be determined by the media planner's understanding of the consumer's level of exposure and media involvement. The communication medium is identified as an open system because it responds to the identity of the black market in its functioning.

The receiver (black consumer) is represented within his cultural context on three levels of sophistication, identified as the sophisticated, transitional and unsophisticated consumer. The levels of sophistication represent open systems to illustrate the flow and upward mobility of the black market. The receiver ultimately interacts as an open system with the external environment (South African consumer market). This approach forms the basis of the growth of similarities in the South African consumer market. The design of a universal creative concept is founded in this perspective but the execution of the creative concept will be determined by the cultural context of the black consumer. The model thus represents the culture sensitive approach towards the black market as developed by the respondents in the research study.

The receiver's response to the advertising message is represented in the model as feedback. The client predominantly focuses on an increase in sales whereas the advertising agency

actively forms part of the process of feedback by undertaking post-evaluation of the advertising campaign. Post-evaluation of the campaign forms a potential source of information that can assist in the development of future campaigns and can also form part of the sender's field of experience and thus stimulate the "gut feel" of the creative team.

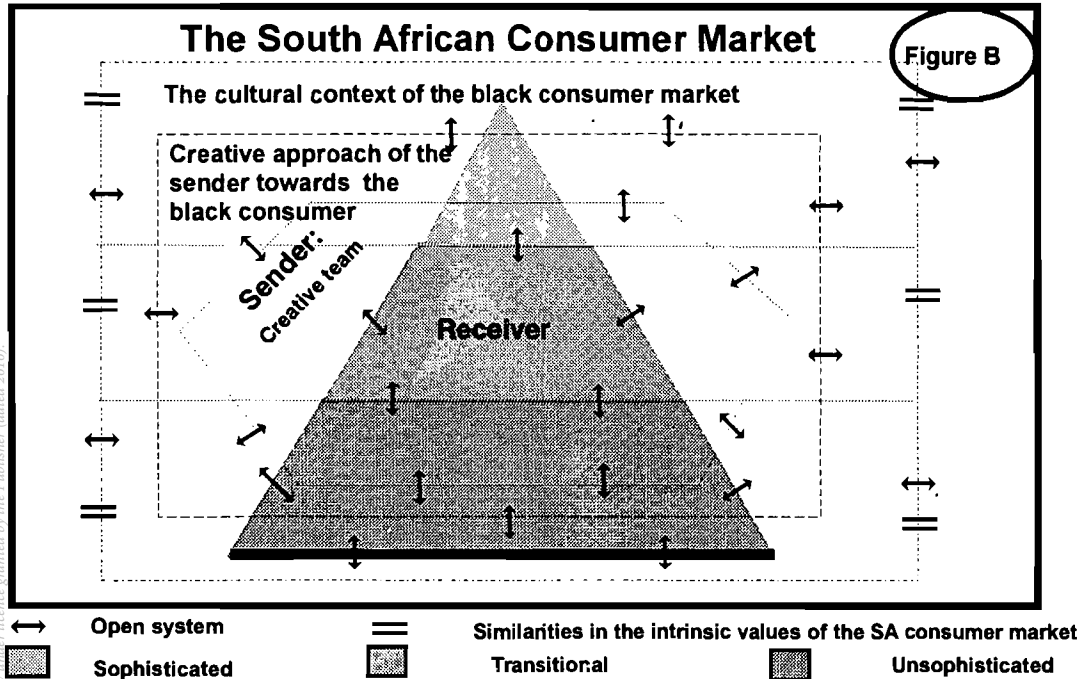
## 2 FIGURE B

This represents a multi-dimensional open system model of a receiver oriented creative approach towards the black consumer. This model illustrates the communication relationship between the sender and receiver, as identified in Figure A, but contributes to this relationship by emphasising the adaptation of the creative approach. The adaptation of the creative approach is the result of the critical analysis of the research results and enforces the need for:

- an objective approach towards the value of both formal and informal research as a guide-line in the design of the advertising message;
- the conceptual and creative input of professional black consultants, who are active in the target market, in the execution of the advertising campaign;
- the composition of representative creative teams. The advertising industry must play an active role in the education and training of black copywriters and artists to ensure that they form part of the entire process of creative development; and
- above all, the advertising industry must develop and nurture a receiver oriented creative approach towards the black consumer.

In conclusion the research results identified the barriers in the development of an effective receiver oriented creative approach towards the black consumer. An analysis and develop-

# A Multidimensional Open System Model of a Receiver Orientated Creative Approach towards the Black Consumer



ment of the creative approach as a communication process recognises the upward mobility and impact of the black consumer market and provides the creative team with practical recommendations to ensure the design of an effective advertising message with which the potential black consumer can identify and associate.

#### **APPENDIX 1**

Structured interviews were held with creative directors of the following Johannesburg advertising agencies:-

Barker McCormac (Pty.) Ltd.  
BSB/Bates (Pty.) Ltd.  
D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles (Pty.) Ltd.  
Grey Advertising  
Hunt Lascaris TBWA (Pty.) Ltd.  
J Walter Thompson Co. S.A. (Pty.) Ltd..  
Klatzko & Waldron (Pty.) Ltd.  
Lindsay Smithers-FCB (Pty.) Ltd.  
Lintas S.A. (Pty.) Ltd.  
McCann Erickson S.A. (Pty.) Ltd.  
Meintjies Parker Advertising  
Nielson, Selby, Oxlee & Pearce  
Ogilvy Mather Rightford Searle-Tripp & Makin (Transvaal) (Pty.) Ltd.  
OK Advertising  
Partnership in Advertising (Pty.) Ltd.  
Saatchi & Saatchi Klerck & Barrett (Transvaal) (Pty.) Ltd.  
Scharrer Edwards & Fraser (Pty.) Ltd.

Jupiter Drawing Room (Pty.) Ltd.  
The Louis Wilsenach Group (Pty.) Ltd.  
Young & Rubicam Transvaal

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