

Nairobi advertisers get the message across using local talent

By [Vuyo Mkosi](#)

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What first strikes you about Nairobi is the vast number of outdoor advertising sites visible. The city is littered with outdoor, positioned at every roundabout, in every neighbourhood and on most streets. These are not just small or average-sized billboards either, they are all huge.

I will use the billboard on the corner of Rivonia and 12th as a reference point - Nairobi's outdoor sites are half to double that size.

Nairobi is vastly different from Johannesburg in that there are no townships or suburbs that cater for differing LSM target markets. You simply move from upper income areas to middle income areas by crossing a street, walking up or down a block, or just popping next door. As a result, there is very little difference in the content found on billboards. In South Africa you will find more FMCG products advertised on billboards in a township area than you would in Bryanston.



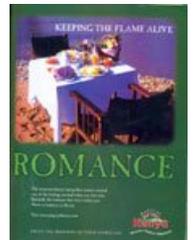
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The greatest difference between Johannesburg and Nairobi, is the level of localisation of international brand executions. If an international brand is running a billboard campaign, the model is Kenyan. Where relevant, the billboard will use a local vernacular or Kiswahili. Nairobi consumers are therefore bombarded with advertising using people that look and behave as they do, and content they can relate to. The Nivea billboards are a typical example.

Even celebrity-endorsed executions portray local or major African celebs. A good example of this is the Samsung Mobile advert featuring Chelsea striker, Didier Drogba from Cote D'Ivoire. In SA, the category determines the type of localisation that will take place and demographics or LSM determines the category featured. The campaigns running in Nairobi were very similar to those in South Africa. The difference was in the brand messaging, as the campaigns had a slight tweak in the pay-off or campaign line.



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Print is much like outdoor in Nairobi, as local talent is used and messaging slightly tweaked. The key campaign message does not deviate much from the global campaign. When going through Nairobi's print and press publications however, there is a lot less advertising than you would find in South African publications - with greater emphasis falling on local and regional products and brands. The editorial/advertising ratio is vastly different from that in SA as this Nairobi-trend is where SA was about 14 years ago.

The insight I gained from my first trip to Nairobi is that if you communicate using people your target market can relate to, you are more likely to capture their minds and pockets.

ABOUT VUYO MKOSI

Vuyo Mkosi is currently a strategic planner at JWT. On completion of a National Diploma in Marketing, Vuyo worked for VW as a graduate trainee and was placed on the Audi brand as brand co-ordinator. This is where her love affair with brands began. She has since worked as an assistant brand manager, account manager, strategic planner and FMCG marketing manager.

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