

Halo helps Yoco to help small business in SA

Yoco is championing small business and entrepreneurial underdogs as part of their new brand campaign, led by an emotive commercial - We The Underdog - produced by Johannesburg-based creative agency, Halo.



The film aims to deliver an authentic look at the challenges facing a small business, using real Yoco merchants rather than actors. “We wanted to avoid the stereotypical – quite disingenuous – portrayal of small business and entrepreneur-focused ads,” says Dean Oelschig, MD at Halo. “Running a small business is an extreme sport and yet we often see happy, smiling people in perfect environments representing these businesses – that’s not what operating a small business in South Africa necessarily looks like”.

Yoco helps small businesses accept payments in-store and on the go, so the Halo team had plenty of options when it came to finding locations and ‘stars’ for the film – from a café in Braamfontein to a leather shop in Melville, to a boxing gym in Hillbrow to a chicken farm in Grasmere.

Matt Brownell, VP of brand at Yoco explains, “The idea of this campaign is to tap into the feeling of being an underdog, being up against the odds - and the struggle and the triumph on the journey to beat those odds. We know that there's an underdog hidden in each entrepreneur - and we are proud of each one of them and we believe this shows in the campaign.”

Halo's own 12-year small business journey provided plenty of inspiration for the film. “It's never been easy – particularly in our positioning as a small challenger agency, we are also an underdog,” says Oelschig. “We thrive on being small which allows us to work on brands that inspire us and create work that is courageous and meaningful. I am not sure if this type of work would have come out of a big agency.”

Halo's belief is that every great idea is based on a great insight and there is a strong correlation between what goes on behind the scenes with the sacrifice and slog of sports stars and small business owners and entrepreneurs. It's from that analogy that the idea of the Underdog was born and the vision to create a piece of film that felt like it came from the genre of inspiring sport ads.



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Evan-Lee Courie 25 Jun 2021



Oelschig says that Yoco has a history of doing brave work in a challenging space, so the marriage between the brand and agency was an easy one. “I feel that they went with the idea that was best for their brand and their market – even if they were not immediately comfortable with it, that's often the sign of a good idea,” he says.

“We challenged them hard because we felt strongly that we could land this message and, credit to them, they bought into our vision and we're incredibly proud of the result and the response so far. It's great to create work that is inspiring small businesses after a tough couple year. Everyone goes on about media innovation and data but in advertising, the truth remains true after all these years, nothing beats a great idea”.

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