

How RMB is banking on integrated advertising



By Pasqua Heard

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Rand Merchant Bank (RMB) has created its first TV commercial in nine years: a set of three TVCs that relate the bank's values to the sport of rowing. Carolynne Waterhouse, RMB's brand manager, shares the story behind the advertisement and what led the bank to take this innovative step.

RMB, along with their agency Stick Communications, and Rowing South Africa (RowSA) partnered in the making of the TVC based on the creative idea 'Thinking. Pulling. Together'. The TVC likens the teamwork and collaboration that goes into the sport of rowing to that which RMB aims to cultivate with its staff and customers. Brendan Seery recently [praised the campaign](#), as its three founders of RMB, Paul Harris, Laurie Dippenaar and GT Ferreira, chose to show as extras in the TVC. Find out more about the TVC [here](#).



■ Explain why RMB avoided TVCs over the last nine years and what inspired the bank's decision to make TVCs now.

At RMB we still believe in the role and the emotive power of TV advertising, but it requires a strong business case and significant investment both from a production and a placement perspective. Operating on much smaller budgets compared to some of the large retail banks, and without TV in the mix, we have made a concerted effort over the years to consistently punch above our weight, working our sponsorships and other advertising channels quite hard.

Putting Brand RMB back on TV was the right decision at the right time for the business. As RMB is no longer just an investment bank, but offers clients both corporate and investment banking expertise, we had a strong case to position ourselves through this medium.

■ What other advertising avenues has the bank found effective over the last few years?

Over the years, we have invested most of our above-the-line spend in press advertising - specifically targeting the financial and business media consumed by our corporate and investment banking clients. Our out-of-home advertising has remained very targeted and focussed, with a presence in key areas relevant to our clients.

Our digital advertising has increased significantly in recent years with an annual rotational schedule running across various business and financial sites. Our approach has been to leverage our relationships with the financial and business media

across both print and digital to ensure an integrated message.

■ Who was the intended target market for this ad? And what channels aired this ad?

Broadly speaking, the target market is SA's corporate and investment banking market and C-suite individuals. We partnered with DStv to leverage their bouquet of news and sport channels, supplemented with very specific linear programming. The partnership gave us the opportunity to collaboratively develop content outside of the commercials, for example a short documentary-like clip of Paralympic rower Sandra Khumalo, who also featured in the commercial. This has allowed us to take advantage of the viewership habits of the DStv PVR and VOD audience. It also aired in cinemas.

■ Describe the collaboration process.



Carolynne Waterhouse

The journey to develop our campaign required the expertise of a few key partners. Working with Andy Rice to interrogate what truly makes RMB different was the strategic starting point for us. It required an introspective process and input from numerous people, both clients and staff.

From there we needed to find a creative analogy to articulate our 'collaborative thinking' differentiator. Together with our agency Stick Communications and our media partner, No Menu, a perfect opportunity emerged for Rowing South Africa and RMB to benefit from a win/win partnership. Working collaboratively to develop the big idea - "Thinking. Pulling. Together." a script was written to tell the story in three parts. Using an analogy where collaboration is king, we tell a story about how we all stand to win when one team collectively thinks and works together for a common goal. Something we try to do every day at RMB for our clients and all those whose trust we hold.

■ How are you tracking the intended audience's reception of and engagement with the TVCs?

It is still early days to report on its success, but anecdotally we have received fantastic feedback. All of our mediums push people to our website www.rmb.co.za/collaboration where we have been able to track visitors and where they are coming from.

■ Comment on the importance of innovation to keep your consumers engaged.

Having not been on TV for nine years it was really important that we delivered this campaign in an integrated way, using a range of channels. Alongside TV we have had a significant digital campaign, including social media. Supported by outdoor advertising at a number of airports around the country, and print advertising, we have been more innovative in our collaborative use of various channels than we have in the past.

■ Elaborate on the specific challenges faced in marketing within the banking industry.

The challenges we face in marketing wholesale banking services and products to corporate and commercial clients is about honing in on what gives us a competitive edge – hence the rigorous preceding process of identifying that which sets RMB apart. Many of the large corporate and investment banks offer the same products and services that are all delivered by very smart people. While we cannot claim a monopoly on talent, we can claim that we have a culture that enables collaborative thinking and an appetite to think through and deliver solutions that aren't always possible elsewhere.

■ Will RMB be running any further TVCs/campaigns in the near future?

Through our partnership with Rowing South Africa we feel there is longevity and relevance in the current campaign. While it works for both parties, we will continue with "Thinking. Pulling. Together" as it is relevant in many spheres of life. The TV element of the campaign will run beyond 2016, but with the negative outlook for the South African economic climate, it will be important to plan any future TV campaigns alongside a multitude of factors.

ABOUT PASQUA HEARD

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