

Case study: Checkers KKNK campaign - creativity leads to sales

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The Klein Karoo Nationale Kunstefees (KKNK), held for the past 15 years, has become a highlight of South Africa's cultural calendar, gaining popularity every year since its inception.

Held in Oudtshoorn in the heart of the Karoo, the festival sees thousands flocking to see the pick of the country's Afrikaans artistic talent. The town comes to a standstill as it rolls out the red carpet to accommodate, entertain and feed attendees for the week.

It's a vital week for commerce in the region and competition for a share of visitors' wallets is intense, with general and specialist retailers, restaurants, bars and supermarkets vying for customers' attention.

We were briefed by Checkers to develop a campaign to create awareness of the Checkers store in Oudtshoorn by raising the profile of the store's wine department, the Checkers Wine Route. Checkers felt that their wine offering would be an ideal hook to gain foot traffic in-store which would hopefully result in increased sales across other categories and departments.

ninety9cents devised an integrated campaign making use of live performances, posters and branded T-shirt giveaways to create awareness of the Checkers Wine Route. A live rendition of what could loosely be termed a "songvertorial" was performed during breaks between iconic Afrikaans musicians' performances, and the T-shirts were handed out to the audience afterwards. Posters were distributed throughout the performance areas, as well as at the store. No other special promotions or store-specific advertising took place during this time.

"When advertising in a festival environment, it's important to keep the jovial atmosphere in mind. Our creative was very lighthearted in tone and made clever use of Afrikaans language and culture to add a little fun," says Marius van Rensburg, creative director at ninety9cents.

The campaign was hugely successful for a number of reasons. Firstly, the wine sales generated during the week of the festival showed an increase of 78% when compared to the previous year when no promotional activity took place. This is even more impressive considering that year-on-year sales were down by 20% for the month leading up to the festival. In addition, the attention drawn to the Checkers Wine Route ensured that the creative messages (see examples) resonated strongly amongst Oudtshoorn residents too, as sales increased by a further 86% over the following month, and have maintained solid growth figures ever since.

As a result of the additional foot traffic drawn in by the wine promotion, other categories also experienced impressive sales, with overall store growth coming in at 36% compared to the previous year. Departments that performed especially well were Bakery, Deli, Fruit & Vegetables and Cigarettes & Tobacco, indicating that the extra foot traffic generated by the Wine campaign converted to additional sales across the store in categories relevant to festival attendees.

The second accolade for the campaign was that the T-shirts and posters became highly sought-after mementos of the festival. As Marius van Rensburg, Creative Director at ninety9cents puts it, "When it comes to festivals, if they aren't wearing your T-shirts and stealing your posters, you're wasting your time. I knew we had got it right when by day three we couldn't find any posters in the whole of Robertson."

The campaign achieved everything we believe a great campaign should. It was creatively brilliant (Silver Pender Award, Loerie finalist) and resulted in significant sales for our client.

That's how we believe advertising should be benchmarked.

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