

Find black actors. Hit the music. Dance. You've got your advert!

 By [Bogosi Mtshegwa](#)

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Black people dancing in adverts has graduated from being a creative expression derived from a weak observation that was camouflaged as an insight, to what is now a very popular creative device or template.

Here are three questions you seemingly have to ask in order to use this (less) creative device to target the so-called black market, the third question being the most critical:

- You have a brand or product?
- Want to target black people?
- Are you lazy to think?

If you've answered 'yes' to all three, then you qualify for a dancing advert.

Below are examples of brands that have used this less creative device of black people dancing for no creative, insightful nor impactful reason at all:

Golden Oldies

- [JokoDoom](#)
- [Sunlight washing powder](#)

Now, any brand, in any category is using song and dance. The dancing has included other races, I suppose that's supposed to make it okay. Now everybody is just dancing:

Golden newbies:

- [Vodacom](#)
- [Mr Price](#)
- Lifebuoy: This is essentially an advert where black people are dancing (of course you guessed it), selling the promise that the soap kills germs that cause underarm odour. To illustrate that there's absolutely no effort in trying to produce creative work that really connects, resonates and based on insight, here is a global execution from which the local one seems to have been an adaptation:

And how did the local ad agency interpret and express this? You guessed it; they made the actors dance.

What is it about dancing?

I'm not really sure what it is about dancing in adverts. Usually, when something is a trend, it has been purported by research pundits, whose insights are shared across the industry. Perhaps it was something to have been discovered as a key to "connecting to the black market".

Dancing here. Dancing over there. Dancing everywhere. Every category from insurance to fashion to alcohol, people are dancing. The unfortunate thing is that black people have so much depth; the advertising industry has barely scratched the surface, in the pursuit of understanding the ethnic group that is so diverse.

I would really love to see the creative process that lead to all the adverts mentioned above. I'm curious as to what led to: "the people will dance". But anyway; I'm sure that it's the clients' fault. "We had a better version, client chose this one". And for me; this is the part where the agency needs to grow a pair and stand their ground by doing what is right.

Surely there are ways to execute without dancing?

If all adverts across different categories are resorting to dancing; can agencies really claim to have competitive advantage over their nearest competitors? You be the judge of that.

Now that we have old people, black, white and coloured people, I suppose that the formula is:

- Find anybody
- Hit the music
- Dance
- And you have your advert

PS: Can someone please share with me the document that highlighted song and dance to be the Holy Grail of impactful and effective brand communication?

This is not an article about black people dancing, it's actually about the low quality of creative expression in the South African industry. I'm certain that there is great work out there that doesn't have dancing, or there is, but the issue is, we've got way too much dancing. It used to be cool, but it isn't. Period.

ABOUT BOGOSI MOTSHEGWA

Bogosi Motshegwa is a strategic planner at Thinkerneur, a brand strategy consulting firm and is Advisory Council Member at Vega School of Design | Brand | Business. He is a brand consultant who specialises in but is not limited to, brand, digital and communication strategy.

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