

How we turned a paint factory into a multi-million dollar brand

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Having no branding save the square logo and 200 assorted product lines, no two of which had consistent labeling and thus little shelf appeal, our initial meeting had been to discuss a packaging revamp. However, that was to be still two years away. The first job we were asked to do was a billboard to go in the vicinity of a popular recreational dam on the outskirts of Windhoek. This turned out to be a great branding opportunity.

How do you capture the essence of a region in a single image?

- We felt that in a beautiful unspoilt area the billboard imagery had to be as natural as possible and not affront potential viewers or spoil the surrounding landscape with commercialism.
- The image should strongly communicate to the viewer a sense of regional pride
- The image should be synonymous with Namibian natural and/or cultural heritage.

We presented a couple of concepts and the client cleverly leapt on the paint pouring out of the ostrich eggs even though it was quite roughly rendered.

In Namibia ostriches are associated with wealth, strength and survival

wealth [being the source of a thriving trade in meat, skin, feathers and jewelery in the region]

- resilience and utility in connection to the original San tribes of Namibian deserts who used the shells to hold precious drinking water and the making of sacred objects.
- Thus the ostrich eggshell as a vehicle from which to pour paint became the perfect symbol for a powerful and proudly homegrown African brand to be.

Developing a unique Pan African iconography

The pouring eggs have become NEO Paints' equivalent of the Dulux dog, but with more obvious relevance to emerging markets. After 5 years of use, we added an alternative visual of a map of Namibia dripping down the side of a bucket. A

version of the bucket floating like buoy in the sea is used to promote coastal and marine products.

Later on, the Namibian Prime Minister Hifikapunye Pohambe is purported to have taken a large laminated poster of the dripping ostrich eggs from a trade fair, to hang in his office, demonstrating how receptive Africa is to a contemporary iconography of its own.

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