

Tiger Brands' Fatti's & Moni's and The Odd Number: A marriage of passion

By  Danette Breitenbach

11 Apr 2023

Tiger Brands' Fatti's & Moni's, and the creative agency, The Odd Number are in love. Much like the recent TVC, *Always Eat'alian*, that the agency created for the brand, the two are passionate about each other.



Image supplied. *Always Eat'alian* is an authentic piece of work that flows from the love affair between The Odd Number and Tiger Brands' brand, Fatti's & Moni's

"We met and got married in six months; it was that kind of experience," says Thembisile Sehloho, Tiger Brands' marketing director.

But before that Sehloho already had her eye on the agency. "I had previously worked with Sbu Sitole, The Odd Number's co-founder and executive chief creative director, and had been watching the work coming out of the agency. I was waiting for them to come through Tiger's doors."

When the agency was given a brief for another brand in the Tiger stable, she grabbed the opportunity and appointed them as the Fatti's & Moni's brand agency.

"I wanted a young brave agency and decided to take a chance on The Odd Number."

She called Sitole. “I said, I am going to use you, but if you mess this up, I will kill you.”

Understand my consumer

Despite her brand strategy being very clear, she says she has battled to find an agency that actually understood her consumer.

Until now.

“After I briefed The Odd Number, they came back very brave. They presented once, then we tweaked it here and there, I approved it, and we went on to the next process.

“Why? Because they spent time understanding the consumer rather than trying to pitch their creative idea to me. This agency understood my strategy and my consumer, they got it. I was so excited!”



Image supplied. Terry McKenna, executive creative director, The Odd Number

The Odd Number executive creative director Terry McKenna, interjects here, “She was excited, I was relieved!”

He tells how after the agency was initially invited to pitch on a different Tiger brand, and while they were not successful, it led them to a brand better suited to the agency.

A marriage of bravery

“We are perfectly matched – just like the people you see on TV who meet and marry in six months.”

It works because the agency likes to do brave work.

He says that while the agency is often nervous when they pitch that their work might be a bit too brave for some brands, it is their agency culture.

“We need to move the dial. Our work needs to cut through; we don’t do wallpaper work.”

But, when he says that the agency like to do brave work, he also qualifies this. “We are never about making work that is just crazy or silly. All our work needs to be grounded in insight. One of our specialties, and what I think makes us good, is an understanding of the SA market. Once you understand the market you can find those human truths that you can play with that resonates with people.”

Great work with a great client

A big part of brave work is the relationship between client and agency.

“There needs to be a good relationship - it is such a cliché and I say it and flinch afterwards but you cannot make great work without a great client,” says McKenna.

When the brand and the agency met, he says there was a meeting of minds and a shared common vision. “That and passion are what make great partnerships between agencies and clients,” he adds.

“We like to be pushed and challenged. The worst thing for a creative agency is to have a client that is not actually passionate about their brand and their work. Client passion trickles down and we feel it, and then the director feels it,” says McKenna.



Image supplied. Thembisile Sehloho, Tiger Brands marketing director

Building relationships with agencies

Sehloho is passionate about agency-client partnerships. “My agency must be fully immersed in understanding my brand because I believe that the agency is probably the most important brand custodian.

“When I leave tomorrow, these guys are going to be spokespersons for this brand. They are going to be the people left on the brand that get it, and educate the next brand person, and help them understand the journey.

“Agency-client partnerships might sound like a cliché, but you see it in brands where the breakdown happens and the brand is left like an orphan child because the marketer has left and the agency does not get it, and it falls apart,” says Sehloho.

She adds that everything she has done and said has been intentional for The Odd Number to understand the brand. “So they can tell the story of this brand to anyone.”

It is underrated how important agencies are in the brands’ journey. “It is our job to be custodians of the brand, but it really does take a village in my view. We build the brand not just at Tiger’s office, we build it here in this agency.”

While there is always tension, she says that tension must be for the good of the brand. “The respect for agencies from marketers needs to be brought to the fore.”

It is this, McKenna and Sehloho both agree that leads to authentic work, such as *Always Eat’alian*.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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