

LbE

No. 8 Civil society and political commitment

Advertising - South Africa

Feature : Subry Govender

Editor: Sandrine Blanchard

Translation: Anne Thomas

1 Female off voice (Feature-Text + Outro)

2 Fictional characters (Intro+ Dialogue) :

- **Philomène (name can be changed)** : young woman who knows a lot of things, Alphonse's big sister

- **Alphonse (name can be changed)** : young man who is more naive and asks lots of questions, Philomène's little brother

6 Voice-overs (English): - VoxPop a young man and a young woman

- Danni (adult woman)

- Shannon (man)

- Junaid (young man)

- Keyan (adult man)

Teaser LbE

Philomène :

Hello everybody and hello to you Alphonse!

Alphonse :

Hi Philomène !

Philomène :

Today our Learning by Ear program about civil society and participation is looking at advertising.

Alphonse :

Really? But what's there to say about advertising?

Philomène :

Well, I don't know if you've noticed but there's advertising everywhere...

Alphonse :

That's true: there are billboards in the streets, adverts on television, on radio...

Philomène :

... and even on clothes -- when a brand name is plastered across a sweatshirt for example...

Alphonse :

OK, so here we go -- a program without any commercial breaks!

Philomène:

... and we're off to South Africa...

1. Clip : VoxPop (engl.)

a) **Young man:** « Brand good, if you like it, you buy it. It makes you look famous. »

b) young woman: « I spend a lot of money and I don't normally think before I spend it. And I don't think whether I could spend it the next day or not. I'm very lavish when it comes to money. It's mostly like to fit in with the crowd. »

Reporter:

Young people, in Africa or elsewhere, are a particular target group for advertisers. Most fashionable brands use advertising to get young people to buy or consume their goods -- they run commercials on the radio, on television, in newspapers or on the Internet. Danni Vos is the head of RedCube, an advertising agency in Johannesburg. She explains openly how marketing methods are used to seduce young people:

2. Clip: Danni (Engl.)

« Once you have a brand strategy we come up with a creative campaign that will create an environment to connect the brand with the consumer. We then come up with the campaign idea. Usually the campaign idea must create talkability and once you have the talkability factor you add that into a publicity environment and makes it so much easier. It gives the media something to talk and write about. It's about young people living their dreams, being famous. That will be the way to capture them. »

Alphonse :

Why are young people more susceptible to advertising than others?

Reporter :

Often young people want to belong to a group, whether at school or in their district or their family. Sometimes they think that fashionable brands can help them gain popularity with people they like or admire, especially when it comes to clothes. Danni Vos:

3. Clip: Danni (engl.)

« There are some marketing trends that one uses. Things like pester power which relates to the child pestering their parents to purchase the product. One looks at peer pressure, there's things like convenience. They are strongly influenced by their peers and the brands they adopt are brands that their friends use, too. Although they would

like to see themselves as individuals at the end of the day they are very much a group. You would be surprised the brands they love are very much adult. Brands like BMW comes out very strongly and then brands like MTV, Coca Cola - all the brands that have a very strong lifestyle attachment are important to them. »

Reporter :

Danni Vos's agency is certain that the "American dream" machine, still exists and continues to have a huge influence -- especially on young South Africans:

4. Clip: Danni (engl.)

« The visual stimuli is again focused on that lifestyle through movies and TV Hollywood lifestyle. They want fame, it all relates to wealth at the end of the day. Celebrities are very important to them.»

Reporter :

The marketing strategies employed by Danni Vos and her colleagues or competitors seem to bear fruit. Shannon Naidoo is just one of the fashion victims on the streets of Durban. This 22-years-old nurse, who keeps up to date by reading the latest fashion magazines, is glad that his style pleases others.

5. Clip: Shannon (engl.)

« It's because of the attention. People stare, they notice you make an appearance. and the fact is that you create attention, simply by wearing something that other people want to have but can't have in fact. I can have it. »

Reporter :

Junaid Ahmed Shabli is another young man in Durban -- he says he would rather prefer to save up to buy some fashionable trainers than buy bread:

6. Clip: Junaid (engl.)

« It makes you look good. It's a quality that you can trust. Whatever makes you comfortable you use it. So I use all-name brands. »

Alphonse :

Yeah, but these brands are expensive! And in Africa not everyone can afford to buy these goods!

Philomène :

Nor in Europe! But what you're saying tallies with what Professor Keyan Tomaselli from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban believes. He's an expert on media discourse analysis:

7. Clip: Keyan (engl.)

« A brand is the ideology that the advertising industry uses to persuade us to buy products that we probably don't need, with money that we probably don't have, to do something which we don't have to do. They are selling images, they are not selling products. The product is the conveyer that is carrying the image, the brand the message. »

Reporter :

Given the masses of advertising, Professor Keyan Tomaselli is not surprised that young people give in to the many temptations -- he has some advice for them:

8. Clip : Keyan (engl.)

« Only buy what you need. Use advertising to make proper selection. Don't just buy because you can. Think about how you can spend your money. Think about how you invest it, think how to use it. Buy what you need, don't buy what you don't need. Stay out of debt. »

Philomène :

Indeed, someone living above his or her means might end up in a spiral of debt -- advertising is tempting but it can be dangerous... Professor Keyan again:

9. Clip : Keyan (engl.)

« People will kill to get a BMW, they virtually do, they can't afford it. You don't need it. I mean a BMW is just a car like any other motor car. It gets you from A to B, you don't need it. People are buying a brand. People are buying a brand, not a product. »

Alphonse :

But isn't it also the duty of advertisers to warn young people or at least educate them a little bit to be selective?

Philomène :

That's what Danni Vos from the RedCube agency says although she adds that the job of advertisers is to sell, not to develop the critical sense of consumers...

Nonetheless:

10. Clip: Danni (engl.)

« Marketers have a responsibility to communicate values and encourage self control within the market and I would think that most marketers would stay away from beauty and sex and things that wouldn't communicate the right values about the brand. »

Alphonse :

But there's plenty of beauty and sex in advertising!

Philomène (laughing) :

We'll talk about that in a minute, little bro...

Reporter :

More and more people are speaking out against the omnipresence of advertising and the disastrous consequences it can have from an economic and social point of view on those who fall under its charm. Not only young people...

Music

Part 2 Dialogue

Alphonse :

Listen, Philo, I've been wondering how long advertising has been around for?

Philomène :

Oh, it's nothing new! Even in ancient times there were frescos proclaiming the merits of certain public figures or advertising sporting events -- they're the ancestors of posters really...

Alphonse :

And when did the sort of poster we're used to first come into being?

Philomène :

In Europe, they first emerged during the Renaissance -- towards the end of the Middle Ages, the 15th, 16th centuries. The authorities started promoting the decisions they had made with posters. Before then there were mainly criers. But advertising posters, which did not only have a message but also had pictures or paintings, only really became popular at the end of the 18th century.

Alphonse :

But these days there's more to advertising than posters. Earlier radio and television adverts were mentioned...

Philomène :

... even packaging is important -- brands are giving more and more attention to how their goods are packaged.

Alphonse :

... because good packaging and presentation makes you want to buy stuff! (**short pause to think**) What sectors advertise the most in Africa?

Philomène :

It used to be the food sector. But that's been overtaken by the telecommunications industry now, and by banks and real estate companies.

Alphonse :

There's something that surprised me earlier on when the Durban professor was talking...

Philomène :

Keyan Tomaselli ?

Alphonse :

Yes, he made a link between advertising and debts. I don't really understand the relationship...

Philomène :

The problem with advertising is that all the brands try to impress on people that they're the best and that their goods are indispensable...

Alphonse :

So?

Philomène :

Well, if you believe all these messages then you always want to consume, to buy... You end up buying stuff you don't need at all or you could very well do without...

Alphonse :

That's what the professor was also saying -- so we have to look at all these messages with a bit of distance?

Philomène :

Exactly! Because most people don't earn enough money to satisfy all their desires...

Alphonse :

I've got one last question: at the end of the report we heard that more and more people are criticizing advertising in public...

Philomène :

Yes, but there are still not that many. In South Africa, the advertising industry is booming. Triggered by two things in particular: the emergence of a wealthier middle class and the football world cup.

Alphonse :

So this isn't the case in all African countries?

Philomène :

No, even if the tentacles of advertising are reaching further and further a field, especially in the cities, of course. Talking about criticism, in Europe over the past 15 years or so anti-advertising committees have cropped up. They criticize the omnipresence of advertising because they're worried about this incessant pressure to consume. They also denounce the privatization of public space...

Alphonse :

You mean they think advertising is a kind of visual or audio pollution that infringes on their freedom?

Philomène :

Yes basically -- they are reclaiming the right to take a walk without always been accosted by massive advertising billboards.

Music

Outro :

Reporter

You've just heard a Learning by Ear program on the subject of civil society and political commitment, today with a focus on advertisement. If you want to listen to the program again or other programs of this series or even to send us your feedback, go to www.dw-world.de/lbe. Thanks for listening and don't forget to tune in again next time!