

# Down the rabbit hole of the summer campaign

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The fondest memory I have of summer is eating a banana boat dessert after a long day of swimming at the Durban beach front pools. The water would turn a slight yellow colour by 1pm on any given day because who can be bothered to go to the nearby public toilets and lose a moment of fun.



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As a toddler, the season was all about sun, beach sand, family time and ice-cream. The teenage years were about how far out I could swim into the Indian ocean and discovering the bikini was the best fashion item ever created. Now, I look forward to sundowners and enjoying the sea breeze when I go home for the year-end break. The drinks by the beach seem to taste even better after spending months down the rabbit hole of the summer campaign.

## The rabbit hole

The term rabbit hole comes from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, in which a young girl called Alice falls down a rabbit hole, meeting some strange and interesting creatures while having surreal experiences along the way.

The fall down the rabbit hole can start from the first brainstorming session you have around the summer campaign. You start on a path with a clearly defined goal but the direction will change several times along the journey. One road will lead you to old ideas that have been used countless times. Then, you keep falling until you are back to your childhood memories, thinking where can you put the banana boat dessert in the campaign. The direction changes again until the rabbit hole leads you to somewhere unexpected. In this new unknown place, you might meet Donald Trump in a red *Baywatch* speedo. The great summer campaign idea is not inspired by where you end up in the rabbit hole but the process in the journey. It is the discoveries along the way that will inform a summer campaign that resonates with your audience or community. After a few trips down the rabbit hole of the summer campaign, some key findings remain the same.

## Essence of summer

The childhood memories I have of summer are not exclusive. The feelings and emotions that are induced by the word 'summer' are similar for so many of us. It's a time for colour and excitement. A season that comes with a sense of freedom and discovery. We are young again in the summer and the nights and days belong to us to do with them as we please. Sometimes, it's about your brand capturing the essence of summer and creating content that authentically speaks to some

of these intangibles.

## The story

What story is your brand telling the audience in summer? Are we taking a road trip back home and rediscovering old places? Will your content pillars focus on summer freedom and travel were trying new things like shark cage diving and encouraging your community to share their moments? Do you focus on one family member like mom and how she can have the best summer with the kids at home? Find that story that is relatable to your audience that you can ride like a wave throughout your summer campaign period.

## Important summer days

There are days during the South African summer that many brands can view as an opportunity to really amplify their content and message. Whether it be an end of school term, 16 December when the whole province of KZN seems to be at the beach front or the day after Christmas. The content creators and marketers who are looking to take full advantage of the summer season will find clever and unique tactics to align with the standout days of the summer.



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I can't tell you what makes a really great summer campaign but there are things to consider in having a fighting chance to be memorable. One must remember that habits change with seasons. People want to be outdoors in summer so they won't be in front of their TV screens and laptops. But they will always be on mobile. What is the state of mind of your audience at that specific time of year? You may need to try a little harder to get their attention. Lastly, it might be in the brand's best interest to jump down the rabbit hole of the summer campaign at the start of winter.

## ABOUT NDUMISO NDLELA

Ndumiso Ndlela is a storyteller at heart. A lover of cinema, an inspiring documentary filmmaker and digital content creator. Head of Digital for DNA Brand Architects with a passion for helping brands navigate the digital landscape and creating ground-breaking, innovate and award-winning content.

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