

Campaigning to #DefeatDayZero

By Leigh Andrews

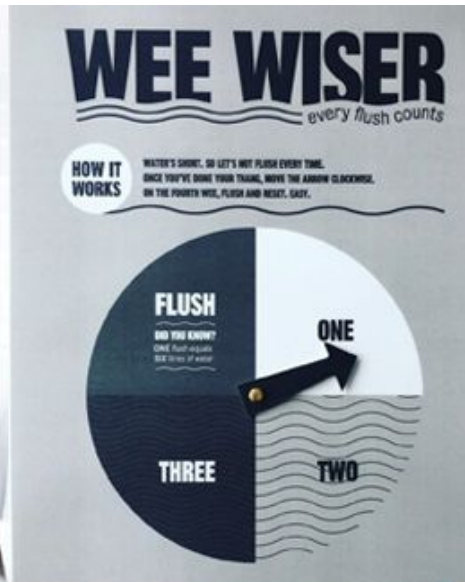
8 Feb 2018

The phrases 'water crisis', 'drought' and 'day zero' have been taking up headline space consistently for the past few months. While this has set most of the country into a frenzy, two Cape Town-based creative agencies put their (shower) thinking caps on with ways to better educate the public and hopefully #DefeatDayZero.

"If it's yellow, let it mellow. If it's brown, flush it down."



No longer just the water-conscious toilet-flushing mantra of Cameron Diaz, a [New York Times](#) blogger says "...entered the mainstream in the 1980s when former New York Mayor Ed Koch reportedly urged New Yorkers to take up the practice during a water shortage." Now the sing-song reminder is being echoed across the country.



Scenes from the #2minuteshowersongs and #weewiser campaigns.

News just this week of [reduced agricultural water use](#) and a [voluntary water donation](#) of some 10 million cubic meters from growers in the Elgin, Grabouw, Vyeboom and Villiersdorp valleys have somewhat allayed the wide-spread panic that we'll run out of drinkable water before the winter rains arrive, and that we'll be queueing up for water in a few months' time. But the truth remains - we drastically need to change our water-consumption habits. Fast.



Online searches for bottled water skyrocket as consumers stock up on Day Zero supplies

7 Feb 2018



Two local creative agencies have taken the water-saving mindset to heart and notably stepped up to the plate, both to help citizens cut their daily water use and to alert businesses to the fact that there are many ways they too can lessen municipal water use and push out Day Zero.

Water-saving at home with King James Group's #2minuteshowersongs

First up is King James Group, with their #2minuteshowersongs campaign for client Sanlam, The City of Cape Town and Cape Town Tourism. While Cape citizens have since been asked to limit that daily shower to just 90 seconds (or 15l of the current 50l and soon-to-be 25l per person per target per day), the campaign's still a very clever one.



Susan van Rooyen and Moe Kekana of King James Group Cape Town © – Warren Rasmussen.

Essentially, Moe Kekana and Susan van Rooyen, the King James Group creative team behind the idea, turned a somewhat baffling billboard brief into a smart way to tap into almost everyone's hidden guilty pleasure of singing in the shower.

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In today's paper #2minuteshowersongs for Sanlam.💧💧💧💧💧

A post shared by [King James Group \(@kingjamesgroup\)](#) on Nov 19, 2017 at 3:44am PST

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■ **Talk us through the current context of the drought and resulting water-restrictions in CT.**

Kekana and Van Rooyen: Cape Town is experiencing the worst drought in a century, and has less than 19% of usable water remaining for nearly 4million residents. As a result, we can no longer take water for granted. Our relationship with water has changed forever, whether we like it or not. And if we're going to have any fighting chance against the taps running dry, whether it's flushing the loo or taking a shower, we need to make every drop count.

■ **How does helping consumers save water tie in with what Sanlam stands for, as a brand, in association with Cape Town Tourism and City of Cape Town?**

Kekana and Van Rooyen: Sanlam has always believed in making the most of what we have, whether it's saving money or in this case, water. So when it came to this particular campaign, Sanlam, The City of Cape Town and Cape Town Tourism understood the importance of giving Capetonians the chance to fight back against the drought, by giving them a practical tool to use in their everyday lives.

“ Hop-in... showering will never be the same.. 💧💧💧💧💧💧💧💧💧 @CapeTownRedBus @VandAWaterfront
@2minuteshowersongs pic.twitter.com/lp9vyptxAV— Mandi Jarman (@mandijarman) January 20, 2018 ”

■ **Explain the creative process behind how the campaign was devised.**

Kekana and Van Rooyen: The project originally began as a billboard brief, trying to figure out how we could communicate or give people a way to save water. And when the City of Cape Town urged everyone to cut down water in the bathroom specifically, we found our insight: Many of us, whether we like to admit it or not, sing in the shower. And if we could use that to manage how long people spent in the shower, we could help save water. But an idea that size wasn't going to fit on a billboard. And so, the #2minuteshowersongs were born: Songs you can sing along to, but that also tell you when your shower time is up.

■ **Genius. What was the reaction like from the artists approached?**

Kekana and Van Rooyen: It was phenomenal. Not only did they rework and re-imagine their songs to fit into two minutes, they were so vocal about championing the cause in their own lives. The Joburg artists impressed us with their honesty and willingness to shower in solidarity with their Cape Town friends and family. This just shows that the crisis has affected all South Africans, not just us Capetonians. And when the best in the business come together to back a cause, anything is possible!

■ **That's for sure. Let us in on a few behind-the-scenes insights on the recording process.**

Kekana and Van Rooyen: It was intense, to say the least. And with 100% commitment from all the artists involved, we

effectively recorded with 10 artists, in four days, across two cities and produced an album in under two weeks. It was absolute madness, but we don't believe it could have been done any other way:

The sense of urgency in the songs, the urgency to make it happen, was a reflection of the crisis. And all that energy translated into a powerful two-minute shower playlist. There is something so pure, yet so powerful about music. And that's what we needed to really make our message heard.

▣ ***What has feedback been like since the launch?***

Kekana and Van Rooyen: Our campaign spread further than we anticipated. Not only were Capetonians singing along to shorten their showers, but they were singing on the radio, and even created their own versions of our shower songs in an effort to keep water use down. Word also spread across international waters with our campaign being featured on the climate change section of [Time.com](#) and on [BBC radio](#).

▣ ***What else can the industry do, to both put a spotlight on societal issues and, hopefully, solve them?***

Kekana and Van Rooyen: We are in the communication business, so it's up to us to find new and interesting ways to communicate the benefit of a product. If we can do that for a car, soap or chicken, there's no reason why we can't do it for social issues. The idea of keeping your shower to two minutes isn't anything new, all we did was contextualise it in a way that was relatable, fun and easy to do.

Hear hear (literally):

Water-saving in the office with M&C Saatchi Abel's #WeeWiser posters

Now you know what to do at home, it's time to ask Jason Harrison – founding partner and MD of M&C Saatchi Abel CT – for tips on saving water at the office, whether you're in the creative industries or otherwise.



The agency's #DefeatDayZero open-source poster campaign comprises various simple elements to remind you that water use should be top of mind everywhere, not just at home:

- A WeeWiser poster for the back of the bathroom door.
- A “why to use sanitiser” poster and a sanitiser poster.
- A urinal poster that asks guys to use the urinal rather than the toilet.
- Two kitchen posters: one for using a single mug all day, and the other for not using a plate at lunch time.
- A flusher poster that points out the short flush versus the longer one.

Harrison confirms that ‘WeeWiser’ went live in December, with the other posters more recent – and welcome – additions. Other than the obvious goal of changing behaviour in their own offices, they aim to inspire people to take the same steps in

other businesses and their homes.

Here, Harrison shares the thinking behind the quirky poster campaign...



Jason Harrison, founding partner and MD of M&C Saatchi Abel CT.

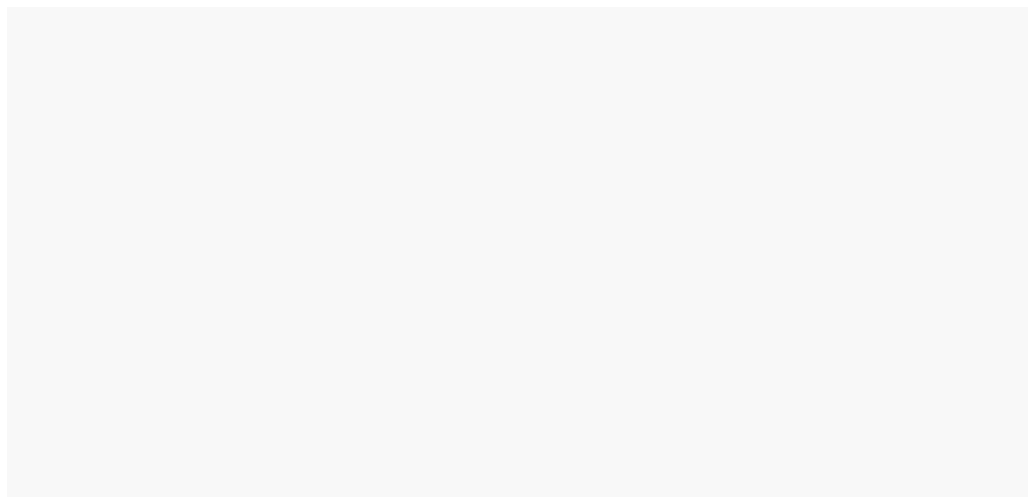
■ ***Explain the context of creating the posters and the intention of cutting office water use in the agency.***

Harrison: Some people think that their daily water quota only counts at home, but they don't realise that the water they use during the day at the office, counts towards it too. We needed to bring this to their attention, but not just tell them to use less water – we needed to inspire them and give them easy, implementable solutions.

■ ***Talk us through the creative work behind the posters.***

Harrison: All the designs are quirky and light-hearted. Things are scary and uncertain enough, without adding fear and panic to our everyday working environment.

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Water's short in Cape Town. So it's time to #WeeWiser. Check out our new water saving initiative!
#weewiser #water #savewater #drought #savewaterct #thinkwater #watersaving #capetowndrought

A post shared by M&C Saatchi Abel (@mcsaatchiabel) on Dec 12, 2017 at 11:50pm PST

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- easy to understand, easy to

■ **Definitely. What prompted you to offer open source versions of the posters for other companies to download and print?**

Harrison: If we want to defeat day zero, every Capetonian needs to get involved and limit their water use. By sharing the designs, we are able to inspire other businesses, schools and homes to do the same.

■ **Impressive! What has general reaction to the posters been like – both from your own staff and the general public.**

Harrison: The staff have taken the project on board with open arms. The perfect example is that we've gone from four to five dishwasher loads and six to seven sink washes a day, to just one of each a day!

■ **Excellent! Do you see this as something that could spread beyond just Cape Town?**

Harrison: Despite the freak rainfall that we see across the country, water is short across South Africa. We have always lived wasteful lives as water is seen as something 'free'. It's time to realise that it's a precious resource and change our mindsets, not just in times of disaster, but every day.

■ **Do you think we'll be able to #DefeatDayZero in the Cape in the short-term, and the rest of the country in the long-term?**

Harrison: If we truly work together and limit our usage, if we change our mindsets and look at saving water as the new normal, then we'll definitely be able to defeat day zero.

That's the type of 'creativity for good' that might just change the world. Harrison says it best:

“ As Cape Town gets drier, it's going to take each and every one of us working together to #DefeatDayZero. That's why we decided to share our ideas with other businesses and homes in the city, to have a greater impact than we could have alone. ”

You can visit <https://2minuteshowersongs.com/> for more on the Two-Minute Shower Songs and listen to them embedded above, while all the #WeeWiser campaign elements are [available here](#) to download and implement at home and at the office. M&C Saatchi Abel is spreading the word via social media through [@mcsaatchiabel](#) on Twitter and Instagram, as well as the #WeeWiser and #DefeatDayZero hashtags.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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