

Mann Made Media works with Kumba Mines to impart a powerful message

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Recognition provides a wonderful opportunity to learn and this often happens when a situation that resonates with the audience is portrayed through a powerful medium - such as industrial theatre.



Recently, Mann Made Media was tasked to create a series of scenarios depicting the dilemma of the workforce shareholders at Kumba Mines. Kumba created a BBBEE share participation scheme (Envision Trust) for its permanent non-management employees at Sishen Iron Ore Company. Over a period of five years it consistently paid out dividends to the workforce, but coming to the end of Phase1, the shares would be sold and a substantial lump sum would be received by each member. An industrial theatre piece

based on this story was the ideal tool to empower the audience with information on how to handle such a sum of money.

With this objective in mind, Mann Made Media worked on a strategy which involved using professional scriptwriters and actors to produce a piece of interactive theatre which would be beneficial to the audience as well as amusing and compelling. The concept of a likeable character with whom the spectators can identify has always stood the test of time in theatre pieces. With this in mind, the role of Mr. Mali was created, an Envision-appointed Financial Advisor who would play the part of a narrator and take the audience on a journey of profitable financial planning as well as the dangers of silly spending. The invaluable input and insight of Envision Financial Advisors was accessed in the research phase of the proposal and footage was taken of them giving financial advice, which would be later used as emphasis in the show itself, lending authenticity to the stories. This would also serve to introduce the option of starting a dialogue between the Envision appointed financial advisors and the employees.



The range of stories illustrating each circumstance was vast. The issues tackled were the importance of budget, saving, prioritising wants and needs, paying off debt and planning for emergencies. This was done with contrasting before-and-after scenes of different situations. Shakespeare's advice was taken into account: "Neither a borrower nor a lender be" and get-rich-quick schemes were disapproved of. Buying a house was encouraged and labelled a good investment and tax, interest and retirement were

discussed at length: how and why tax is deducted from salaries and capital gains, along with the power of compound interest in relation to savings and investments and retirement. Humour was woven into the script in order to connect with the audience.

At the end of the show Mr Mali summarised all the correct ways to deal with a lump sum of money using a Yes/No quiz with his fellow actors, winning the audience over with the slogan: "Make your money grow - not go!" The feedback from the audience afterwards was positive. In general, they were motivated to open up a channel of communication with the Financial Advisors provided by their company, but more importantly they felt valued as they recognised and identified with the situations presented to them. MMM has stuck to the principles of respect for the audience and professional integrity when using the powerful medium of industrial theatre.

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