

Campaigning for free with Generation Z

 By [Pasqua Heard](#)

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Absa Retail Bank recently redesigned their [Absa MegaU product](#) and launched a new campaign aimed at generation Z and founded on the various meanings of the word 'free'.

On a practical level, Absa MegaU offers a bank account to the youth (ages 0-19yrs) and no longer charges a monthly service fee. It now also includes access to a free movie ticket or 75MB of data each month if the account holders maintain a minimum balance of R200 in their account; perform two transactions using their MegaU card for purchases; or purchase data or airtime using their MegaU account. On a deeper level, the campaign tries to connect to the values and experiences that young people care about.



According to Yolande Steward, marketing GM of Absa Retail Bank, research was conducted in focus groups aimed at young people aged 15 and older “across the income spectrum and who didn’t necessarily have a bank account with Absa.” What emerged from these focus groups was that young people “have a passion for self-expression, they like creativity and also care about their communities.” Parents of those younger than 15 were also asked whether they would be open to opening a bank account for their child if its offering includes no monthly fee, as well as access to free movie tickets and data.

Absa briefed their agency, The Jupiter Drawing Room (Johannesburg), on their findings. “All this research helped the agency to come up with relevant ideas; thus they created the TV ad around slam poetry which is very linked to self-expression,” explains Stewart.

The Jupiter Drawing Room (Johannesburg) discusses the ad

“The concept took shape when we began to question what the word “free” really meant. The word “free” gets used synonymously with promotions, vouchers, gifts, t-shirts, buy two get the cheapest one “free” and so on. So essentially the word “free” is in a way being held hostage, being used against its intended purpose. This gave us a rich territory where we could realign the word “free” to its true intended purpose. We also knew that our audience are some of the most skeptical consumers, so this territory gave us a perfect opportunity to develop an idea that leveraged this skepticism and use it to form a positive perception of the product and ultimately the brand. We wanted the youth to feel and believe that Absa was the bank that had set ‘free’ free,” explains Cameron Fraser, copywriter at The Jupiter Drawing Room (Johannesburg).

According to Fraser, the elements that made the campaign relevant to the youth market were the voice-over recorded by well-known local music artist, Kwesta; a young, diverse and fashionably clad cast; youthful slang interpretations of the word 'free'; and finally the director, Leigh Ogilvie. "Leigh was chosen because of her talent in capturing exactly what "youthful" means and bringing it to life visually," explains Fraser.

"We're very excited by the campaign and the positive response we've received thus far. This is a long-term proposition for us. As we evolve this proposition, we'd like to see more young people being educated and becoming comfortable with managing their finances," says Steward.

"Depending on what we add to the whole youth proposition; we'll see how the campaign changes over time. A lot of our work is about the consumer and the insights, so we will run more focus groups and keep touching base with how young people feel and what they want in relation to financial education," concludes Steward.

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