

Media freedom, a personal freedom

By  [Danette Breitenbach](#)

22 Jan 2018

Media freedom is a right of all South Africans and not a limited mandate of editors and journalists. Last year the South African National Editors Forum (Sanef) launched a refresh of its brand - the first in 21 years - that included a positioning and narrative review to make the citizens of this country aware of that.



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Katy Katopodis, deputy chairperson of the Forum (and EWN editor-in-chief), explains that the brand was in urgent need of a new look and the campaign gave them the opportunity to refresh the brand. “The brand refresh provided the perfect opportunity to get their media freedom message out there.”



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This campaign aimed to make media freedom about South Africa and included an editorial and an Above The Line (ATL) creative campaign. It kickstarted on “Black Wednesday” 2017 with a week-long programme of action by Sanef to make the public aware of the connection between media freedom and personal freedom. It was also a public stand by editors to collectively promote the personal rights of South Africans and to make a stand against any challenge to this.

Championing media freedom is about our democracy

“We want everyone to understand that when the media talk about media freedom it is not navel-gazing. Free media can only prosper in a free South Africa. Championing media freedom is about our democracy,” she explains.



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The primary insight the campaign is built on is that South Africa has a long and proud history of a media who speak truth to power. “In a time of political uncertainty and concerns over state capture, it was perhaps even more critical that we remind South Africans of this long history and that we bring attention to the very real connection between media freedom and personal freedom,” says Ogilvy public relations (Ogilvy PR) head of strategy, Dustin Chick.

“By building greater awareness for the broad work done by Sanef in South Africa, and positioning Sanef’s role in society, South Africans can be mobilised to get behind efforts to protect media freedom (because media freedom is a personal freedom),” he says.

Ogilvy PR responsible for the campaign, which was done pro bono, worked with the Sanef team to achieve two primary goals Chick explains. “The first phase involved relaunching Sanef’s public face, which involved the positioning and narrative review as well as the brand refresh.”

New visual identity and new website

For this Ogilvy PR developed a new visual identity and a new website. “We also developed a new strategic focus for Sanef aimed at broadening its appeal to South Africans through an expanded focus on media freedom to the broad base of work undertaken by Sanef,” says Chick.

The second phase was to craft the narrative, define a key positioning statement and develop an integrated communications campaign through a highly collaborative process between Ogilvy PR and the various title editors who make up Sanef’s Mancom.

When we saw what they had put together we felt it was very powerful, says Katopodis. “The visuals were very important in the campaign, which launched at a critical time in the country, and we needed to send a strong, clear and decisive message that resonated with people. It was not the time for a wishy-washy campaign.”

The response to the campaign was overwhelmingly positive. “It resonated with a country that wants a free country that can prosper. We hope that the campaign will continue to gain momentum and speak to South Africans and help them understand the crucial role of media freedom and the role of the media and Sanef within that.”

Ogilvy and Sanef will continue to work together over the next two years to entrench this effort further, adds Chick.

Sanef Legal Defence Fund

The Fund allows the Forum to fund any current and future court cases which affect the right of journalists to work freely in the country’s our democracy. Donations are welcome via Snapscan or electronic transfer.

Sanef is a non-profit organisation whose members are editors, senior journalists and journalism trainers from all areas of the South African media. It is committed to championing the country’s hard-won freedom of

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

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