

Zim advertising awards go ahead despite lack of new campaigns

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Zimbabwe's Advertising Publicity Club is organising its annual competition for the advertising industry, despite a dearth of new campaigns due to an economic crisis that has stunted growth and limited new advertising campaigns in a once vibrant sector.

The organisation has started inviting entries for The *2007 Ngoma Advertising Awards*, and has issued out a call to all advertising agencies to submit their portfolios.

"Has your advert been entered? Don't let your creativity go unrewarded," a note sent to agencies and seen by Bizcommunity.com said.

Judy McDonald, who is coordinating the awards, was not in the office to receive calls seeking a comment this week.

The advertising industry in Zimbabwe is stagnant due to an economic recession now entering into its ninth year.

Advertising budgets have been cut, and agencies have scaled down their operations just to stay in business.

A fractured backbone

A price blitz by the government in June last year also affected prospects for the limited new campaigns on the market, mainly by banking institutions and the retail sector.

The backbone of any vibrant advertising industry is a vibrant economy, and Zimbabwean advertising agencies have been victims in the economic meltdown that has ravaged the economy and almost brought it to its knees.

There is virtually a shortage of everything, from toothpaste to cooking oil and laundry soap – products that kept the creative desks of advertising agencies busy trying to come up with new ideas for fresh campaigns.

A number of other advertising awards have been abandoned as a result. One of these was the *Creative Directors' Forum Awards*, which dominated the advertising industry during the 1990s.

Some advertising agencies indicate that due to the economic crisis, a number of clients have stifled creativity by putting too many controls to the generation of ideas in order to cut spending.

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