

Solar-powered ad fires up Cannes

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Network BBDO won South Africa's first Outdoor Grand Prix at the 2007 International Cannes Advertising Festival for a solar-powered billboard offering "power to the people" - literally, in the form of electricity generated for a nearby school.

According to Bizcommunity.com, the billboard makes good on Nedbank's message - "What if a bank really did give power to the people?" - by transforming sunshine into electricity for the MC Weiler School kitchen in Johannesburg's Alexandra township, saving the school around R2 000 a month in electricity bills.

The billboard is reportedly being patented for use on school sites across South Africa.

The innovation - and the fact that it made a difference to a local community - gave Network BBDO the edge over a BBDO, New York billboard created for BBC World. The New York billboard featured a photo of soldiers and allowed passers-by in Times Square to vote via text message whether they thought the soldiers were occupiers or liberators.

The "power to the people" billboard "was more than advertising," Lowe Bull executive creative director and Cannes outdoor jurist Porky Hefer told AdAge.com. "It was help and it was hope."

SA's Cannes Lions winners

Network BBDO hasn't been the only award-winning South African agency at the festival taking place in Cannes, France this week. The country's creatives have also picked up gold, silver and bronze Lions aplenty in the direct mail, media, outdoor, press, promo and radio categories.

South Africa's 2007 Cannes Lions winners include:

- Cinevation - Bronze Media Lion (Microsoft Xbox campaign).
- FCB Johannesburg - Gold Direct Lion (Raid insecticide).
- Grey Worldwide - Gold Radio Lions (Geronimo condoms).
- Ireland/Davenport - Bronze Press Lion (Hubba Bubba bubblegum).
- Jupiter Drawing Room - Gold Radio Lions (Senokot laxative); Gold Media Lion (Mont Blanc fountain pens).
- Lowe Bull Johannesburg - Gold Press Lions, Gold Radio Lion (Axe deodorant); Bronze Press Lion (National Council Against Smoking).
- Network BBDO - Gold Outdoor Lion (Ghost Pops).
- Ogilvy South Africa - Bronze Press Lions (Audi pollen filter); Silver Outdoor Lion (Eskom "Save" campaign); Silver Radio Lion (Exclusive Books).
- Tequila - Bronze Media Lion (Toot-n-Scout taxi service).

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