FREEDOM DAY

INTRODUCTION

This newsletter focuses on the significance of Freedom Day. Few days in our history have such a significance as this day. It captures the views and perceptions of South Africans celebrating 20 Years of Freedom. It captures the views and perceptions of South Africans on which we commemorate our journey to freedom and democracy.

As we continue our commemoration of 20 Years of Freedom many South Africans will experience what Freedom Day means to them. It is a day that brings back the memories and highlights the sacrifices of the past, without which we would never have won our freedom. The intensely personal way in which most people view Freedom Day stems from the personal connection they attach to our freedom. The essence and spirit of freedom therefore lives and thrives in the DNA of South Africans. The personal reflection of how we view our freedoms is important in the way we nurture and protect these freedoms.

We need to encourage media to more constructively reflect on the challenges that government inherited and how they have worked towards meeting the expectations of their mandate. We also need to encourage media to play a constructive role as we strive for a more inclusive society.

Therefore government needs to engage with media and encourage them to play an educational and constructive role in the run-up to Freedom Day. Media reports are the only means of reaching a large section of the population and it is important to appeal to the public as we commemorate our journey to freedom and democracy.

When asked about these achievements, the vast majority of respondents again pointed to freedom, human dignity and our democracy as evidence of our freedom. Others highlight important issues like freedom of speech, or human dignity. For many, freedom can be felt in the tangible changes they perceive in their lives since 1994.

Communication implications

In the run-up to this year’s Freedom Day, government has embarked on a large scale media and communication campaign. The communications strategy is aimed at upholding the values of freedom and the spirit of peaceful coexistence. The importance of these changes cannot be overstated; they set us on the road to normalising social and cultural relations. They set the foundation for a normal society in which race, creed or gender does not matter.

The change is undoubtedly evident in the freedom that all South Africans now have to participate in the democratic processes in our country. The political and socio-economic freedom that we now enjoy. It is easy to forget that without the resultant growth in the economy and better quality of life, our freedom would undoubtedly ring hollow to many.

Similarly, the importance of enhancing the quality of life and ensuring the provision of services cheaply and efficiently is critical. Without this our freedom would also ring hollow to many.

Acknowledgements of 20 years of freedom

The Department of Arts and Culture in partnership with the Department of Social Development have produced a video about the recognition of freedom. This video is an opportunity to both reinforce what freedom means and to tap into its sentiment and cascade it to other initiatives.

Awareness around Freedom Day and its sentiment is higher than any other national day. This presents an opportunity to both reinforce what freedom means and to tap into its sentiment and cascade it to other initiatives.

The South African public’s awareness of national days, and particularly Freedom Day, is significantly to build national unity.

The intensely personal way in which most people view Freedom Day stems from the personal connection they attach to our freedom. The essence and spirit of freedom therefore lives and thrives in the DNA of South Africans. The personal reflection of how we view our freedoms is important in the way we nurture and protect these freedoms.

We need to encourage media to more constructively reflect on the challenges that government inherited and the development of a more inclusive society. We also need to encourage media to play a constructive role as we strive for a more inclusive society.

Therefore government needs to engage with media and encourage them to play an educational and constructive role as we strive for a more inclusive society.

Therefore government needs to engage with media and encourage them to play an educational and constructive role in the run-up to Freedom Day. Media reports are the only means of reaching a large section of the population and it is important to appeal to the public as we commemorate our journey to freedom and democracy.

When asked about these achievements, the vast majority of respondents again pointed to freedom, human dignity and our democracy as evidence of our freedom. Others highlight important issues like freedom of speech, or human dignity. For many, freedom can be felt in the tangible changes they perceive in their lives since 1994.

Introduction

An analysis of media reporting in the run-up to this year's Freedom Day shows that there was significant media interest around the celebration of 20 Years of Freedom and the day itself. This is attributed to the fact that South Africans have grown accustomed to the day being dominated by other commentators, including editorials. Government's voice was however largely absent in opinion and analysis sections which tended to be

Commemorative events and government communication initiatives attracted significant media interest. There was a strong focus on coverage of the Freedom Day celebrations and the role that the day plays in affirming our democracy. This is consistent with the findings from the GCIS National Tracker Survey, (April 2013), which confirm that most respondents view this day as significant to build national unity.

The report of these changes is somewhat concerning as it set the scene for a lack of media interest and coverage of the day among the media. The survey also indicated that there is a lack of alignment within government on how this day should be commemorated and the way in which the day should be used to address the socio-economic challenges and inequalities experienced by South Africans.

African countries have been using Freedom Day to address issues such as human rights, reconciliation, and the role of the media in promoting democracy. The day has been used to call for an end to poverty, crime, and corruption. South Africans are becoming more acutely aware of the need for freedom and democracy to mean something more than a facade for the right to vote. The need for a political system that protects the rights of all citizens is becoming increasingly apparent.

The day of Freedom has been turned into a day of protest, with many people demanding more from their government. The lack of media interest and coverage of the day among the media is a cause for concern. It is important that the media continue to play an important role in promoting democracy and human rights. The day of Freedom should be used to create awareness of the importance of human rights and the role of the media in promoting democracy.