

# STRATEGIC MARKETING *for* AFRICA

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Journal of the African Marketing Confederation

Issue 2 2021

African consumerism:

# Culture is the new marketing currency

## Consumer insights

for a Covid world

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## The new voice of African marketers grows ever louder

**H**ELLO AGAIN! AFTER THE POSITIVE RECEPTION to our first issue, we're excited to welcome you to the 2nd issue of *Strategic Marketing for Africa*, the official publication of the African Marketing Confederation (AMC).

I'm pleased that, despite Covid's challenges, we had a successful online relaunch event for the AMC on 30 September; details and coverage of the landmark event on pages 8-9.

Not ones to rest on our laurels, we're now forging ahead with plans for our first AMC Conference scheduled for March 2022. See preliminary details on pg 22 and keep an eye on the AMC website for updates.

A significant theme of this issue is African Consumer Trends which have been severely impacted by the pandemic. One notable change is the apparent swing towards consumers spending significantly more on 'essential' items, whilst spending on 'non-essentials' has dropped considerably. See pages 16-20.

### POSITIVE NEWS FROM AFRICA'S YOUTH

However, as we move forward and learn to live with Covid-19, there is still positive news. Kantar's *Africa Life 2021-2022* study [pages 10-14] shows a clear drive by Africa's youth to succeed despite the odds. Enabled by innovation and digitisation, this segment is highly entrepreneurial.

Another trend from the same study shows a renewed focus on the diverse African cultures and a switch in marketing messaging towards the recognition of the African cultural revolution. It's an intriguing dynamic.

As two of the AMC's goals are 'sharing marketing knowledge' and 'connecting professionals across Africa', I believe this issue ticks those boxes.

**Helen McIntee**  
**BA MBA (Wits) CM (SA)**  
**President: African Marketing Confederation**

## La nouvelle voix des marketeurs africains se fait de plus en plus entendre

**B**ONJOUR ENCORE UNE FOIS! APRÈS L'ACCUEIL positif réservé à notre premier numéro, nous sommes ravis de vous accueillir dans le deuxième numéro de *Marketing Stratégique pour l'Afrique*, la publication officielle de la Confédération Africaine du Marketing (AMC).

Je suis heureux que, malgré les défis de Covid, nous ayons eu un événement de relance en ligne réussi pour l'AMC le 30 septembre ; les détails et la couverture de l'événement marquant sont disponibles aux pages 8-9.

Ne voulant pas nous reposer sur nos lauriers, nous allons maintenant de l'avant avec les plans de notre première conférence de l'AMC prévue pour mars 2022. Vous trouverez les détails préliminaires à la page 22 et gardez un œil sur le site Web de l'AMC pour les mises à jour.

Un thème important de ce numéro est celui des Tendances de Consommation Africaines, qui ont été sévèrement affectées par la pandémie. Un changement notable est la tendance apparente des consommateurs à dépenser beaucoup plus pour les articles "essentiels", tandis que les dépenses pour les « non essentiels » ont considérablement diminué. Voir pages 16-20.

Cependant, alors que nous avançons et apprenons à vivre avec Covid-19, il y a encore des nouvelles positives. L'étude *Africa Life 2021-2022* de Kantar [pages 10-14] montre une volonté claire de la jeunesse africaine de réussir malgré les obstacles. Porté par l'innovation et la numérisation, ce segment est très entrepreneurial.

Une autre tendance de la même étude montre un regain d'intérêt pour les diverses cultures africaines et une évolution des messages marketing vers la reconnaissance de la révolution culturelle africaine. C'est une dynamique intrigante.

Comme deux des objectifs de l'AMC sont « partager les connaissances en marketing » et « connecter les professionnels à travers l'Afrique », « je crois que ce numéro coche ces cases ».

**Helen McIntee**  
**BA MBA (Wits) CM (SA)**  
**Présidente de: African Marketing Confederation**

# We're back and still striving for perfection

## PUBLISHER

**African Marketing Confederation**

<https://africanmarketingconfederation.org>

[info@africanmarketingconfederation.org](mailto:info@africanmarketingconfederation.org)

## PUBLISHING COMMITTEE

Kwabena Agyekum (Chair)

Gillian Rusike

Helen McIntee

Nigel Tattersall

Mike Simpson

## A.M.C. PRESIDENT

Helen McIntee

## A.M.C. SECRETARY-GENERAL

Gillian Rusike

## EDITORIAL

**Simpson Media**

**Editor:** Mike Simpson

[mike@media-simpson.com](mailto:mike@media-simpson.com)

## ADVERTISING SALES & COORDINATION

**Avenue Advertising**

**Managing Director:** Barbara Spence

**Landline:** +27 11 463 7940

**Mobile:** +27 82 881 3454

[barbara@avenue.co.za](mailto:barbara@avenue.co.za)

## DESIGN & LAYOUT

Tamlin Lockhart Design

[tamlin@tamlinlockhart.co.za](mailto:tamlin@tamlinlockhart.co.za)

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## IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Chartered Institute of Marketing, Ghana

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Moroccan Association of Marketing

and Communication

National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria

Institute of Marketing in Malawi

Institute of Marketing & Management, Mauritius

Institute of Marketing Management, South Africa

Zambia Institute of Marketing

Marketers Association of Zimbabwe

**A**S THE EDITORIAL AND design team that put together the first issue of *Strategic Marketing for Africa*, the new publication of the revitalised AMC, we were elated at the response the magazine received.

Having been compiled in a relatively short timeframe ahead of the confederation's relaunch event at the end of September, there was always the concern that we may need to take a few short-cuts to meet the exacting deadline we had set ourselves. But we didn't need to do that and, ultimately, we are satisfied with the final product.

'Satisfied', because in the media world you tend to think you could have done better; a different angle to a story, a more incisive question that should have been asked, a comma missed. 'Happy' would imply a perfect publication – and those are typically the result of big budgets and large editorial teams who can pore over every word in every article.

So 'satisfied' it is! One of the areas we can still improve on is to publish a wider range of articles from more African countries, particularly those who are members of the AMC. Each country has unique circumstances and customised marketing solutions. And we would like to hear about them. We can't promise to cover all of them; but the more information you share with us as an editorial team, the more likely we are to be able to communicate marketing knowledge and solutions across the continent.

## IN THIS ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE

AMC President, Helen McIntee, has talked in her column about our special

focus on consumer trends in Africa as we head into 2022. So I won't delve too much into this coverage (see pages 10-20), except to say it is heartening that so many African consumers seem to be seeking home-grown marketing solutions, rather than simply accepting foreign trends as being right for them.

Marketers who believe in 'one-size-fits-all' strategies implemented by remote control from the world's capital cities – take note.

## IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT PROFIT

One of the things that we will try to do in each issue is to emphasise that marketing, particularly in the African context where so many have so little, cannot just be about maximising profit to the detriment of all else. Consequently, our article on Purpose-Led Marketing (see page 39-42) emphasises that it is, by definition, when a brand and its audience connect on a mutual cause that both believe in.

## ABOUT THE COVER

*Our cover illustration for this issue reflects key points from the Africa Life 2022 study (and, to a lesser extent, our interview with marketer Feyi Olubodun) which emphasises that consumers increasingly expect their cultures to be recognised and celebrated in marketing messaging.*

*We also acknowledge that we drew inspiration for this illustration from a photo used in the study and thank Kantar for that.*

**Mike Simpson**  
Editor

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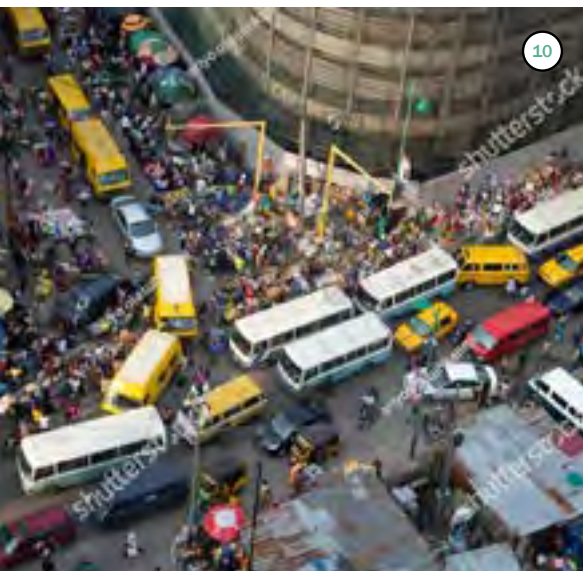


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**NEXT ISSUE:**

- Marketing and the Africa Free Trade Agreement
- Guerrilla Marketing strategies
- Marketing in the boardroom

# Institute Of Marketing in Malawi

## BECOME **A MEMBER**

### Our Vision

To develop Marketers in  
positions of Influence

### What we do

- Promoting professional development of Marketers in Malawi
- Setting best marketing practice standards
- Offering professional marketing training courses
- Networking marketers
- Organising marketing events
- Providing guidance to marketing students

### Membership

We have Individual Member categories and  
Corporate Member categories

Your Way Up

# Introducing the African Marketing Confederation

**T**HE AFRICAN MARKETING Confederation is the ground-breaking pan-African body of marketing professionals spearheading the ongoing development of the highest possible standards of marketing across Africa.

Founded in 2011, the AMC is a collaboration between the various national marketing bodies and associations to exchange expertise and information, as well as to promote the marketing profession as a whole.

By unifying the bodies in the various countries, the AMC is positioned to

exchange expertise and information, provide intellectual capital and to ensure that the continent has a platform for like-minded marketing professionals at the highest level. The AMC aims to grow and support Leaders in Marketing in Africa, through this platform.

The AMC founding members are also fully committed to observing each country's unique and varying cultures, languages, standards of education and levels of development which require home-grown marketing approaches designed and nurtured by Africans themselves.

## THE MOROCCAN ASSOCIATION OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Moroccan Association of Marketing and Communications (AMMC) was created in late 2013 as a dedicated platform to the country's marketing and communication communities – including managers, directors and officers from large, medium and small companies operating in the private and public sectors. AMMC members contribute to strategic thinking related to topics and themes of common interest and organise networking and experience-sharing events. AMMC's vision is to become the Moroccan reference for marketing and communication. Its defined mission is to promote the marketing and communication professions, to develop the skills and knowledge of professionals and to participate actively in the economic welfare of Morocco. <https://www.facebook.com/AMMC.Maroc/>



## CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF MARKETING, GHANA

The Chartered Institute of Marketing, Ghana (CIMG) was founded in July 1981 with the vision to be the voice of marketing practice in Ghana under the Professional Bodies Registration Act 1973 (NRCD143). The Institute aims at seeing organizations (both private and public) embrace the marketing concept, and be marketing oriented in their operations. In 2020, the CIMG received a Presidential Charter by the passage of the CIMG Act 2020 (Act 1021) with the main objects to set standards for the practice of marketing and to regulate the practice of the marketing profession in the country. [Visit Website](#)



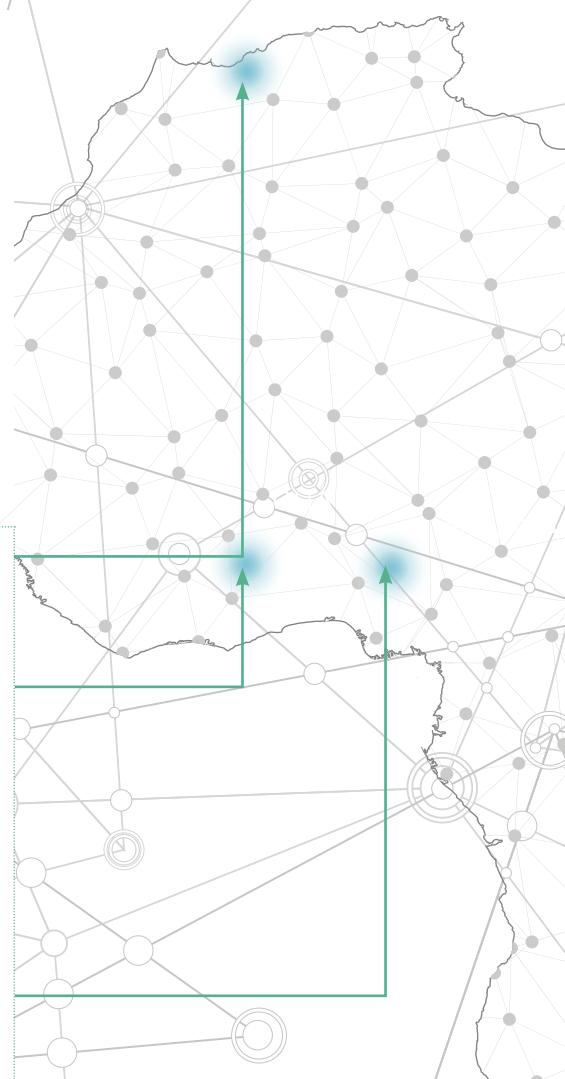
## NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MARKETING OF NIGERIA

The National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria is the body of professionals engaged in marketing and related fields as marketing practitioners: sales and marketing directors, commercial directors, customers' managers, media planners, channel developers, creative directors, value builders, brand directors, corporate and institutional governors, transformers, communication experts, general manager and chief executives. [Visit Website](#)

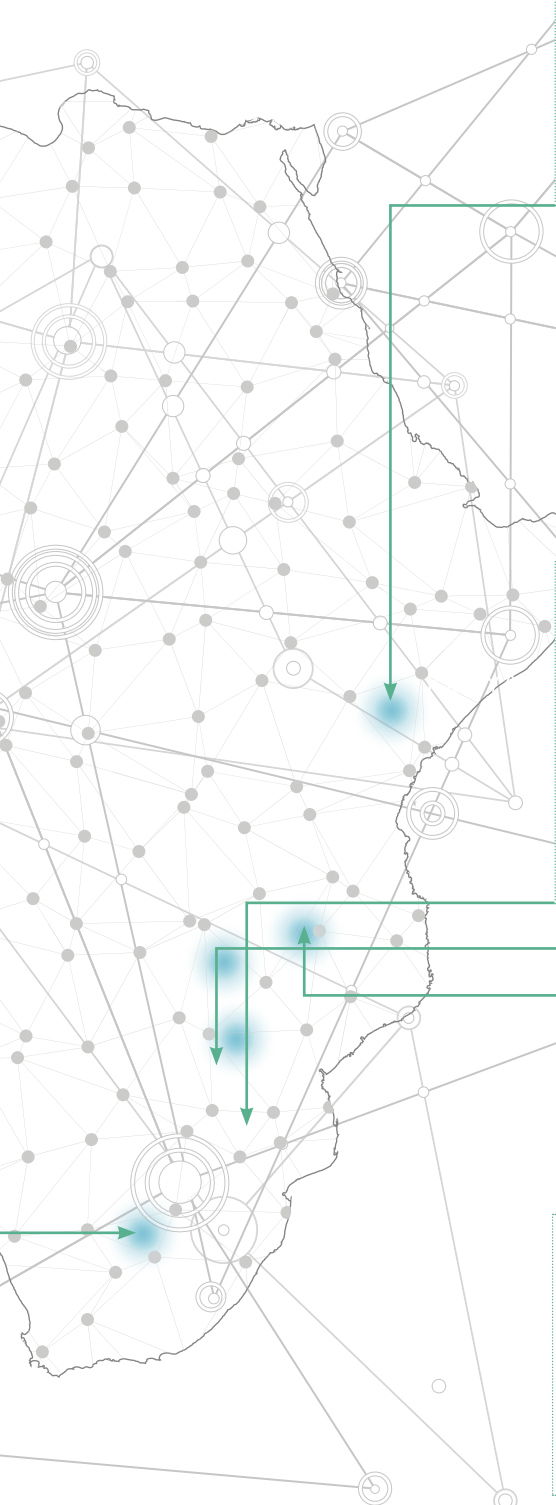


## IMM INSTITUTE

The IMM Institute has for decades been the pre-eminent marketing institution in Southern Africa. It is reinvigorating the brand through the launch of a wide range of value-added products and services for marketing professionals that are members of the IMM Institute in either an INDIVIDUAL or CORPORATE capacity. Together with its partners in the African Marketing Confederation (AMC), the IMM intends to build the largest network of marketing professionals in Africa.







### MARKETING SOCIETY OF KENYA

The Marketing Society of Kenya started as the Advertising Society of Kenya in 1962. It became the Marketing Society of Kenya in 1968. The first chairperson was Nigel Crouch, the then MD of Cadbury Schweppes. The Society's main objectives are to develop, acknowledge and practice the profession of marketing, to provide services to members, and to offer a platform for self-regulation for practicing marketers.

[Visit Website](#)



### THE ZAMBIA INSTITUTE OF MARKETING

The Zambia Institute of Marketing is a membership organisation regulating the practice of marketing in Zambia as provided for in the Zambia Institute of Marketing Act No. 14 of 2003. The Institute is affiliated to the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry. The broad operating moralities of the Institute include: apolitical stance; impartiality and common good; capacity building; networking; and effective communication.

[Visit Website](#)



### MARKETERS ASSOCIATION OF ZIMBABWE

The Marketers Association of Zimbabwe was launched in 2007 with a vision to be a leading body of marketing professionals promoting professionalism of the highest standards and establishing channels of career development for the benefit of organisations and the economy at large.

[Visit Website](#)



### INSTITUTE OF MARKETING IN MALAWI

Institute of Marketing in Malawi (IMM) was formed in 2020 after transitioning from what was CIM Malawi Members Group which was formed in 2010. IMM is committed to ensuring that interests and needs of its members and stakeholders are understood and catered for throughout the organisation and the wider industry. Currently, IMM is the largest community of professional marketers in Malawi involved in several marketing activities such as networking of marketers in Malawi, organizing marketing events and training courses, setting best marketing practice standards in Malawi, promoting professional development of Marketers, study and education guidance to marketing students among others. IMM has become the face of Marketing in Malawi with the organization now referred to as the benchmark of marketing standards in the country.

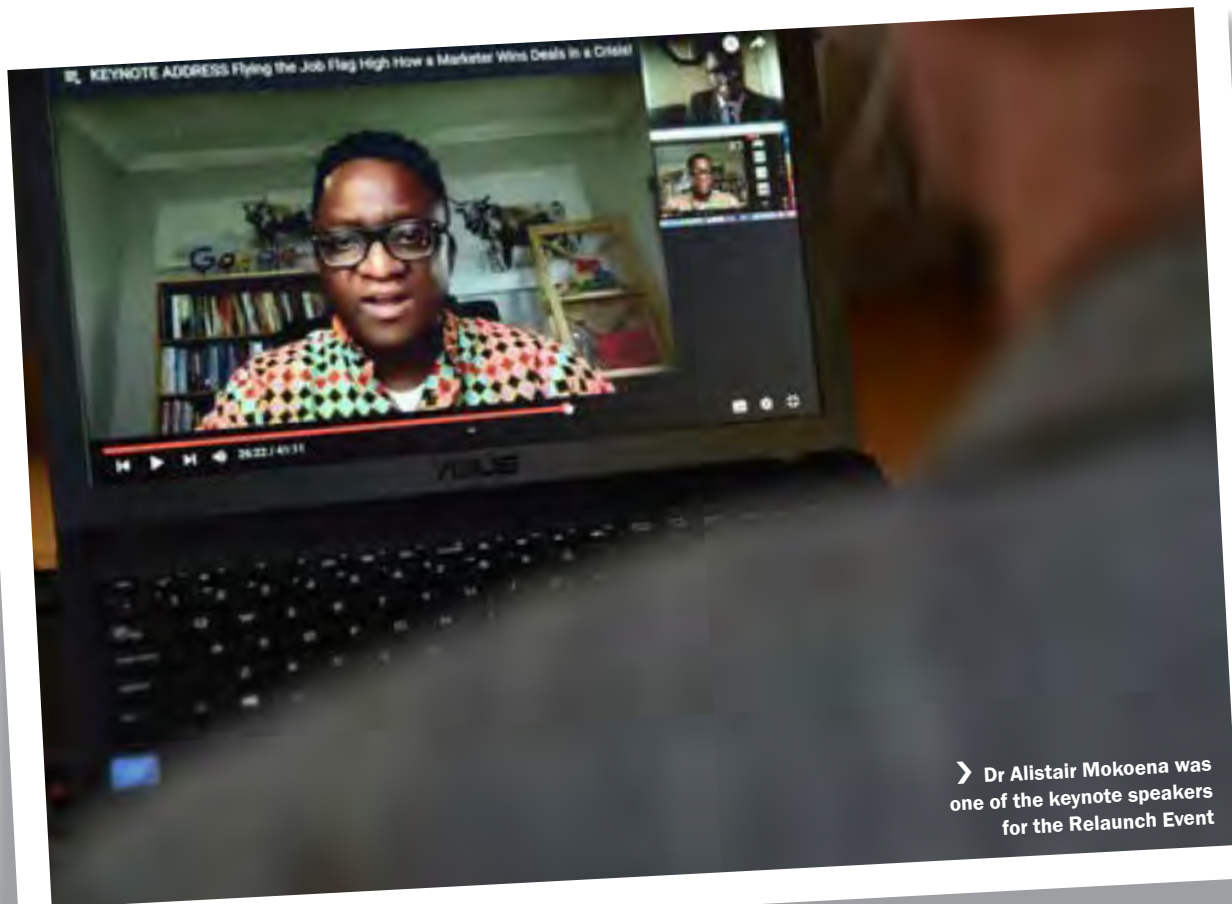


### INSTITUTE OF MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT, MAURITIUS

Established in 1991, the Institute of Marketing & Management is the leading professional marketing education and training institution of Mauritius.

[Visit Website](#)





➤ Dr Alistair Mokoena was one of the keynote speakers for the Relaunch Event

# Revamped marketers' body takes wing across Africa

African Marketing Confederation comes back into the spotlight with continent-wide online relaunch event.

**T**HE OFFICIAL RELAUNCH Event for the African Marketing Confederation (AMC) took place on Thursday, 30 September before an expectant audience of marketers, academics and businesspeople from across the continent and even further afield.

Delegates were treated to a formal welcome and explanation of the aims and objectives of the AMC, presentations by prominent guest speakers, a panel discussion, and messages from well-wishers expressing their support for the Confederation in its journey.

In his introduction, Mediacy Mudekwa, the Master of Ceremonies for the day, emphasised that the role of marketers in Africa had changed rapidly and fundamentally due to the pandemic and the need to embrace new technologies and revised ways of doing business.

## AMC VISION DATES BACK TO 2011

In her welcoming address, AMC President Helen McIntee emphasised



### *Vision for an Africa-wide confederation*

that the vision for a continent-wide marketing confederation had begun as far back as 2011.

“The vision was two-pronged. We realised Africa’s potential and its variety of languages and cultures etc – yet there was no pan-African organisation emphasising the need for marketing strategies tailored to local needs and with local empathy. The other prong was our passion for marketing and the need for businesses operating in Africa to embrace marketing so as to bring together consumers and appropriate products,” she explained.

“The AMC was born as a pan-African marketing umbrella body connecting all the national marketing associations. Now we have nine members and hope to have four more soon.”

With the theme of the Relaunch Event being “Connecting marketing professionals”, there was a clear and immediate need to start looking at new rules, new ways of doing business, and new approaches across Africa, McIntee said.

### SIGNIFICANT UPSIDE FOR ASTUTE INVESTORS

One of the two Keynote Speakers for the Relaunch was Afro-optimist, commentator and author of two business books about Africa, Victor Kgomoewana.

In his presentation, Kgomoewana said he was confident that, over the next 50 years, Africa would offer significant upside for the astute investor, despite current Covid-induced challenges. “Africa is attractive and it will bounce back,” he said.

For businesses and investors interested in the agricultural sector, for example, there was the reality that Africa occupied 20% of the world’s surface, but with only 15% of the population. A good climate and an abundance of arable land meant Africa “could be the food garden of the world for the next 100 years or so”.

### ➤ *Young demographic has great potential*

“Similarly, Africa’s young demographic means that there is great potential if you are in consumer goods and in retail. Consumers are there and urbanisation is growing. Marketers know the implications of this,” Kgomoewana emphasised.

### THERE IS NO PLAYBOOK AND NO PRECEDENT FOR THE PANDEMIC

In his keynote address Dr Alistair Mokoena, university professor and Country Director for Google South Africa, said he believed the AMC was a fantastic

initiative by marketers on the continent to unite in mutual support, particularly given that there was “no playbook and no precedent for how to do business during the pandemic”.

He noted that African marketers were already having to negotiate a range of new challenges. These included the phasing out of third-party cookies, increased data privacy demands by consumers, the unexpectedly rapid online migration of consumers as a result of the pandemic, and a consequent shortage of digital marketing skills.

“A three-year [digital] evolution was shortened into a period of a few months. The media landscape is now heavily fragmented and we have gone from the Four Ps of Marketing to the Seven Ps,” Mokoena said.

The Relaunch Event concluded with breakout meetings of the AMC Events and Publishing committees. ■

## Messages of support for the Confederation

Several prominent members of the African marketing and business community were present on the day with pre-recorded messages of solidarity and support for the African Marketing Confederation. Among them:

**Hon. Monica Mutsvangwa. Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services, Zimbabwe.**

“I recognise and applaud the role being played by the African Marketing Confederation. We express support and solidarity in your quest to implement the highest possible standards of marketing across the continent.”

**Jessie Simukoko. Acting President, Zambia Institute of Marketing.**

“Now, more than ever, marketers need to rise to the occasion; break barriers and be trendsetters in coming up with the most innovative ways of adequately meeting our clients’ needs. We are passionate about creating valuable networks that will enhance our profession ... and believe the AMC will do just that.”

**Christina Zakeyo. Principal Secretary, Ministry of Trade, Malawi.**

“The Government of Malawi, through the Minister of Trade, wishes to extend its warmest wishes to the AMC on its relaunch. This is an important milestone for the continent of Africa and we are pleased that Malawi is part of this through our own Institute of Marketing.”



**John McCoy, Assistant Professor of Marketing, The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, USA.**

“Marketing is about figuring out what consumers want and how you can create and deliver value to consumers. Along the way, of course, extracting a chunk of that value for yourself. Across Africa, I see so many opportunities to use marketing in this way.”



# Why **'Culture'** is the new marketing currency on the continent

**Cara Bower** reports on an extensive consumer study in four countries aimed at 'capturing the energy and spirit that drives the people in our region'.

**N**EW INSIGHTS INTO THE African consumer are revealing an increasingly confident, connected, creative and culturally aware continent.

This is according to an extensive study involving more than 3 500 conversations during July 2021 with urban consumers across Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa to determine the defining trends across these key regions and their relevance to the marketing fraternity.

The result of these dialogs is the *2021-2022 Africa Life* report compiled by data analytics and brand consulting company Kantar; a wealth of insights for marketers, brands and businesses focused on the African continent.



While acknowledging the limits resulting from a sample of just four countries, Ndeye Diagne, Kantar's Managing Director for West Africa, commented during the official launch of the report that "we are confident that we are capturing the energy and spirit that drives the people in our region". Already, however, the company is hoping to expand its research to include Ethiopia and Egypt for the 2023-2024 study.

While tracking these trends is pivotal for any brand looking to do business in African markets in 2022 and beyond, one pervasive trend stood out for special mention: The cultural revolution permeating how consumers in Africa interact with brands and how

brands, in turn, are being asked to craft messaging that resonates with the essence of being African.

While it is relatively easy to track internet penetration in the various countries and to follow mobile phone and social media usage, this cultural revolution is harder to box, more complex to measure and fundamentally unique to each market on the continent.

Culture, believe the authors of the Kantar report, is the "new marketing currency" of Africa. And it is a trend that can be both a friend or a foe if marketers fail to heed the warning signs.

#### **FOUR PRIMARY DRIVERS OF AFRICA'S MEGA-TRENDS**

In a report that spanned mega-trends and smaller sub-themes, four primary drivers came through strongly in the 2021-2022 *Africa Life* study:

- The role of technology;
- Identity and the culture opportunity;
- The impact of a connected, impassioned and purpose-driven youth; and
- The women of Africa.

Understanding how the shifts revealed in these trends were playing out would create exciting opportunities for Africans to leapfrog old, established ways and build multimillion-dollar businesses, commented Fred Swaniker, Founder and CEO of the African Leadership Group. Ghanaian entrepreneur Swaniker, alongside Kantar South Africa's CEO, Ivan Moroke, set the stage for the unveiling of the report by recapping the business case for having a presence in Africa.

With a total population of some 1.3-billion people, Swaniker noted that by the end of this century Africa would comprise around 40% of the world's population. A major demographic boon.

"We are eventually going to be a huge market," he said. "If you look at the combined GDP of Africa, which today is about US\$2-trillion, that is only going to grow over the next century as our population grows."

Many of the opportunities associated with this sort of coveted market would doubtless be explored and exploited by Africa's new breed of young hustlers, who "are popping up in every city on

the continent”, said Serah Katusia, Kenyan-based MD of GroupM: East and Central Africa & SSA Coordination Lead. GroupM is a leading international media investment company.

**YOUNG, GIFTED, CREATIVE, POSITIVE AND CONNECTED**

Katusia was upbeat about the potential for Africa’s creative, connected youth, who are increasingly urbanised and fiercely positive about their futures.

One question posed to youngsters in the Generation Z cohort (aged 24 and younger) was to rate whether “one of my goals is to be among those who achieve financial success in life”. In Nigeria and Kenya, 96% of this generational group offered a resounding “yes”, with 94%

in Senegal affirming this view and 87% in South Africa.

Using the technology, digital connections, tertiary education options and skills at their disposal, Africa’s youth were driving content creation to an all-time high and, in the process, democratising content, said Katusia.

➤ *Young Africans want brands that connect*

“Young Africans are creators, of content, of business, and also of movement. They are looking for brands that can connect with them beyond just being a customer; brands that

are willing to go deeper, stretch into uncharted territory and resonate with them,” she observed.

For example, said Katusia, the youth are driving a powerful and evolving social commerce concept on the continent, simply because of choice and convenience.

“In Tanzania you would rather buy something from Instagram than buying through any other shopping app. Why? Because this is a place you already interact with and young people are finding it easier to do social commerce than any other commerce,” she explained.

It’s just an indication of how Africa’s youth are bending technology to their will.

**TAPPING INTO THE TECH REVOLUTION IN AFRICA**

The digital revolution and role of technology were singled out in the report for their transformative impact on Africa, and for their ability to unlock new possibilities and augment existing opportunities.

As the *Africa Life* report stated: “The future of the continent is rapidly being reshaped by the digital creativity of its people, especially that of younger generations. There’s no prospective view or growth possibilities without a thorough understanding of how digital is reshaping African lifestyles.”

The report highlighted Africa’s growing internet usage numbers compared with the 2019 *Africa Life* study, with Nigeria at 77% usage, Kenya at 72%, Senegal at 76% and South Africa at 92%. Among these users, the Generation Z cohort was the most connected group across sub-Saharan Africa, achieving 91% penetration in Senegal among 20 to 24-year-olds and 98% among 15 to 19-year-olds in South Africa.

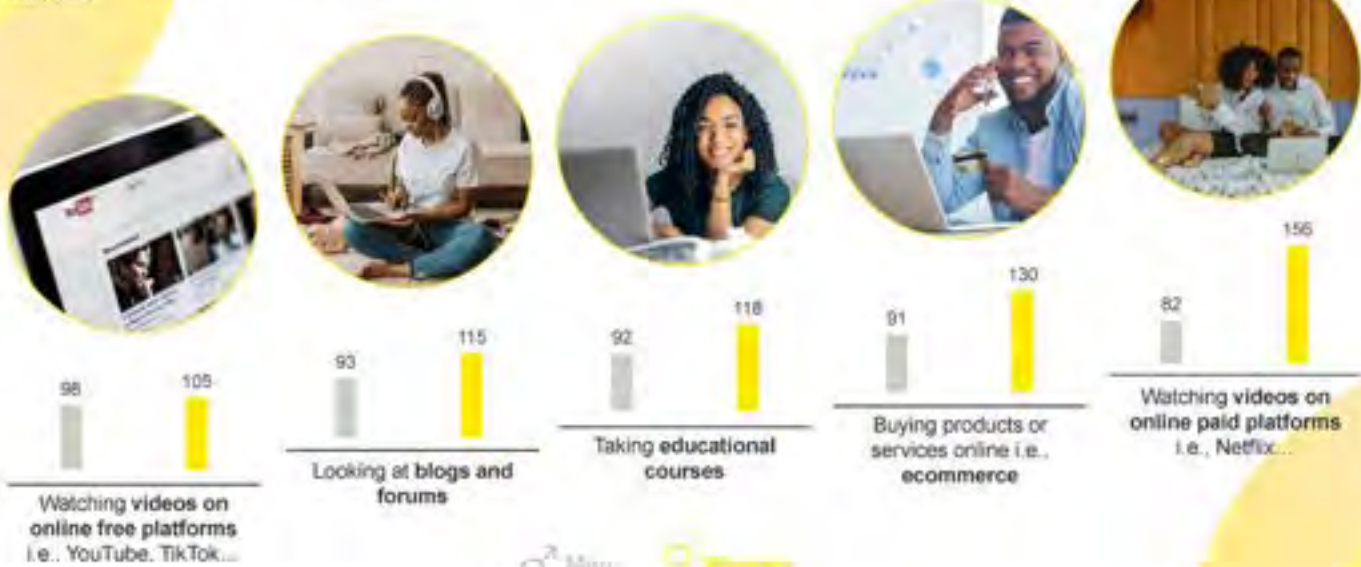
The youth were also behind the rise of gaming in Africa; an increasingly valuable and emerging industry. Senegal topped the gaming use figures at 92%, with Kenya following at 84%, South Africa and 79% and Nigeria at 76%.



➤ Ndeye Diagne, Kantar’s Managing Director for West Africa

## Comparison of online activities

Index levels



Source: Kantar Africa Life Report

Other key statistics confirmed the African consumer's growing love affair with mobile technology, notably:

- 53% of Africans in the four markets viewed videos via streaming, largely using mobile internet access.
- 34% were downloading audio/video files, highlighting the growing influence of the internet across these key markets.
- 28% downloaded smartphone apps, highlighting the "growing dependency on digital options and solutions".

### AFRICA'S RAPIDLY EVOLVING SOCIAL MEDIA PREFERENCES

While 64% of Africans surveyed were active on social networks and 74% used instant messaging platforms to chat at affordable rates, the *Africa Life* report noted that consumers were not married to a particular platform. In fact, emerging trends show clearly shifting allegiances.

In particular, the report highlighted the rise of the TikTok platform, which it projected had seen an explosion to around 53% usage among connected Senegalese, 26% in South Africa, 23% in Kenya and 16% in Nigeria, from an

estimated base of about 5% just two years ago.

Other research firms put TikTok's gain in market share even higher, with Statista noting a 31.9% hike in market share in Nigeria in 2020 and the *South African Social Media Landscape 2021* report recording that the country's TikTok users grew from five million to nine million since January 2020.

Notably, the second-biggest TikTok account globally is that of Senegalese-born Khaby Lame, a TikToker now based in Italy and with a cool 118-million followers (as at November 2021).

### ➤ Female internet users are increasing rapidly

However, as Diagne noted, this social media trend is still very much in its early stages. So watch this space, particularly as the number of women internet users continues to rise across the continent.

### URBAN WOMEN ARE DRIVING AFRICAN INTERNET GROWTH

Another significant trend being driven by technology was the higher internet usage being recorded among urban

women in Africa. Diagne pointed to a notable hike in Nigeria, with internet usage by women escalating from 50% in 2019 to 72% in 2021.

"That presents 44% growth of internet usage among the female population; that is 22% nationwide. It's safe to say women are driving internet growth in Nigeria and, by the way, 64% of them now possess a smartphone," said Diagne.

In addition, she explained: "While men are still more connected than women in Nigeria is absolute terms, and tend to do more activities online, in one dimension it's the opposite: Women buy more online than men in Nigeria."

It's not just e-commerce; women watched more videos on online free platforms and used paid-for platforms more. They also consumed more blogs and forums, and took more educational courses. With this trend likely being accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, Diagne said these rising numbers could have a profound impact on successful digital strategies; putting gender equality at the forefront of marketing strategy and giving flight to new voices and potentially new trends to monitor in the future.



**Women lead ecommerce in Nigeria**

**A shift that no brand can afford not to action.**



Source: Kantar Africa Life Report

**WINNING IN THIS RAPIDLY CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

In this fast-changing African environment, amidst exciting shifts in behaviours, consumption patterns, decision-making and expectations, GroupM’s Katusia offered up the sage advice that brands operating in Africa must fall back on tailored, data-driven approaches – particularly if they “hope to connect in a unique and meaningful manner with the most connected generation of our times”.

Katusia commented that brands should “use data and insights in a smart and agile manner”; they should understand their audience deeply and “use the levers to build brand growth”.

Above all, said Diagne, energy, drive and possibility should be at the core of any meaningful interaction with Africa’s consumers – even in the midst of a global pandemic. ■

*Cara Bower is a Johannesburg-based writer, journalist and editor. Her words appear in media articles around the world, in business case studies, insight reports and corporate copywriting. She is also an experienced ghost writer. @carabouwer*



➤ Africa’s youth are bending technology to their will

PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK, KANTAR, OLA DAPO FROM PEXELS



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▲ Marketer and author  
Feyi Olubodun

# Is Africa's middle class consumer segment shrinking due to Covid?

Author and marketer, **Feyi Olubodun**, attracted widespread attention with his first book. The updated version promises new surprises about the continent's consumers.

**J**UST THREE SHORT YEARS after publishing his popular book, *The Villager: How Africans Consume Brands*, Nigerian marketing executive Feyi Olubodun is revisiting the concept of the 'African village' with updated takeaways, fresh insights and a refined engagement framework for brands looking to connect with the African consumer.

Unsurprisingly, the rapid changes brought about by the pandemic have proved an important catalyst for fresh insights and new research by Olubodun, who is Founder and Managing Partner of Open Squares Africa, a marketing strategy consulting firm, and former CEO of creative agency Insight Publicis Nigeria.

He sat down with *Strategic Marketing for Africa* to answer some important questions.

## When can we expect an update of *The Villager*?

We are actually busy with a body of work. One is likely to be an updated version of *The Villager*, with the working title *The Villager 2.0*, which speaks to issues around digital, what has changed post-Covid, and how it has affected consumers.

Secondly, because we now have data from three regions on the continent – South Africa, East Africa and Nigeria – we've developed the framework [outlined in *The Villager*] into a suite of consulting



tools. This working title is *The Village Map*, and the objective is to show how to apply the framework and use it across the continent. At least one of these books will be published in 2022.

### Can you give us a peek at the marketing trends emerging from Covid?

The whole Covid experience has highlighted the stark difference between the Western world and Africa. It's become very clear that Africa is a very communal continent, we are organised around families and households, whereas the West is around individuals, their personal pursuits and capabilities.

It is clearer to businesses now that they must engage the African consumer differently, that while the principles of marketing and doing business are the same wherever you are in the world, you've got to apply an

African lens to the African environment, and then adapt your approaches to that.

### Does this mean we shouldn't concentrate on global trends in Africa?

There is a lot of embracing of global trends by Africans, but we are not seeing an outright embracing of or a copy-and-paste approach to Western trends and values – instead we are adapting everything we are seeing in an African fashion. This has made more clients interested in looking at things from an African point of view.

### The pandemic has highlighted the impact of poverty across Africa; what does this mean for brands operating on the continent?

It has shown that Africa is still a bottom-

of-the-pyramid market – in some countries the size of the informal market is as high as 70%. As a result of poverty and income, consumers are being forced to go back to the informal market to create new ways of consuming products and brands, and companies are being forced to try understand these markets and how to engage with them. The companies that are doing this really well are making good progress.

### With incomes adversely affected by the pandemic, how is this impacting consumer priorities?

We've done a bit of work around this issue. One of the pieces of data to emerge is that consumers have now shifted very sharply in their consumption habits. Pre-Covid the split was approximately 54% on essentials, 46% on non-essentials. Now, essentials

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are 87% of consumer spend and 17% on non-essentials. It is likely to stay like this all the way to 2025, at least.

### **What are the implications?**

Notably, the definition of the household has shifted. Previously, the household was organised around a patriarchal or matriarchal entity – mother, father, children. Now the household is arranged around income, which means a group of people [not necessarily related] living together under the same roof who are living off one, maybe two, income sources.



### ***Africa is a continent based on community***

This unit emerged during Covid, due to lockdowns and increased unemployment, and it is indicative of Africa's rising dependency ratio which is normally about two in the West – but around eight, on average, across Africa. The number of dependents on the same income is significantly higher, which means the real value of the middle class in Africa is shrinking.

### **How can companies respond to this?**

Companies must now consider the implications of how they market to these households, rather than to individuals.

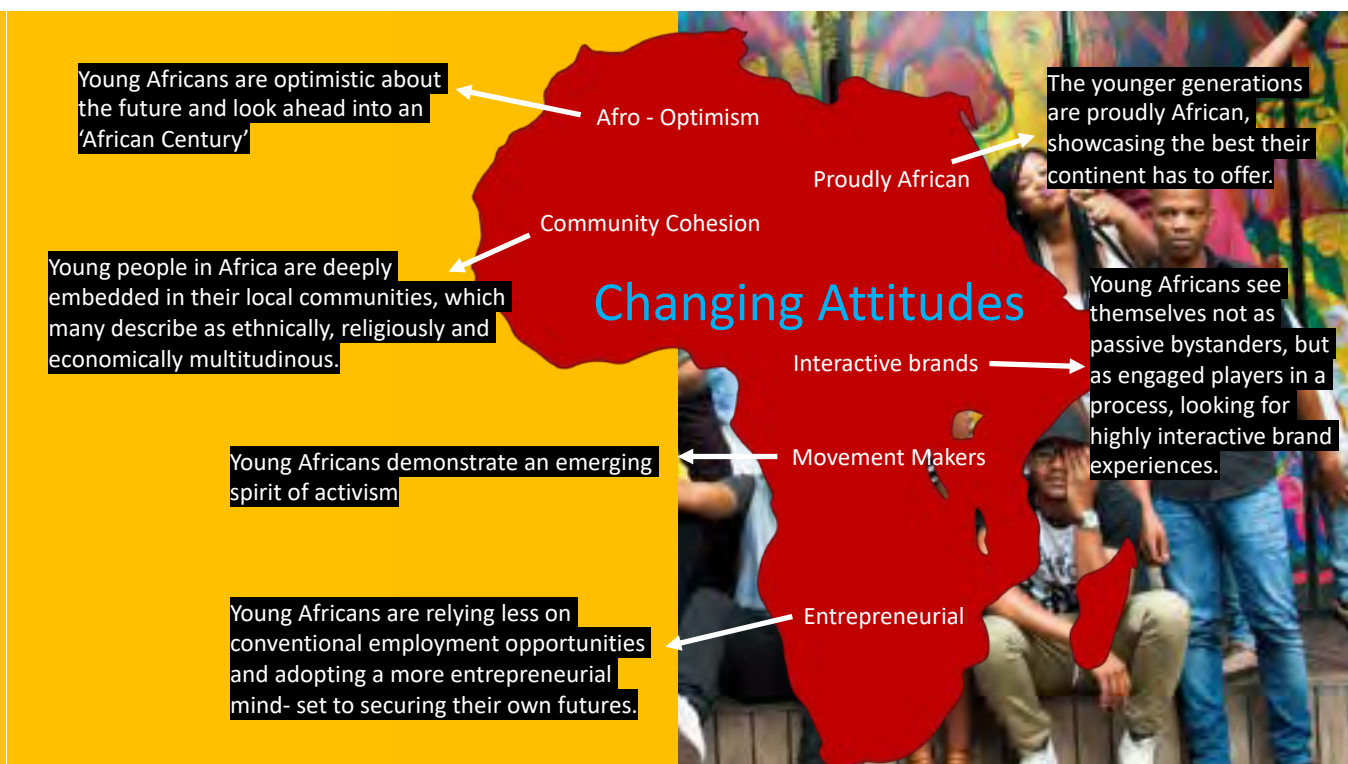
### **Turning to the youth, how are they shifting consumer preferences and habits?**

The youth would rather build something for themselves than pursue a career. A lot of this is being influenced by the younger generation, Millennials [aged 25 to 39] and Gen Z [25 and younger].

The rapid adoption of digital and tech in Africa, which is giving rise to a generation of influencers who have attained rapid wealth and success through entrepreneurship. This trend



^ It has become clear that Africa is a very communal continent, organised around families and households



▲ Africa's youth are shifting consumer preferences

Source: Open Squares Africa

is also being impacted by the growth of 'Afropolitanism' – blending global trends with African beliefs – and the fact that the youth are rallying around causes; so they expect brands to take a position (either formally or informally) on a cause, and this cause has to be African in nature.

**Based on these insights how could a luxury brand, for instance, connect with Africa's young consumers?**

One of the ways you recruit a future customer base is to let them experience your brand. The other thing is to create opportunities for micro-entrepreneurship across the value chain.

For instance, how can you create opportunities for youth to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams along your value chain? This approach means you are building loyalty and affinity even before the youth get

to the income level where they can afford your product. You've built some love and can harvest that equity a few years down the line.

**Which marketing channels are still most effective?**

One thing that has definitely gone up is digital marketing and it is gradually evolving beyond putting an ad on Instagram or Facebook. For example, [smartphone group] TECNO in Nigeria has held multiple virtual product launches which previously would have been physical product launches, as well as watch parties.

Another thing I've seen, and I think it is brilliant, is the use of micro-influencers. While the macro big names give you awareness and affinity, micro-influencers give you credibility and purchase, and is more likely to result in behaviour change. Notably,

this is also getting through to households.

**What advice do you have for marketers when it comes to engaging with African consumers?**

Africa is a continent in which you need to take a long-term view. The dynamics are so nuanced and they can shift so rapidly, that if you respond too extremely to any trend or dynamic that you see in the short term, without framing it in the context of a long-term possibility and potential, it may not serve your business very well.

Also, don't be too quick to overemphasise Western trends. I've seen this mistake being made again and again, with huge budgets being put towards marketing programmes and initiatives, or commercials, just to tap into top trends. Then the trend fizzles and the brand has to restart its storytelling. ■

PHOTO: TRACEY MCDONALD PUBLISHERS. AUGUST DE RICHELIEU FROM PEXELS), OPEN SQUARES AFRICA

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# AMC's conference will navigate Africa's **unique** marketing mix

What's changed for Africa's marketers in the wake of the pandemic? How have consumer needs evolved? These topics, and more, will be under the spotlight.

**T**HE AFRICAN MARKETING Confederation's first Conference, taking place online on the **23rd and 24th of March 2022**, is shaping up to be the must-attend pan-African event for marketing professionals in Africa, and those looking to do business on the continent.

Themed as *Navigating Africa's Unique Marketing Mix*, the event explores the real challenges and opportunities of doing business in Africa from a marketing perspective.

Covid has made it imperative for marketing leaders to adopt strategies that enable business continuity, customer stability and revenue growth during an unpredictable and unprecedented moment in history. The pandemic has shifted the way marketers must position their products and penetrate the African market for the foreseeable future.

Consumer attitudes have evolved, purchasing habits are different, the

sense of community has changed, consumption habits are not what they used to be. But the opportunity for marketers remains immense!

## THE AFRICAN CONTINENT CONTINUES TO BUZZ!

We are now seeing the adoption of technology in Africa at an accelerated rate, and the ready availability of digital platforms is effectively changing the way marketers can communicate with their client base. Africa is a continent like no other and it is still buzzing! In approximately five years' time, there will be around 625-million mobile services subscribers on the continent. That's three times the population of the United States.

The AMC Conference 2022 will outline what it takes to be a top marketer in Africa and what trends you need to watch in order to make a positive contribution within your organisation. Its focus will be on offering solutions for marketers

across the continent and providing practical tools to use when tapping into this diverse audience.

### Programme topics include:

- How to market in Africa, a continent with over 2 000 languages and more than 3 000 diverse tribes.
- Marketing trends in Africa that marketers must not ignore.
- Understanding the legislative requirements for setting up multinational businesses in Africa from a marketing perspective.
- How to do business in Africa – the role of marketing in building effective and convenient distribution networks that will ensure supply even in times of crisis.

Participating countries to date are: South Africa; Zimbabwe; Zambia; Malawi; Kenya; Ghana; Nigeria; Mauritius; Malawi; Morocco.

"The continent is fortunate to have several conferences and events that focus on specific elements of pan-African marketing, such as media research and advertising creativity," says Helen McIntee, President of the AMC. "But few, if any, take an impartial overview of all the elements of the African marketing mix. Our conference aims to do just that."

For more information regarding how to register, please send an email to: [events@africanmarketingconfederation.org](mailto:events@africanmarketingconfederation.org). For general information on the African Marketing Confederation, please visit: [www.africanmarketingconfederation.org](http://www.africanmarketingconfederation.org) ■



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# African marketers and the science of the online business pitch

Pitching a new campaign to a client, or a revised strategy to management, is stress-inducing. Doing it online has added a new dimension, writes **Aurelia Mbokazi**.

**O**NLINE MEETINGS AND pitches are here to stay. African marketers and their various specialist agencies have not only adopted strategies for conducting profitable business on digital platforms, but also came up with ways to address regional quirks which could otherwise jeopardise doing business online.

Fanny Namonde, Marketing Manager for the Malawi Institute of Management and also a Council Secretary for the Institute of Marketing in Malawi, says

the two organisations reacted to the 'new normal' differently.

## ➤ *First strategic plan was finalised online*

The Institute of Management abandoned online training due to challenges that include poor connectivity and limited participation by students. However, the Institute of Marketing fully

embraced digital technology, hosting the majority of their meetings online.

"Only the President and I are based in Lilongwe, the rest of our exco members are in Blantyre. Switching to online meetings enabled us to save on travel costs and also host regular meetings," she explains. Namonde says she presented the organisation's first strategic plan during an online meeting that took place from 9am-5pm.

"Everyone was very happy that we were able to come up with and finalise



a strategic plan for the first time in the history of our organisation. Apart from meetings, the institute also hosts regular training sessions and webinars.”

### **Distractions are a problem**

While in favour of online platforms for ease of business, Namonde says the inability of attendees to avoid distractions in their homes while attending online meetings can be disheartening.

Godfrey Koti, head of Corporate Affairs at the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and President of the Zimbabwe Institute of Public Relations, admits that the shift to doing business on digital platforms allowed his organisation to pivot and replicate experiences that were previously only enjoyed once tourists were physically on the ground.

As the tourism authority, it also invested in a digital platform that allowed for a 100% virtual experience for exhibitions. “The platform hosted over 200 exhibitors, the first to host an exhibition of this magnitude in Africa,” he shares.

To attract audiences to Zimbabwe destination platforms, the authority tapped into film-making techniques to keep people engaged. For example, when showcasing the Victoria Falls online, the marketing team used drones to take close-up shots from different angles and added a distinct voice-over that amplified the viewer’s experience.

Koti adds that, at first, the transition by members of the Zimbabwe Institute of Public Relations to online meetings was difficult because they had been accustomed to long networking sessions over drinks. But they have since adapted and have drinks at home over Zoom while interacting with industry colleagues.

### **A cost and time saver**

Running a lean team, Lute L. Mwelo, CEO of the Zambia Institute of Marketing, says despite the country leaning towards old ways of doing business following vaccination, the institute will continue hosting

hybrid meetings, with more online engagements to save costs and time.

“Online meetings allow us to manage our time effectively without delays due to someone being stuck in traffic,” she observes.

Mwelo says her organisation partnered with other stakeholders to ramp up the quality of their online meetings. Recently, the institute hosted a webinar to debate the national budget allocation to the sector, which attracted over 100 people to the event. To minimise technical glitches, the panel met in a broadcasting studio that had a back up to the usual power supply in case of power cuts.

Beatrice Tonhodzayi, a branding and reputation management specialist who is Account Manager in the Digital, PR and Media Relations team in the APO Group, says the focus for doing business online has moved from maintaining productivity to being profitable and advises marketers to be intentional in all their online engagements.

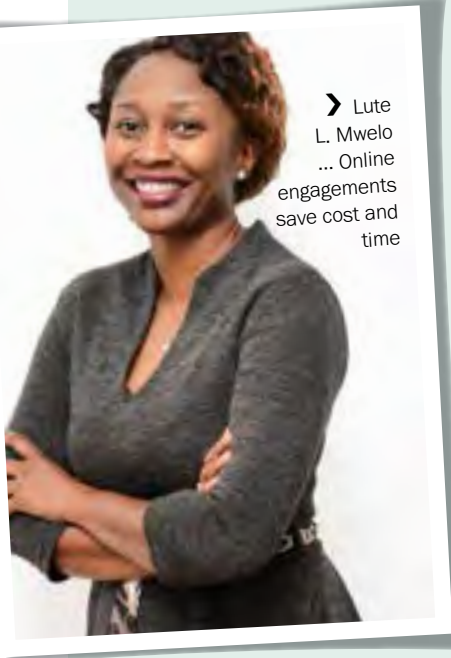
“Use every opportunity when doing business online to bring out your A-game. In my previous job, I virtually raised funds for an annual cancer walk. Even though I presented my pitches from my dining room, I was professional and I did my research about each organisation and team I was presenting to. My camera was always on, so as to establish trust with clients,” she says.

Tonhodzayi also advocates investing in greater bandwidth to ensure stable connectivity. She further advises communicators to dress formally when speaking to high-level clients online.

“Keep consistent eye contact so that people believe they have your full attention,” she adds. ■

*Aurelia Mbokazi is a freelance journalist, editor and development communications specialist with 23 years’ experience in telling impactful stories across Africa on various platforms, including print and the digital space. She has occupied leading roles in national newspapers, magazines and digital platforms.*

## Expert advice for your online marketing meetings and pitches



➤ Lute L. Mwelo ... Online engagements save cost and time

Tips for successful online meetings and pitches shared by our four experienced African marketers:

### PLANNING:

If you are the host, have clear objectives for the meeting and ensure that the theme is clear. Allocate time for each agenda item and stick to the agenda.

### TIME:

Respect everyone's time by starting and ending the meeting on time, as well as sticking to the agenda. If there are new matters arising, set up another time for a new meeting. Always join the meeting 10 minutes before the call starts to test your camera angles. The maximum acceptable time for an online engagement is two hours, anything longer than that and you run the risk losing the attention of your audience.

### NOISE:

When hosting a meeting, choose a quiet spot in your home and a time

when there is less commotion. Always mute your microphone and only unmute yourself when it is your turn to speak. If you have a burning question before the Q&A session, use the chat functionality to ask questions without interrupting the flow of the meeting.

### BACKGROUND:

Set up a professional background that will not distract people. If you have photos, paintings, illustrations or books behind you, ensure that they are tasteful and will not divert attention from the meeting when your camera is on.

### SITTING:

Sit upright, maintain a professional posture and maintain direct eye contact throughout the meeting. Slouching can come across as being disengaged.

### APPEARANCES:

Before an online meeting or pitch, make sure your face is not too shiny and your hair is not unkempt. When you look relaxed and professional, your audience will also develop trust and take you seriously.

### CAMERA:

Encourage everyone on the call to keep their cameras on during the first five minutes of the pitch to forge connections. When you address the meeting, always keep your camera on so as to be better understood.

### PRESENTATIONS:

Ensure that your presentations are well-researched, to the point and not too busy. Always keep your sentences short and action-oriented to maintain your audience's attention.

### REMEMBER NAMES:

During the meeting, refer to people by

their names and ask them questions. This encourages participants to remain engaged and also contribute to the discussion.

### DEBRIEF:

At the end of the call, summarise key points and actions before adjourning the meeting. Don't assume that people will remember what was discussed and is expected of them.

### CONNECTIVITY:

Invest in high-speed Wi-Fi from two service providers to ensure that you always have back up and are always available online during office hours, particularly when working from home.

### POWER CUTS:

These are common throughout most parts of the continent. Invest in alternative energy sources for the convenience of doing business from home and avoid having to reschedule important meetings due to load shedding. Always ensure that your gadgets are fully charged in advance. If possible, invest in back-up power sources.



➤ Fanny Namonde ... Two organisations she is involved with reacted to the 'new normal' differently



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# The continued rise of WhatsApp as a marketing tool in Africa

It started as a simple, free, messaging app for connecting families, friends and social groups. Now WhatsApp is a highly effective marketing tool in Africa. By **Eamonn Ryan**.

**I**T HAS BEEN MORE THAN 10 years since WhatsApp made its debut in Africa. Since then, it has evolved from a simple messaging service into a mainstream business marketing tool for businesses of all sizes, ranging from small and medium-sized enterprises through to corporate giants and multinational retailers.

The highest global levels of WhatsApp penetration are today to be found in sub-Saharan Africa (*GlobalWebIndex* 2020), where it has come to be used by everything from coffee shops to insurance companies and supermarkets.

Ongoing Covid woes have served to accelerate the use of WhatsApp in business as people have come to realise that technology is the answer to the barriers presented by social distancing requirements, lockdowns, border closures and an increasing reluctance by consumers to be in crowded public places.

WhatsApp was described as “absolutely dominant” by a 2018 *Quartz Africa* media report, and that has manifestly not changed since. *GlobalWebIndex* 2020, lists WhatsApp’s penetration of various countries as 97% in Kenya, 96% in South Africa and 95% in Nigeria. In other words, from a marketers’ perspective, it is near-ubiquitous in many African countries.

## A MOBILE STORE-COUNTER

Sidney Ogodo, head of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, attributes its dominant position to its ease of use, ease of understanding and simplicity of downloading. He notes that “every step is user-friendly”.

It is this factor which has allowed many African businesses to make WhatsApp their digital store-counter; a place to discuss products and coordinate sales. This translates WhatsApp users into potential customers as they are able to see catalogues of what’s available without having to click on any external link, Ogodo explains.

Gillian Rusike, Secretary-General of AMC and head of the Marketers Association of Zimbabwe, says of the Zimbabwe market: “WhatsApp for Business is gaining a lot of traction among Zimbabwean companies for its quick turnaround of enquiries, making payments or resolving issues.

“Looking at Zimbabwe, in particular, I think WhatsApp is proving to be a great marketing tool for both business and the consumer. For business, it is less costly and can be used for the right targeting,” he states.

“Because it provides a two-way communication platform, the business is able to get instant feedback from customers. For the consumer, the benefit also is that it is immediate and

comes directly to the person through their phones. Because it enables both video and non-video, it can suit every occasion for consumer and business,” emphasises Rusike.

Chawa Mphande, a marketer based in Blantyre, Malawi, says: “WhatsApp is being used widely in Malawi by small businesses and big corporates alike, including banks. Many business groups have been formed on WhatsApp, for instance for buying and trading items and the marketing of those items – every type of product from agricultural to electronic equipment.

➤ *A potential client is a finger-touch away*

“It’s a fast, affordable and convenient way for marketers to get to their target market. Today, most people have smartphones, so a potential client is just a finger-touch away.”

One additional convenience of this format to customers, explains Ogodo, is the automatic ‘busy’ signal WhatsApp

gives, enabling it to be looked at later. “This way the SME doesn’t actually lose business, which might be the case with any other contacting method.

“It means that, with the help of WhatsApp, businesses can have one-on-one contact with customers (B2C) whom they already have a relationship, as well as using it for business-to-business (B2B) Interactions. It is for these reasons that it has become the most engaging marketing channel in Nigeria.”

Even without the WhatsApp business account, the free multimedia platform tied to the user’s phone number gives access to features like group chats, messaging, voice notes, images, voice/video calls, documents and the like. Ogodo says these enable almost any marketing a Nigerian small business could hope for. For the more proficient, it also permits bulk messaging and advertising through various media.

A further advantage is that usage of social media is higher among the younger generations, which fits Africa’s demographics.

**HIGH CLOSURE RATE**

WhatsApp marketing has a high closure rate compared to other marketing methods, and Ogodo puts this down to the ready acceptance of mobile telephony all over the continent. “Most people receiving a message know the sender one way or another, either personally or through recommendation. All that counts to close the sale, then, is whether what the person is offering meets your needs.”

Rusike also attributes WhatsApp’s high closure rate to its two-way nature. “It is not just the business communicating, but the customer is able to respond and negotiate on the terms within a split second.”

That WhatsApp enables communication even with someone you don’t know personally, but have their contact details, makes it great for prospecting for business. “You can liaise and conclude a sale with

**Chat option for retail customers**

Leading African retailer, Pick n Pay, recently unveiled a chat commerce solution on WhatsApp aimed at giving its nine million Smart Shopper loyalty clients near-instant access to customer care and self-service options.

Members of the programme can access a range of Pick n Pay services by sending the word “Hi” to a specified number. A menu then allows shoppers to choose which action they want to perform. Possible actions include the ability to view a member’s loyalty points balance, block lost or stolen cards, order card replacements, update personal details, locate a store, or enter competitions.

“According to [research company] Forrester, retail is leading the way in chat adoption, and we are excited to provide an engaging experience for Pick n Pay customers in chat. Consumers love chat and with the broad reach of WhatsApp it is the perfect channel,” said Pieter de Villiers, CEO and Co-Founder at Clickatell.

Clickatell is a specialist in mobile communications and chat commerce, and has operations in Nigeria, South Africa, Canada and the US. It has partnered with Pick n Pay on the project.

“We are constantly looking to improve our customer service and to make it easier for our customers to engage with us. WhatsApp is a popular communication channel, so it made sense to launch a chat option for our customers to engage with us whenever they choose,” explained John Bradshaw, Head of Omnichannel at Pick n Pay.



➤ Chawa Mphande says WhatsApp is being used widely in Malawi by small businesses and big corporates alike





a person you have never met before. The viral nature of the platform, where a message can be shared across different groups or persons, also makes it more popular,” says Rusike.

### THE FUTURE OF WHATSAPP

Notes Ogodo: “I believe SMEs in Nigeria will embrace WhatsApp more and more. As social media grows as a force in marketing, the more businesses will see other opportunities to use the platforms. To what extent countries perpetuate social distancing will also determine the extent to which businesses turn to remote forms of contact and continue their uptake of social media platforms such as WhatsApp.

“It has revolutionised how many businesses market themselves – with a business in Lagos now able to consider a person in Abuja as a customer, which they might not previously have done,” he says.

“I do not see WhatsApp as a passing trend, but as a permanent feature of the marketing landscape, allowing businesses to cut marketing costs while reaching a wider audience.”

Mphande concludes: “I think it is a channel that more and more businesspeople will look to use over time. The Covid-19 pandemic made us evolve more towards digital, and this is reflected in the high take-up of WhatsApp, although the trend was already well established beforehand.”

**Additional reporting by Mike Simpson**

*Since becoming a freelance financial writer 20 years ago, Cape Town-born and LL.B graduate Eamonn Ryan has focused on the business and financial sectors, having at one time or another written for virtually every English-language daily and weekly in the country, and been editor of four trade magazines. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/eamonn-ryan-9614901a/>*

## Auto brand also sees the benefits for clients

The South African business unit of automotive giant Renault is another that has embraced WhatsApp as a way to engage with its loyalty customers.

It recently launched a ‘Renault Drivers Club bot’ on WhatsApp that owners of its vehicles can use to locate their closest dealership by dropping a pin, check their Rewards wallet, and book their car in to make use of any special offers they have earned. They can also connect with Customer Care to get additional support.

A company spokesperson said the bot facilitated customer service in a user-friendly way and through a

familiar platform – making it easy for customers to redeem rewards, stay in contact and create an enjoyable brand experience.

Techsys Digital, the company responsible for delivering the bot solution, added: “As much of the engagements are customer-driven, this powerful pull-marketing nurtures relationships with engaged customers who want to get the most from their brand interactions. The best part is that they are steering it themselves and are therefore more invested in the outcomes and associated rewards.”

# Digital: The impact of the co-creation of value within virtual communities

Dr. Amina Lahbabi, PR & Community Engagement Lead at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University in Morocco, examines how marketers should embrace co-creation strategies.

## 1. THE CO-CREATION OF VALUE FOR THE CUSTOMER AND THE COMPANY

The development of new technologies has stimulated the rise in power of the consumer by modifying his or her relationship with the company, a bilateral relationship that is based on partnership and collaboration, giving the consumer the status of an actor.

Marketing research suggests that the client could carry out activities traditionally devolved to an organisation.

This is where the concept of the co-creation of value comes from. The co-creation is defined as a process where roles are redistributed: Products, services and experiences are designed by consumers and companies in an environment where value is not only created, but shared.

According to Cova (2008), there are four types of co-creation strategies:

– **Co-innovation:** Organisations involve consumers with a sense of creativity in the design of new products and services. This process fuels both traditional and electronic word of mouth.

– **Co-promotion:** This is the creation of content through the involvement of the consumer, for example UGC (user-generated content).

– **Co-production:** The consumer participates in creating his or her own consumption experiences.

– **Co-determination:** This process allows companies to draw up a roadmap with the different axes of development according to the needs of consumers. Long-term productive interaction is necessary for this process to be successful.

These different forms of co-creation show that the client's participation can manifest itself in several ways, at several levels, upstream or downstream.

## 2. THE CO-CREATION OF VALUE THROUGH DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Consumers can now express themselves and engage actively with companies; they are connected, informed, active and with a force not previously owned. New technologies act as facilitators of this new role held by the consumer.

These technological devices are certainly important, but not sufficient to co-create value; professionals must think about the design of these platforms in such a way as to engage consumers in activities that go beyond their traditional perimeter of consumption, towards business-oriented behaviours such as co-creating value.

Digital technology makes it possible to promote the collaboration of the service company with the customer, who appropriates the role of a partner.

Whether it is co-creator, co-producer or co-promoter of the offer, the digital element allows companies to engage internet users in their value creation process and place them at the heart of their strategies.

Since the basis of the co-creation is the interactive dialogue between the consumer and the company, this process requires an investment of financial, mental and emotional resources.

Moreover, the anxiety that some consumers may feel about technology could be a handicap to the process of co-creation of value. *Xu et al. (2016)* define technological anxiety as “the irrational anticipation of fear when using related



➤ Dr. Amina Lahbabi

technologies that can affect intent to use through avoidance or minimisation”.

Co-creating value involves the customer and the company. This ‘voluntary’ involvement goes through different stages of the service company's value chain: From the design of the service to its promotion until its evaluation.

## 3. THE CO-CREATION OF VALUE AND THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Digital creates social connectivity, personalises the offer and makes it possible to improve it through better listening to the expectations and needs of customers. Innovation is encouraged and the customer is thus encouraged to engage in action to co-create value with companies.

However, customer engagement is not systematic and depends mainly on the design of engagement platforms. The main question that concerns

professionals in general: How to engage customers in a process of co-creation of value through digital platforms?

According to *Berthon et al., (2008)*, three factors motivate the involvement of consumers in online engagement platforms:

– **Intrinsic enjoyment:** Co-create for the pleasure of creation. The expected result is in itself secondary because the experience being lived is what matters.

– **Self-promotion or self-expression:** Co-creating value to enhance oneself. The creation of value is intended to achieve a result.

– **Changing perceptions:** Influencing other members of the community by co-creating value.

Another view of the factors that push the client to engage in co-creation activities has been proposed by *Van Doorn et al., (2010)*. Three families of factors have been identified:

– **Factors linked to the consumer:** Satisfaction, commitment, trust, etc.

– **Factors linked to the context of the co-creation:** Tools for co-creation, involvement of stakeholders, etc.

– **Business-related factors:** Political, legal, economic aspects.

The level of customer engagement can also be influenced by the pursuit of profit, social connection or a sense of morality which manifests itself in the desire to help others. We will also note the desire to improve oneself in order to develop one's knowledge and know-how, as well as the desire for recognition by others as a psychological characteristic that can influence the engagement in a process of co-creation with a company.

Consumer resources such as effort, time and money can influence the level of engagement; but also corporate resources such as the reputation and the brand equity.

Digital, therefore, is certainly a way to promote the exchange and interactions between the customer and the company, but the fact remains that it lacks human contact that promotes relationships of attachment and trust. ■



## Some examples of value co-creation strategies

While the co-creation of value has become common within the digital ecosystem, there are numerous other examples around the world:

**Toy brand Lego** has an 'Ideas' platform that asks fans to post designs for new products. Those that receive sufficient votes are considered for production.

**Courier company DHL** has invited customers to its Innovation Centres to brainstorm new ideas with employees. One of the concepts that emerged was the Parcelcopter delivery drone.

**Furniture brand Made.com** has a crowdsourcing platform called TalentLAB that allows up-and-coming designers to submit their most creative design ideas.

Editor

# The use and misuse of 'envy' to drive sales



International researchers find that young women are particularly susceptible and can suffer with self-worth issues and harmful body images.



**M**ARKETERS AND SALES teams have long understood that using the emotion of envy can help to drive purchases, particularly among younger audiences in industries such as fashion and beauty.

Now a study by marketing academics at Macquarie University in Australia has revealed how the strategy can be manipulated and that young female social media users may consequently see themselves in a disturbing light.

Combining social media and envy can be a recipe for disaster, the researchers have warned, with marketers preying on the impressionable. This creates unhealthy measures of self-worth, harmful body image issues and pointless competition,

The long-suspected fraught nature of the relationship between young women

and social media has been confirmed by research conducted by Lawrence Ang, Associate Professor in Business at the Department of Marketing at Macquarie Business School, and Dr Camille Singh. The research, which involved online surveys and interviews of 335 female Facebook users aged 18–25 years, investigated the effects of envy on purchase intent.

“The main condition required for envy is upward social comparison, whereby you perceive someone is superior to yourself,” explained Singh. “People tend to compare themselves with those similar to them, especially friends and peers.

“Many women told us the number of likes and comments they get on their social media posts were a barometer for their self-worth. They are very



▲ Marketers have long used envy to elicit emotions from consumers

engaged with how they are perceived. There is also a lot of pressure to keep up with what they see on social media.”

In the age of social media, consumers are constantly exposed to idealistic images of others, arousing social emotions such as envy, the researchers noted.

“We found the effects of envy-inducing imagery was most effective for body-related products,” said Singh. “If you look at evolutionary psychology, females put high value on their physical attractiveness and the way they look – and clothes are a way you put your attractiveness on display.

### **WOMEN MORE SOCIABLE AND IMPRESSIONABLE**

“As a generalisation, women are more suggestible and impressionable

because they are more social than men. Women talk a lot more. They share a lot more.

### ➤ *Social media is a visual medium*

“We found they also engage with – and follow – people they don’t like just to see what they’re up to. They stalk these people (aka ‘frenemies’) partly because they are interested in their lives and partly in the hope of seeing them fail.”

Ang noted that while social media didn’t invent envy, it does heighten personal comparisons. “Our culture values how people look and social media is a very visual medium,” he emphasised.

“Forty-four percent of women aged between 18 and 25 reported feeling envy within the previous seven days from watching social media. This was mostly due to appearance and body image issues.

“The worst thing about this is that the images to which young women are comparing themselves are not real. They are curated. These ‘ideal’ images are used for marketing purposes to create a following.

“For young women suffering from self-image issues or existing mental health problems, social media is likely to make them more depressed. Cosmetic surgeries are rising because of social media and this makes *me* more depressed.”

The research notes that there are broadly two types of envy, which can be a challenge as the English language has only one word for both. Other cultures and languages understand that envy is more nuanced.

“In English, envy is always perceived as a negative,” says Singh. “But this is not always so when it comes to buying intentions.

### **ENVY HAS TWO SUBTYPES – BENIGN AND MALICIOUS**

“In our study of the effects of envy, we looked at two subtypes – benign envy and malicious envy – and found they trigger vastly different behavioural actions.

“Benign envy is actually inspiring and engenders a positive attitude. You perceive the ‘envied’ person to be deserving of their good fortune and associating with them stimulates pride.

“Malicious envy is the opposite. It is seen as showing off. This person doesn’t deserve their success, or body, and you want to pull them down or see them fail. In this case English borrows the German word ‘*schadenfreude*’ [pleasure derived by someone from another person’s misfortune].”

To test the difference between benign envy and malicious envy, Ang and



➤ Combining social media and envy can create unhealthy measures of self-worth

Singh asked the 335 interview subjects to gauge their attitudes – and their subsequent willingness to buy – a crop-top fashion garment presented in two different ways.

They created a profile and photo of a young, good-looking, female university student wearing the crop-top they wanted to sell. All the parameters were the same except for the captions they attached to the photo.

To elicit benign envy, the caption said the model had achieved her attractive body by exercise and a healthy diet. She was perceived as deserving.

To elicit malicious envy, the caption specified the model had achieved her attractive body through liposuction. She was perceived as undeserving.

“Crucially for marketers and advertisers, the ‘deserving’ model was far more persuasive and generated significantly more intentions to buy the crop top,” said Singh.

So, to optimise a marketing strategy on social media, creating benign envy is more beneficial than malicious envy. But is either approach really the way to go for ethical brands? The debate will, no doubt, continue. ■

## Using envy can backfire and damage brands

Other studies by marketing academics have raised doubts about the use of envy – although the focus has been more on its effectiveness as a sales strategy, rather than any moral or ethical imperative.

A 2018 study by the UBC Sauder School of Business at the University of British Columbia in Canada, for example, found that feeling envious as a result of an advertisement was less likely to result in a sale if the consumer had low self-esteem. In this instance, the strategy could backfire against the brand.

“Marketers often try to take advantage of consumers’ tendency to compare themselves to others. Does their neighbour’s lawn look healthier than theirs? Is their co-worker’s car more luxurious?” said study co-author Darren Dahl, Professor of Marketing and Behavioural Science at UBC Sauder.

“While this strategy can sometimes work, our findings suggest that when marketers use envy to sell products, they could also end up with a bunch of sour grapes instead of

sales – and potentially damage brand relationships.”

### SERIES OF EXPERIMENTS

In the study, researchers conducted a series of experiments, involving more than 500 people and two popular luxury clothing brands, where one participant possessed a product the others desired. Those who reported being confident tended to want the desired brand and remained motivated to get it.

But participants who reported a lower sense of self-worth felt worse about themselves for not having the product and generally felt unworthy of the high-status brand. To avoid a bruised ego, they often rejected the brand altogether.

Dahl did note that, while the information from the study was useful to marketers, it should also empower consumers to understand how marketers play on their psychology.

“Consumers should be aware of their emotions, and how companies are using envy to elicit those emotions,” he said.

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# Google's dominance in ad tech supply chain harms consumers

Australian consumer watchdog report delivers a damning condemnation of how Google dominates the advertising technology sector.

**A**N OFFICIAL INQUIRY BY the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) into the advertising technology – or ‘ad tech’ – sector has identified significant competition concerns and likely harms to publishers, advertisers and, ultimately, consumers.

The **report** published in late September concludes that enforcement action under Australia’s existing competition laws alone is not sufficient to address the competition issues in the sector, and that the ACCC should be given powers to develop specific rules in response.

Ad tech services facilitate complex transactions for the selling and buying

of advertising space on websites or apps, resulting in the ads that are displayed to consumers.

## DOMINANT POSITION IN AD TECH SUPPLY CHAIN

The report finds that Google has a dominant position in key parts of the ad tech supply chain and estimates that more than 90 percent of ad impressions traded via the ad tech supply chain passed through at least one Google service in 2020.

Google’s dominance in the ad tech supply chain is underpinned by multiple factors including its access to consumer and other data, access to exclusive inventory and integration

across its ad tech services. Key acquisitions by Google, including of DoubleClick in 2007, AdMob in 2009, as well as YouTube in 2006, have helped Google entrench its position in ad tech.

The report finds that Google has used its position to preference its own services and shield them from competition. For example, Google prevents rival ad tech services from accessing ads on YouTube, providing its own ad tech services with an important advantage.

## BOYCOTTING PUBLISHER-LED HEADER BIDDING

Google has also refused to participate in publisher-led header bidding, an industry innovation aimed at increasing competition for publishers’ inventory, and previously allowed its services to have a ‘last look’ opportunity to outbid rivals.

“Google has used its vertically integrated position to operate its ad tech services in a way that has, over time, led to a less competitive ad tech industry. This conduct has helped Google to establish and entrench its dominant position in the ad tech supply chain,” ACCC Chair Rod Sims said.

“Google’s activities across the supply chain also mean that, in a single transaction, Google can act on behalf of both the advertiser (the buyer) and the publisher (the seller) and operate the ad exchange connecting these two parties. As the interests of these parties do not align, this creates conflicts of interest for Google which can harm both advertisers and publishers.” ■



PHOTO: 377053 FROM PIXABAY



# Purpose-led marketing is a must for African brands

Do consumers care how a company behaves, providing the product and price is right? Increasingly, research shows they do favour brands with a social purpose. By **Greg Viljoen**.

**A**NY MARKETER WORTH their salt knows that change is good and based on the permanent flux of human evolution. A seasoned marketer embraces this and the ethos that marketing is a service to others; not the opportunistic entity that it is sometimes portrayed to be.

So, how does purpose-led marketing fit into this picture? Is not all marketing purpose-driven?

Purpose-led marketing is, by definition, when a brand and its audience connect on a mutual cause that both believe in. In a perfect world, purpose-led marketing would be an extension of a purpose-driven business model.

The latter goes deeper than simply aligning with a cause, which in itself is a good thing. However, when the business model is built on a purpose, it makes people, their experiences and their well-being the primary aim of what the organisation does.

## WHY BRANDS NEED TO BE MORE PURPOSE-DRIVEN

The old adage of 'do my customers actually care as long as my prices are

➤ On the African continent there are wonderful examples of purpose-led campaigns



➤ Safaricom's 'Bonga for Good' campaign in Kenya makes use of more than 40 000 Lipa na M-PESA merchants

competitive and my products or services provide the desired quality?' is fast becoming redundant.

Several marketing surveys in recent years have revealed the ascent of purpose-led business and why consumers support certain brands. Business magazine *Forbes* published a comprehensive list of many of these surveys and the overarching message was clear: The purpose-led business model is on the rise and for good reason.



### *Consumers are happy to boycott an errant brand*

Consumers are changing and so are their choices. Consider that Generation Y or Z consumers will likely be a large part of a company's current customer base and most of its future customers.

These tech-savvy generations have grown up in the digital age and understand the power of their voice online. They use the social tools at their disposal to both express their dissatisfaction with, or support of, brands and services.

Several recent studies also reveal that the aforementioned generations not only choose to support brands that align with their beliefs but, where possible, prefer to work for brands that do so!

A 2018 global survey by communications firm *Edelman* revealed that "64% of consumers surveyed globally will buy a brand or boycott that brand based solely on the social or political stance".

### **PURPOSE-LED MARKETING SHOWS GROWTH IN AFRICA**

The global trend of purpose-led business and marketing has also become relevant on the African

continent. The digital age has brought the entire world closer and the generations that have grown up with technology have access to information at the press of a button. In Africa, as in other emerging markets, global trends affect local trends!

The importance of authentically communicating the 'why' of an organisation is critical, given that a bad story (whether based on fact or imagined) can spread around the entire world quicker than it can be re-written or re-stated.

Therefore, a key goal is to create content that is authentic and driven by customers, or those who have benefitted from a brand's involvement in communities and the work it has done to empower them to create a better socio-economic environment. A brand telling stories about itself has far less credibility than when others tell stories about the brand.



➤ Global apparel brand, Levi Strauss, has a Water<less Project to reduce water usage during the manufacturing process

Companies have the power to positively impact on communities and, by doing so with genuine purpose and authenticity, both the message they deliver (purpose-led marketing) and the impact they create can have far-reaching socio-economic results.

On the African continent there are some wonderful examples of purpose-led campaigns that have had significant impact. I have discussed a few of them below.

### EXAMPLES OF PURPOSE-LED MARKETING WITHIN AFRICA

Safaricom's 'Bonga for Good' campaign in Kenya was launched to help ease the economic impact of Covid-19.

What the mobile network operator did was increase the value of its loyalty points so that customers earned more from using Safaricom's services and then made these 'Bonga points' available to pay for essential services and goods at over 40 000 Lipa na

M-PESA merchants countrywide. Lipa na M-PESA is a cashless payment service that allows customers to make payments for goods and services securely and conveniently.

### ➤ *Clients can donate to people in need*

The initiative also allows customers to donate their points to others as a show of goodwill – an important benefit in the time of Covid and its widespread economic and social impact. Thus, Safaricom identified a need and implemented a project that both served a broad purpose and involved its customers in the process.

Global apparel brand, Levi Strauss & Co, has committed to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 and has been promoting its sustainability strategy in South Africa for some

time, and continues to communicate its results transparently.

Its Epping industrial facility in Cape Town is one of just two plants that the company owns and operates itself. The company's focus has been to use less potable water in the production of its jeans by using more environmentally sustainable production methods. Around 80% of the products produced at the Epping factory use the Water<less Project method

This makes more drinking water – frequently very scarce in this drought-prone region of the country – available to use by ordinary citizens.

Other brands to have an impact locally with purpose-led campaigns include FMCG giant Unilever's #EndDomesticSilence, which supports victims of domestic violence in South Africa and also raises awareness.

Nigerian-based conglomerate, Dangote Industries Ltd, has supported



➤ In Africa, as in other emerging markets, purpose-led marketing is increasingly relevant to brands

## Millennials demand social values from the brands they use

When it comes to Millennial consumers, it's crucial for brand managers to demonstrate that they align with this audience on social issues. For these consumers, 83% want companies to align with their values and 76% want CEOs to speak out on issues they care about.

That's according to the 2020 *Consumer Culture* Report released by 5W Public Relations. The firm is New York-based and operates in 25 countries.

The report found about two-thirds (65%) of Millennials said they had boycotted a brand that took the opposing stance on an issue, and 62% favoured products that show off their political and social beliefs.

That's in contrast with older consumers, who are far less likely to buy items that express their cultural identity. For the 55+ demographic, only 21% said they preferred buying items that showed off their political and cultural beliefs.

education, health and empowerment in communities across Africa via the Aliko Dangote Foundation since 1994. The foundation has contributed millions of dollars to charitable funds and partnered with the likes of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in an effort to eradicate polio in Nigeria.

Telecommunications company MTN, which has a vast footprint across Africa, also has a sustainability plan addressing economic, environmental and social issues, with the aim of providing socio-economic benefits on the continent.

Similarly, multinational food and drink conglomerate Nestlé has been driving a campaign to reduce plastic-packaging waste among its consumers in Africa.

### NOT LIP-SERVICE AND HYPE

While purpose-led strategies may at times seem like paying lip-service to issues and offering more marketing hype than providing tangible impact,

the need continues to grow for more businesses in Africa to create campaigns that positively impact the communities they service and make their profits from.

In an environment where each African citizen suddenly has the power to make themselves heard and there are ready ears listening at home and abroad, it is time for every CEO, board of directors, and shareholder to recognise the great responsibility they collectively have to play their part in creating genuine and purposeful change. ■

*Greg Viljoen has been involved in the communications industry for over 25 years, specifically in the digital space. He founded Bigger Than Me over six years ago, one of the first cause marketing agencies on the continent. Its goal is to help brands create campaigns that drive sustainable, lasting impact in a community and society at large.*



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**Marketing: Key to Prosperity**

# Merchandising challenges in the African micro-retail environment

Effective merchandising is integral to retail. When servicing Africa's micro-retailers, it's vital to understand the merchandising challenges and set standards, says **Tielman Nieuwoudt**.





**M**ERCHANDISING IS A KEY component for any retailer, as well as for the FMCG sales and marketing teams who use merchandising techniques to promote brands and increase sales in those retail outlets.

However, in Africa's numerous small 'traditional retail' stores – as opposed to the more sophisticated 'modern trade' supermarkets – there are many merchandising challenges. Often it is unprofitable for sales teams to service these micro-retailers at all. And if they do, salespeople will frequently spend less than eight minutes in the outlet – with the focus on getting the order rather than allocating time to any merchandising activities.

In most cases, small micro-retailers will not even buy directly from brand owners, manufacturers or their national distribution network. As they prefer to buy smaller product quantities, they are more likely to make use of local wholesalers or distributors to break bulk into more affordable quantities.

Typically, such outlets will remain 'underserviced' in the formal sense and won't qualify for minimum drop sizes set by delivery companies (the drop size being the amount of inventory purchased and delivered per visit).

➤ *Salespeople are not incentivised to spend time merchandising*

If these outlets receive delivery services at all, the bigger distributors will, at best, provide only limited merchandising services. This is because their salespeople are mostly not incentivised to do this work and their focus is on earning sales commission.

So, for the majority of Africa's micro-retailers, merchandising will be their own responsibility and they will receive limited or no external support.

## Merchandising Activities – Overview

| ACTIVITY   | WHY?  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Stock Rotation</b><br/>Old in front of new – First in, first expired (FIFE).</p>   | <p>Merchandising is a daily activity. Consumers buy the highest quality and don't buy expired products. Expired products should be removed.</p>                   |
| <p><b>Cold Availability (e.g. dairy)</b><br/>Products must be visible in the cooler. Maintain cooler purity in the cooler provided by the company.</p>   | <p>Certain products such as beverages taste better chilled, and perishable goods will go bad if not stored in refrigerators.</p>                                  |
| <p><b>Equipment</b><br/>Equipment should be placed in high-traffic areas or on countertops in a visible position. Check and report damaged equipment.</p>  | <p>The more visible the equipment, the higher the sales. Damaged equipment reduces sales and should be replaced.</p>  |
| <p><b>Clean</b><br/>Make sure equipment and products are clean.</p>  | <p>Cleanliness will improve the quality of the product display and increase sales.</p>  |
| <p><b>Facings and planogram</b><br/>Ensure brand labels or facings are visible. Ensure products are merchandised according to the planogram. A planogram is a diagram that shows where and how (e.g. the brand order) products should be placed on shelves or in equipment (e.g. cooler). It is done to increase visibility and sales.</p> | <p>The correct merchandising attracts attention and increases sales and profits. By providing merchandising services, you build relationships with customers.</p> |
| <p><b>Warm display</b><br/>Ensure product displays are visible – including floor, shelves and hanging displays.</p>  | <p>Products and cartons are visible to increase sales.</p>  |

### THE PROBLEM OF LACK OF SPACE

For Africa's micro-retailers, space is limited and comes at a premium. Shops are poorly lit and have limited shelf space to stock and display products. For brand owners and their distributors, placing equipment such as coolers and point of sales material (POSM) in these outlets is a challenge.

New owners of micro-retail outlets also rarely have the market knowledge to display and merchandise products in the correct way to increase traffic and volume. Consequently, they frequently require training and salespeople need to demonstrate the correct merchandising techniques. However, with the limited time available to service these outlets, that is challenging for most companies.

### PURCHASING POWER

Building displays and creating block branding requires stock. For micro-retailers, that is not always possible as they are more likely to run out of stock. They have limited cash flow and purchasing power, and will have a reduced number of brands per product category in stock – often only two to three per category.

Micro-retailers are frequently unwilling or financially unable to purchase all products required to display and merchandise correctly. They also fear that they will tie up cash flow in slow-moving products.

Convincing these shopkeepers to purchase additional brands is therefore difficult – especially new and untested products.





## Differences between traditional trade and modern trade for merchandising purposes

| CATEGORY  | MODERN TRADE  | TRADITIONAL TRADE   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Decision-makers to approve merchandising decisions</b> | Multiple-layer decision-making process that requires time for decision making via central offices or individual branches. Sometimes decisions are made by committee or the management team. | Only one or two decision makers involved. Often the store owner or manager.   |
| <b>Brand and packs available for merchandising</b>        | Extensive range.  | Mostly limited range of products.   |
| <b>Out of stocks</b>                                      | Less common.  | More common. Decision to change brands is based on availability of products at wholesale or distributor level.  |
| <b>Equipment</b>  | Require specialised equipment. Multiple points available to display or cross-promote products. Placing equipment requires detailed negotiations with multiple stakeholders.                 | Standard equipment only (e.g. racks). Limited space available for equipment placement. Outlets often use company equipment such as coolers to store personal items (e.g. milk, butter). |
| <b>Promotions</b>   | Provide ongoing promotions. Centralised promotion negotiations.   | Some promotional prices. Suppliers must negotiate promotions with store owner or manager.   |
| <b>Merchandising support</b>                              | Often dedicated merchandising teams to support the sales team and the store.  | Limited or no support.  |



### ADVANTAGES OF MICRO-RETAIL MERCHANDISING

While they do have shortcomings, micro-retailers also provide benefits for consumers and the big companies they work with. Successful stores are often well-stocked and there are a high percentage of first-tier brands available.

Shopkeepers are flexible in meeting customer needs and will stock products upon request. They usually offer more affordable small pack sizes to their cash-strapped shoppers. For example, small plastic bags of sugar rather than a standard (larger) manufacturer's pack.

They are also in tune with the customer and merchandising preferences. Modern retail practices, such as artificial colouring of vegetables or in-store ripening of fruits, may be

at odds with the preferences of more traditional customers. Owners are sensitive to customer needs, avoiding any retail practices that may be considered 'unconventional' by their client base.

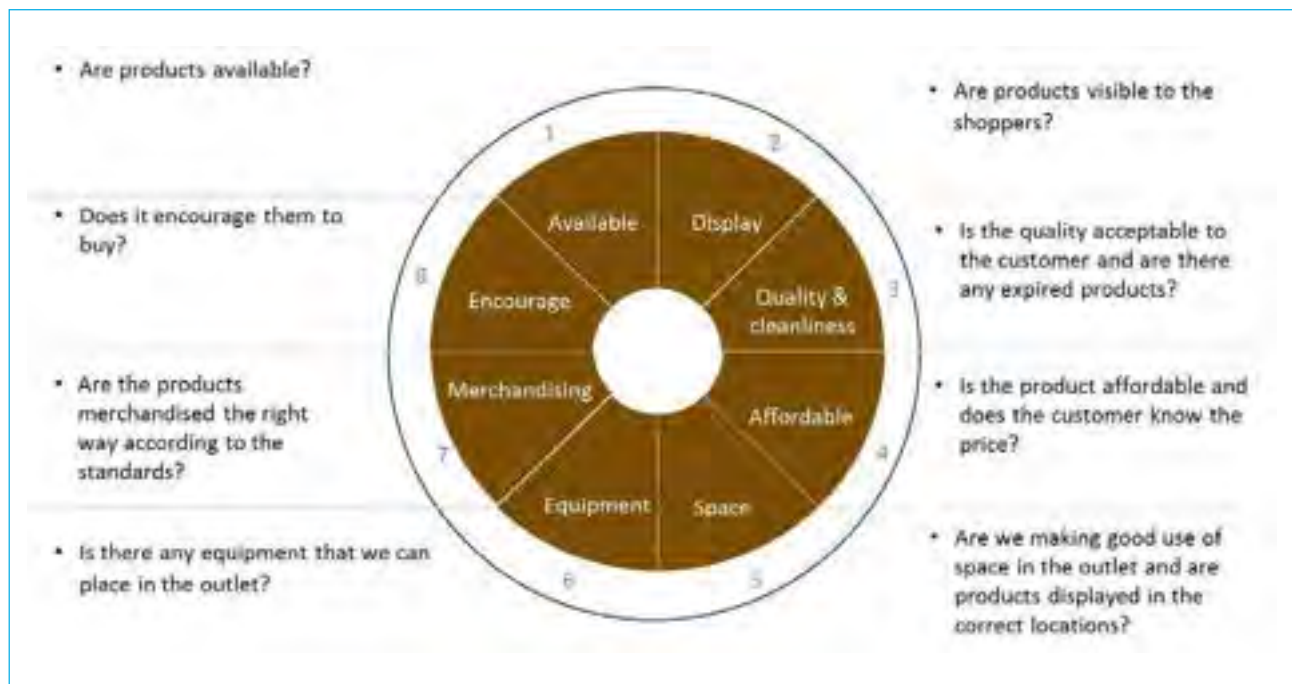
Even though space is limited in traditional outlets, big companies could find it easier to negotiate merchandising space with them, compared to the often long and procedure-bound processes found in modern trade outlets. Multi-nationals have more leverage with mom-and-pop retailers and they can consequently control their in-outlet message better. Innovative merchandising designs – such as product dispensers and hanging racks to maximise space – could further support this strategy.

### SETTING EXECUTION STANDARDS IN EMERGING MARKETS

For any company working with micro-retailers and traditional markets, it is important to establish what success looks like for the sales team and the

company. This applies even to the smallest outlet.

Below are some questions to ask when evaluating or setting merchandising standards:



### MARKET VISIT AND RESEARCH

Prior to setting standards, it is important to understand the market and channel dynamics that could influence your merchandising and product placement. Below are some issues to consider:

- **Reasons for merchandising practices** – Explore why products are displayed in a certain way in the channel. There could be several reasons. e.g. space, lack of equipment, packaging, limited stock.
- **Quality of call** – Observe and rate the service quality of your company and competitors. Do the competitors and company salespeople provide any additional services such as merchandising and stock rotation?

- **Inventory visibility** – Observe what products are displayed and where, and what percentage is in the storeroom.
- **Execution levels and standards** – Review the current execution level. Observe whether there are any visible execution standards and POSM in place by channel. How are execution standards tracked?
- **KPIs** – Assess key performance indicators (KPIs). How are merchandising standards being tracked or monitored?
- **Equipment** – Check the equipment in the outlet, including cold chain and display racks. Consider the floor, counter or roof space required to place and hang equipment in the outlet.

- **Technology** – Explore if any technology is used to track and monitor execution standards.
- **Aids** – Assess if the company uses any material or merchandising aids to communicate the standards and merchandising practices.

### HOW SHOPPER INSIGHTS CAN ASSIST MERCHANDISING

Shopper insights provide valuable research for companies setting standards. These focus on retailers and channel insights, and activities to improve distribution. At the micro-retailer level, these insights also help to assess product placement, merchandising effectiveness and the success of in-store promotions.

The research determines how shoppers buy when they enter a store,

and when they buy (e.g. number of times a week) when in the store. It also looks at what they buy (e.g. package sizes, products) and what they don't buy. Companies could organise field trips to observe merchandising practices, conduct focus groups, or hire a research company to conduct the research.

Good shopper insights will help to answer the following questions:

- What is the right pack to sell in micro-retail outlets?
- How often do customers buy this product and what package size do they buy?
- What merchandising equipment is currently being used in micro-retailers?
- Where did the customer stand or move inside the shop?
- The space and position of competing products or segments?
- Where do products need to be placed in the store and next to which brands?
- Is it better to hang products, or display them on shelves or floors?
- How durable does your packaging need to be, considering the handling and storing in micro-retail outlets?

## SETTING MERCHANDISING STANDARDS IN MICRO-RETAILERS

Once you have collected all the data and evaluated options, you can set standards. When setting your standards in traditional retail, consider the following:

- **Visibility** – Identify the brands and SKUs (stock-keeping units) that need to be available and visible in the outlet.
- **Display** – Determine where you would like your products displayed in the outlet. If it applies to your brand, also consider the floor, roof, warm and cold display.
- **Promotions and pricing** – Review the promotional equipment and visible pricing in the channel.

- **Equipment** – Determine the right equipment required by channel. Take into consideration the size and footprint of equipment.
- **Standards** – Set minimum standards by channel. Determine the amount of space you would like to have in the outlet, including equipment and display space. In micro-retail, also consider the complexity the channel can handle and the space available in the outlet.
- **Compliance standards** – Review budget and set minimum compliance standards. Implement an incentive system for the sales team and outlets.
- **Ad hoc teams** – Where micro-retailers are not directly serviced by the company and distribution partners, consider ad hoc support teams to train shop owners and share knowledge.
- **Documentation** – Determine how you will communicate with the sales team and shop owner. Document standards with pictures, videos, planograms and other visuals.
- **Key performance indicators (KPIs)** – Set the key performance indicators to be tracked by the sales team.

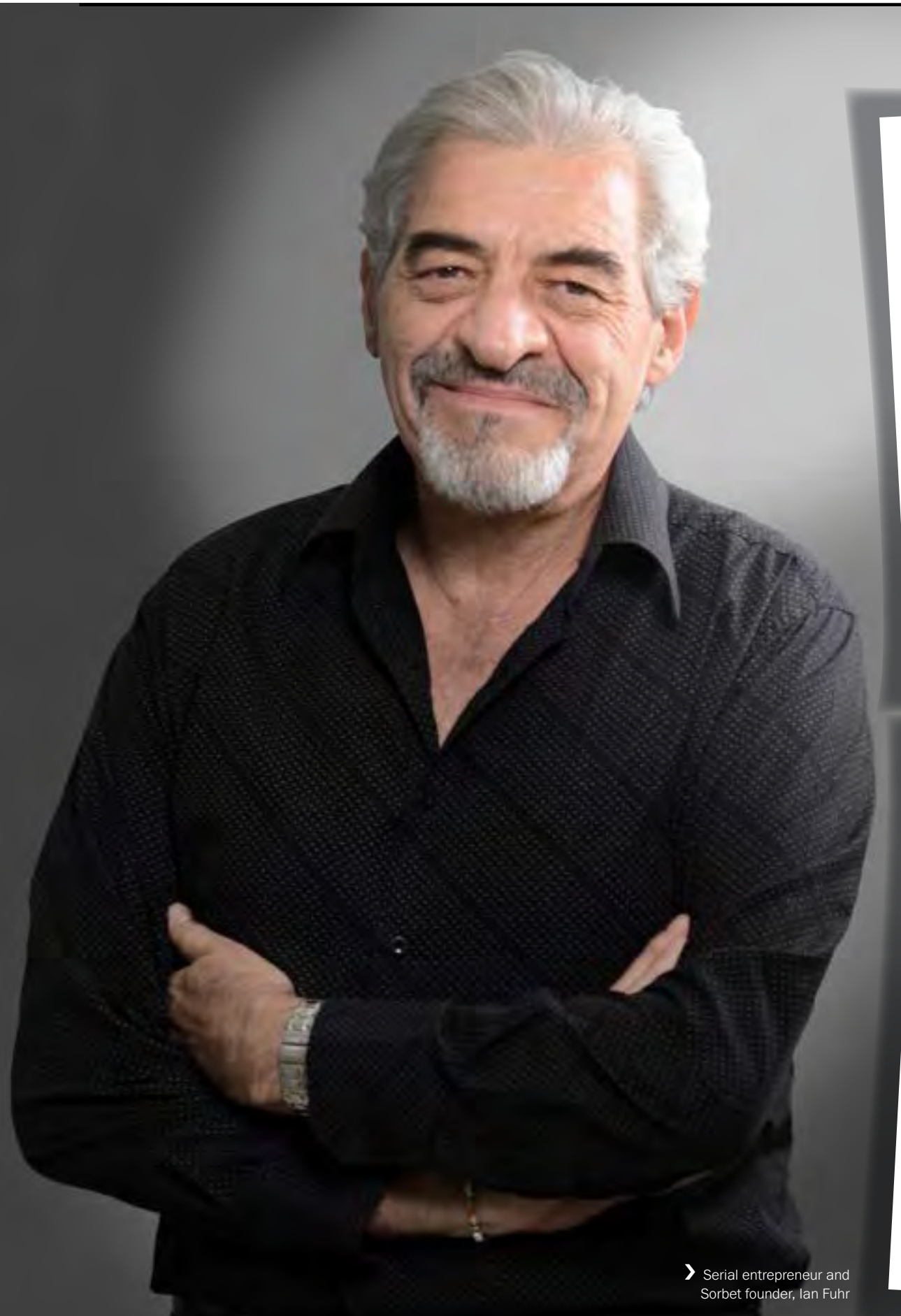
- **Audit** – Create a standard template for the sales team to conduct internal assessments. Make 'searching for opportunities' part of the business culture.
- **Tracking** – Implement a tracking system to measure standards and track compliance.
- **Test and follow up** – Test standards and make changes where necessary. When working with micro-retailers, keep standards simple.

A final point to remember is that most micro-retailers trade in low to middle income areas. But some trade in higher income areas, where there is a demand for more upmarket brands and packs.

So, segment product offerings based on neighbourhood income and the customers they serve. Even in this market, it is definitely not one size fits all! ■

*Tielman Nieuwoudt is a consultant focused on supply chain, last-mile logistics, and informal retail service models in emerging markets. He has more than two decades of personal and professional experience – working in more than 100 countries in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere.*



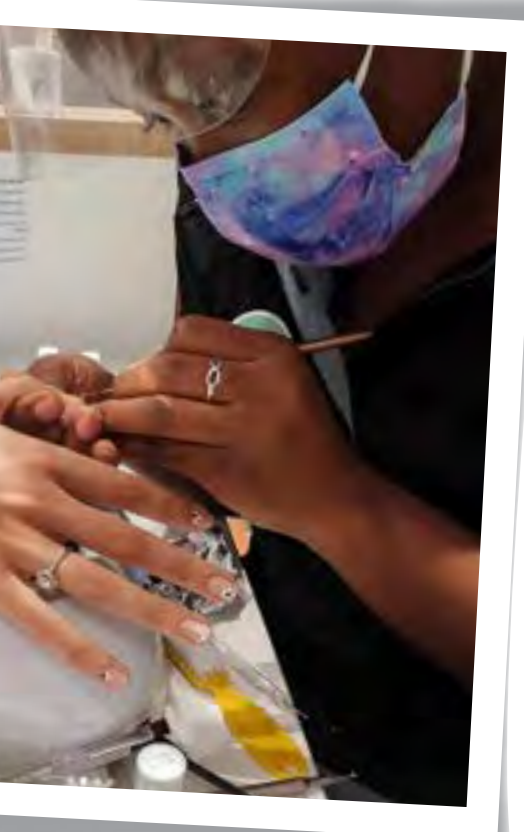


➤ Serial entrepreneur and Sorbet founder, Ian Fuhr



# How an obsessive focus on the customer drove beauty chain's success

Serial entrepreneur **Ian Fuhr's** deeply held philosophies helped drive his Sorbet brand to great success. At the core was commitment to customer service excellence.



**I**N HIS NEWLY PUBLISHED book, *Cultureneering*, entrepreneur and businessman Ian Fuhr details how he founded and grew South Africa's Sorbet chain of beauty salons to become a dominant brand with more than 200 outlets nationwide. After being at the helm since 2005, he sold Sorbet in 2017 and currently runs a successful business that specialises in coaching entrepreneurs.

At the heart of the brand's success under Fuhr was a focus on obsessive customer service derived from building a strong business culture in a diverse workforce. In this extract from *Cultureneering*, the author outlines the path to service excellence and how it is inextricably linked to the organisation's culture.

## FOUR SIMPLE TRUTHS ABOUT CUSTOMER SERVICE

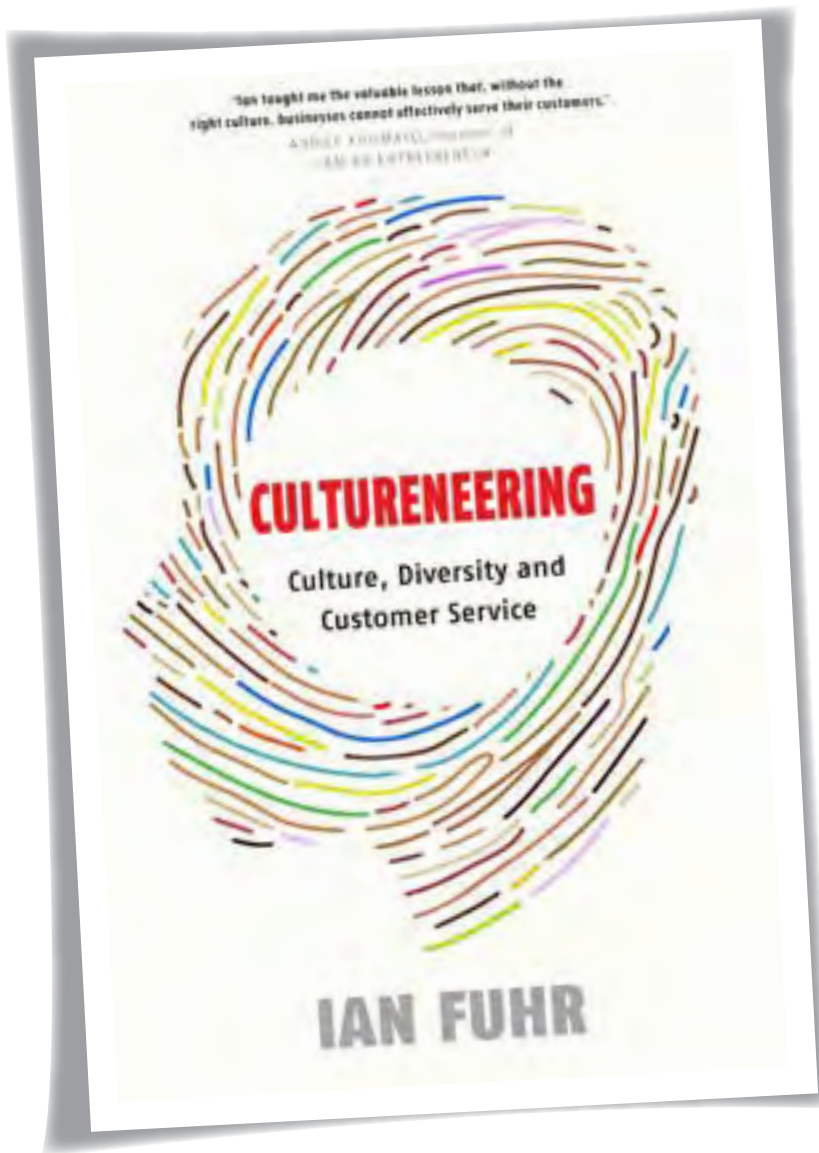
**Simple truth #1:** If employees are not aligned with the company's reason for being, its core values and the purpose of work, obsessive customer service will be an elusive target.

If there is no common purpose and people are going to work for different reasons, customer service will tumble down the list of their priorities. When someone works for the sole purpose of earning a salary and making a living, focus is turned away from the customer and towards the month-end pay cheque. The mind becomes attuned to just getting through the month. The thoughts, feelings and experiences of the customer become irrelevant to that employee, and in many cases, the customer is seen as nothing more than an obstacle to the main objective, which is to earn enough money to satisfy lifestyle needs.



## *No common purpose equals bad service*

If, on the other hand, employees are aligned with the company's reason for being and they view their work as an opportunity to positively impact someone else's life, they will deliver service beyond the expectations of their customers.



**Simple truth #2: The quality of the customer experience will never be better than the quality of the employee experience.**

Unhappy or discontented employees do not deliver great service. The big question: Why should they? Several managers have offered me an answer to this question. 'People must deliver great service because they are paid a salary to do so'. This seems perfectly logical, but I'm afraid it's somewhat naïve, especially in a racially polarised workplace.

Discontented employees are distracted by their unsatisfactory work

environment and the way they are being treated. They look inwards instead of outwards. They tend to do the bare minimum and the mere fact that they are paid a salary does not inspire them to meet and exceed the needs of the customer.

**Simple truth #3: The first person to suffer in a toxic culture is the customer**

I believe that the underlying cause of poor service in most organisations is the negative attitude of the staff towards the bottom-line-focused culture of the business. Whenever poor service is delivered, take a good look at the

culture of that company and you will surely find some tell-tale clues.

Poor service is commonplace in many countries around the world and universally, customers seem to have accepted that their expectations are unlikely to be met. Mediocrity has become the order of the day and great service has become the exception not the rule. This is exacerbated in many South African businesses that have not yet come to terms with the root causes of their poor service issues. The blame is often laid on a 'poor work ethic', but people are not born with a poor work ethic. Their life experiences and book of rules dictate their attitude towards service.

Great customer service does not come naturally to people who have been on the receiving end of social injustice and unfair treatment.

**Simple truth #4: Attitude is the rock of a strong service culture**

Without a positive attitude, skilled technical service can only take you so far. If employees have a poor self-image and are filled with self-doubt, the chances of them building strong customer relationships are slim. If they believe they are not good enough and question their ability to perform at the required standards, they are going to fall short of the mark.

Self-image is closely tied to an employee's sense of belonging and purpose. In the same way as the company needs a reason for being, so too does the individual. Everyone needs a purpose. Too often, people drift through life without aspiring to anything other than surviving another day. Everyone needs something that gets them out of bed and gives them passion and hope for the future. That purpose must be rooted in the service of others and the contribution they make to society.

It is critical that we help people to instil a positive mindset and to build their self-esteem and self-confidence. We need to help them believe that

the work they do makes a meaningful contribution to the lives of their customers and that service should always come before reward.

Every point of human interaction provides an opportunity to start a relationship. To deliver obsessive customer service you must be able to connect with people at a personal level and to achieve that, you need to start with a positive frame of mind.

If someone said 'I love people' in a Sorbet recruitment interview they were virtually guaranteed employment. These words displayed the kind of passion and culture fit that we were so desperately looking for when hiring new employees or signing on new franchise partners. There is something very different about a person who loves people. Their intent is different and their desire to please is blissfully evident. This is the kind of person who sees the customers when they walk in. She doesn't look past them or conjure up visions of how much cash can be extracted from them. She looks at them and smiles – and the pathway to human connection has been opened.

Relationships are the new currency and cash compensation is simply the reward for building powerful human connections.

If employees are expected to deliver obsessive customer service, they must be competent and confident. They must also have a positive attitude and a passion to listen, learn and grow. They must have a good self-image and self-belief and finally, they must inherently believe that people are always more important than things.

## THE 360° CUSTOMER JOURNEY

### Brand building is an emotional connection

A brand is a product or service that creates an emotional perception in the minds of consumers. Thousands of brands are launched every year, each fighting for a share of the market. How does one stand out from the crowd?

A brand is brought to life by the personality of the company and by that company's commitment to reaching people at an emotional level. These days, customers think as much with their hearts as they do with their heads when it comes to choosing a brand. The emotional connection with the brand is often the difference between success and failure.

To achieve this emotional connection, you need to create a total customer experience that gives an individual a powerful take-away impression of their interaction with your business. The tangible attributes of the products or services you provide have far less

influence on a customer's preference than the subconscious sensory and emotional elements derived from the total experience. Sensory experiences are immediate, powerful and capable of profoundly changing people's lives.

## ➤ *Provide clients with the total experience*

### Creating your 360° customer journey

A successfully implemented 360° customer journey will lead to a positive overall customer experience preference for your brand, which in turn will create



loyal customers, which ultimately results in wealth creation and sharing.

### *Touchpoints*

There are many touchpoints in the 360° customer journey that are identifiable signals and stimuli – some of them rational some of them emotional. These are registered consciously and subconsciously by the senses. In combination, these touchpoints unlock the 360° customer journey.

In developing an effective 360° customer journey, you need to start with the end goal in mind. The end goal is to create an overall positive experience that produces loyal brand champions. This requires a thorough understanding of the needs and wants of your customers and the experiences they are looking for. Once you start the exercise, you will find that the process of identifying and perfecting touchpoints is very dynamic and helps you to fully understand your business. It thrives on ever-changing and variable environments and requires a high degree of flexibility and adaptability as you continuously realign your touchpoints with the changing needs and desires of your customers.

### *Creating a theatrical show*

Creating a 360° customer journey is very similar to producing a theatrical stage show. From the audience's point of view, the actual performance on a given night appears to occur in a specific and simple sequence: Act 1, Act 2 and so forth. But on closer investigation you will find that there is much more to creating an audience experience than what actually happens on the stage.

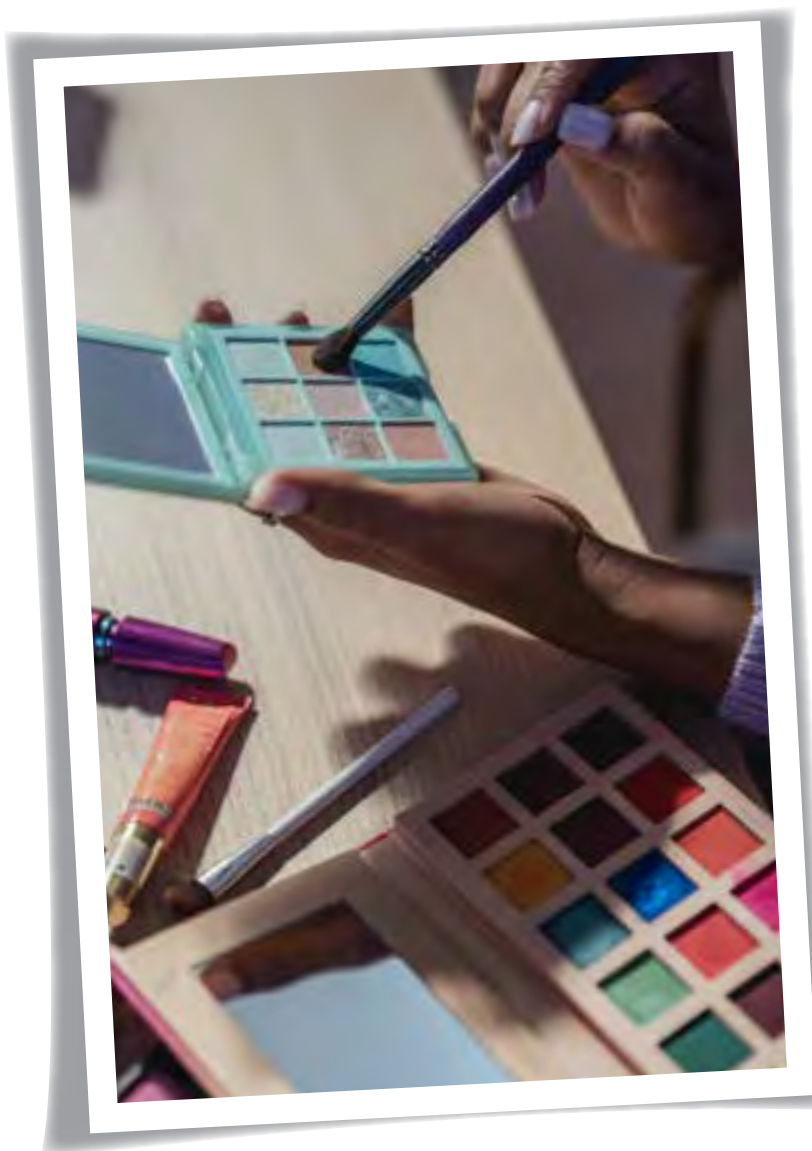
First, the producer must assess how to stage the show within the budgetary constraints. Then consider the playwright and the director who want to communicate an end message to an audience. They conceive a play that represents the manner in which the roles interact with each other and form part of an unfolding storyline that will lead the audience to the end

message. The props are the sensory touchpoints and the actors are the human touchpoints.

Behind the scenes, a location is found, sets and costumes created, lighting configured, and sound and sight lines evaluated. A cast is selected with each member assigned to learn a specific role or roles and understudies are secured to cater for unexpected absences. A behind-the-scenes plan is created to handle curtains, lights, set changes and the countless logistical details involved in the performance. Through constant practice, the cast and crew refine myriad interconnected elements of dialogue and

staging to create the desired effect on the audience.

Eventually the production is advertised, creating expectations about the kind of entertainment experience that will be provided. On opening night, the first audience arrives and the performance is delivered. Everyone waits to gauge the audience reaction and then the cycle repeats itself, but before each new performance, the observations of the production staff and the feedback from the critics and previous audiences are assessed and fresh changes are made to further enhance the performance.



PHOTOS: PAN MACMILLAN SOUTH AFRICA, SORBET VIA FACEBOOK, GEORGE MILTON & ARINA KRASNKOVA FROM PEXELS



Hit shows are not accidents. Hits become hits because a conducive environment has been created and those involved, whether onstage or behind the scenes, are very consistent in doing the right things over and over again, while continually refreshing strong points and making changes and improvements where needed.

### *Learning from the Sorbet Way*

At Sorbet, the Soul of Sorbet created the culture that laid the platform for our 360° customer journey, which was aimed at attracting and retaining loyal guests.

Loyal guests were fans of the Sorbet brand. We even had a name for them – Sorbies. They loved what we did and what we stood for. They came back again and again, and they told their friends and family to do the same. Their loyalty was so intense that they were even prepared to act as a reference for the brand and in doing so put their own reputations on the line. The long-term loyalty of our Sorbies provided a foundation for our business; without them we would have walked on shaky ground.

So how did we create our loyal Sorbies? The simple answer to this was through the 360° customer journey.

The Sorbet client journey, as outlined above, is an overview of the key touchpoints required for a positive customer experience. Importantly, every touchpoint needed an individual to be accountable for the success of that specific element of the total experience. If just one of the touchpoints resulted in a service failure it would impact the entire customer journey and result in an overall negative outcome, regardless of how successfully the rest of the touchpoints were experienced.

An opportunity to fix a situation presented itself when a guest walked into a Sorbet salon with a skincare product that she had been using for several months, that was virtually empty and claimed that the product was no longer working for her skin, and demanded a full refund. She had no

proof of purchase or any evidence that it was in fact bought at Sorbet in the first place.

### › *Loyal Sorbies came back again + again*

In a case like this, most other salons would not accommodate her demands. How dare she come in after all this time and demand a full refund for an empty tube and to top it all no proof of purchase and no original packaging!

At Sorbet, our staff were trained to smile, accept the empty tube and

refund the guest in full. No questions asked. We were not even concerned about proof of payment or if the product was bought in a Sorbet salon. Our only concern was to try and ensure that the guest signed onto the loyalty programme and that she left the salon feeling like she had received the best service experience. If we could retain that guest for five years, the refund would be a fantastic investment. ■

**Cultureneering: Culture, Diversity and Customer Services** was published in September 2021 by Pan Macmillan South Africa. It is available in Paperback and e-book versions.



# Marketers showing a **surprising** lack of concern over cookies

In 2023, marketers and those in related industries will transition to an online world without cookies. A study finds most are unconcerned.

**A**RE THE ADVERTISING AND marketing industries prepared for a post-cookie world in 2023? Or are these sectors facing their own version of the 'Y2K' problem that so concerned the world as we transitioned from 1999 to the year 2000?

That's the question that a recent international study asked of marketers, publishers and ad tech specialists. The results, according to the researchers, were alarming, with the uncertainty of 'what's next?' continuing to breed inaction.

"Our research found clashing beliefs in confidence and preparedness, resulting in a lack of urgency to address essential steps before the moment the switch is flipped," said Samantha Powers, who

leads the marketing research team at TripleLift, Inc, an international ad tech company that works with some of the world's biggest brands.

## **MOST DON'T HAVE THE NECESSARY RESOURCES**

"While a little more than half of marketers reported having a high sense of confidence in their company to navigate the future of privacy and identity, 70% say they do not have the resources necessary to move through the change with success.

"The disparity is because marketers believe that ad tech will be responsible for identifying post-cookie solutions. But, even though SSPs (supply-side platforms – a software system that

allows publishers to offer their available inventory to ad exchanges and demand-side platforms) and DSPs (demand-side platforms – a type of software that allows an advertiser to buy advertising with the help of automation) will take the lead on identifying solutions, marketers still need to familiarise themselves and align with solutions to obtain future success."

Powers says the overconfidence in SSPs/DSPs suggests many marketers have a false sense of security.

"Given the 2023 deadline is an extension, solutions should be well underway. But a lack of urgency and low level of awareness [leaves] the majority of marketers placing their confidence in an uncertain future.

## **MARKETERS KNOW THAT THE CHANGE IS COMING**

"To be sure, most marketers (84%) are aware change is coming. And yet, those polled admit they have little understanding of potential solutions. In fact, marketers are more than [twice as] likely to be aware of the shifts in privacy and identity than they are aware of solutions to them," she noted.

Perhaps most concerning of all, is that most marketers essentially do not think the end of cookies matters all that much.

"Yes, you read that right," Powers says. "According to the survey, 71% said they didn't see the end of cookies dramatically impact their purchasing behaviour for digital ads.

"There seems to be a feeling in the industry that boils down to this: 'If I don't look at privacy and identify shifts directly in the eye, then they won't impact me'." ■



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