

The dawn of differentiation

 By [Karabelo Mbokoena](#)

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With the resounding ringing of Ayoba being drowned out by a cacophony of other cries varying from IYOH, Fo Sho, The Real Makhoya, Yebo, Yizo and even Woo Ha, all in an attempt to connect with a new target market, one has to take a closer look at this changing advertising-scape with some much needed harsh objectivity. I've taken it upon myself to take on this rather daunting task as I have never been one to worry about 'stepping in it' because I have great cleaning tools and odour repellents.

Calling it like it is

Brands have come to an illuminating realisation that to seriously maximize on profit margins, the targeting of the ever-increasing middle-upper class main market target segment (due to their spending habits, spending power and their sheer volume) makes complete sense in order to avoid reaching a ceiling while attempting to increase sales.

One needs only to turn on the silver screen for the evidence (with everything from the use of lekker local slang to casting sessions that are churning out tons of township superstars).

Let's get to it

The long-and-short of it is that while these attempts are much appreciated and greatly entertaining in some cases, for real penetration and lasting brand-building with the view of uncompromising brand loyalty, brands are going to have to up the ante.

The answer does not lie in traditional advertising, where you are limited to visuals and copy, as there is clearly only so much brands can do without completely alienating other currently existing or dually targeted markets, while trying to make a meaningful emotional connection with that much sought after unicorn being those sparkling diamonds within the main market.

With the rise of smartphones, due to South Africa being a country with 100% mobile-penetration and the rise of Blackberry and Samsung smartphones - particularly due to hire-purchase options made available through alternative avenues such as furniture stores - the mobi realm is one that needs far more innovative exploration for the fruits of its full potential to be clearly seen in our country.

Looking at the success local mobi companies have had internationally (particularly the Guinness Nigeria campaign executed by the newly Mxit-acquired company Mo Tribe), one is confused about our own hesitance to tread confidently in these un-

explored waters.

This rise in smartphone use is also requiring far more careful consideration when brands decide to venture into social media. As with personal pages where at times people update up to three times a day, brand Facebook pages have to be far more interactive, regularly updated, entertaining and user-centric *plus* be treated as social media as opposed to a static extension of running campaigns.

But the golden ticket

In this current economic climate, what any brand should be aiming to do is explore possibilities in experiential marketing to fully optimise on emotive connections with consumers as the engagement of maximum sensory interaction leads to positive memorability resulting in positive brand associations connected to well-imprinted 'happy-moments', which is a state of mind that is very conducive to concrete brand loyalty.

ABOUT KARABELO MOKOENA

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