

Where the cool ones are

 By Leigh Andrews

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Effective brand management today is about more than simply business as usual. Trevor Ormerod, GM of sales and marketing at Times Media, explains brand managers can better tap into the youth market, as well as how partnering with sponsors helps further build the Sunday Times Generation next Awards brand.

The 12th rendition of that culmination of all things cool – the annual Sunday Times Generation Next Youth Marketing Conference, Interactive Showcase, Awards event – is taking place on 10 June at the Sandton Convention Centre Pavilion. This year, the celebration will be better than ever due to the inclusion of the inaugural youth After Party as the plan is to make the Generation Next programme even bigger. With a larger showcase planned, and an increased number of delegates for the conference and awards, the *Sunday Times* wanted to amplify the hype with the youth market itself. And therefore partnered with Uparty to launch the inaugural youth After Party.



Ormerod in explanatory mode...

“As a result of the ever-increasing popularity of the Sunday Times Generation Next event and the announcement of the first after party, companies such as [Proudly South African](#), [MTV](#), and [You Decide](#), an organisation that aims to discourage under-age drinking have already cemented their early participation as joint headline partners”, says Ormerod, due to their influence in terms of shaping youth behaviour. The mandate of the Proudly SA Campaign is to create and sustain quality jobs by encouraging the consumption of locally produced products and services. You Decide is a holistic, integrated community programme to curb drinking in SA’s teens. MTV, which focuses on teenagers and young adults provide an invaluable platform to speak directly to the youth. Good brand match. Here, Ormerod gives us a glimpse of what to expect, as well as insight into the impact of the participation and commitment of these brands, and others looking to be part of the Sunday Times

Generation Next movement...

1. How does Times Media Group’s (TMG) events expand your overall offering to readers?

Ormerod: Times Media owns SA’s most influential media titles including the *Sunday Times*, *The Times*, *Business Day*, *Financial Mail* and the *Sowetan*, so we already have strong affinity with our audience in both print and online spaces. We’ve been conducting research and surveys for various industry sectors for a number of years now through the Sunday Times Top 100 Companies, Sunday Times Top Brands, Financial Mail Adfocus, Times Media AMARAs, Sunday Times Literary Awards and Sunday Times Generation Next, to name a few. These always culminate in respective awards celebrations for top performers, but we’ve come to realise that the opportunity exists to extend these even further to deliver more for our readers and advertisers - through conferences, exhibitions and even ‘mentoring’ opportunities, like Leaders on the Move. Our expanded events offering take the level of engagement we have with our audience to the next level – we use our relationships with SA’s newsmakers and leading thinkers to create opportunities to meet experts, participate in debate, and be where the action is.

2. Talk us through the impact of the Sunday Times Generation Next survey on the SA marketing and advertising industry.

Ormerod: We’re now in our twelfth year of the survey, and with each year the support from the marketing and advertising industry grows, so we know we’re delivering value. Conducting a survey on the scale of Generation Next requires a high level of commitment and resources, and we’re happy to carry that responsibility if it means we can help advertisers direct their brand messaging and marketing budgets as best as possible in such a competitive economy.



3. Explain [HDI Youth Marketeers'](#) Generation Next Survey/youth poll process.

Ormerod: There are two components to the overall study. One component is a brand preference study, which polls the opinions of young people aged 8-23 to establish which brands they think are the coolest across 72 different categories. The second lifestyle component of the study requires respondents to reflect their attitudes as young consumers and is aimed at getting a grip on youth habits and behaviour. The study is conducted across seven provinces, balanced between coastal and inland, males and females and inclusive of all race groups and lifestyles. The surveys are conducted in person, with youth sub-segments categorised as:

- **Kids:** Primary school learners, aged 8-13 years
- **Teens:** Secondary school learners, aged 14-18 years
- **Young Adults:** Youth who have completed their schooling, aged 19 -23 years.

4. What's the impact of being recognised as a winner for brands and marketers alike?

Ormerod: Receiving a Sunday Times Generation Next Award is a highly prized accolade, and there is no other barometer of its kind in SA that is as widely respected. Youth are the consumers of tomorrow and their perception of a brand will therefore play a role in its longevity. If a brand is "cool", it's a strong indicator that messaging, visibility, and overall brand positioning is hitting the mark with these consumers and is a strong predictor of imminent success.

5. How can brand managers better target SA youth?

Ormerod: Today's youth have wide access to information, and are constantly receiving messages about products and the latest trends. They're very connected, and very exposed to advertising. They're also savvier than they may previously have been given credit for, so marketers need to keep their messaging authentic, responsible and honest.

That's for sure. View the Sunday Times 2015 Generation Next Conference, Expo and Awards highlights reel video embedded below for a taste of what to expect, [click here](#) for HDI Youth marketeers' perspective on why millennials matter and interact with the [Twitter handle](#) for more.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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