

Cause Related Marketing - who cares wins

There are new paradigms for business and therefore times are changing for marketing and advertising. Consumer activism and the untamed frontiers of cyberspace are taking down brands and brands that care are those that are winning long term, says Sue Atkins, international director of Business in the Community.



By [Louise Marsland](#) 2 Oct 2004

Many governments in fact cannot afford to meet the needs of their communities and it is often up to the global multi-nation (MNCs) to fill the void. However, issues in our fast food society that are hitting the ad industry and marketers hard, are obesity issues; new legislation regarding advertising to children; ethics and social responsibility and so on.

"Companies are having to reformulate marketing strategies, particularly for food brands, and in fact, how their products are being made. Many issues have nothing to do with marketing, but they can bring brands to their knees," said Atkins.

In fact, she commented on how in South Africa, fashion retailers are being challenged for job losses due to clothing imports.

"I noticed that Telkom was facing criticism over planned job losses, so I went onto the web to find out more, and very quickly found [www.telkomsucks.com](#). Brands are being destroyed through viral campaigns on the Internet. Unfortunately, you can sue a virus, as Telkom are trying to do and many other global brands in the world, have found out subsequently. Dunkin' Donuts in the end, facing the same issue with a website: [Dunkin' Donutssucks.com](#), bought it after failing to sue it and now use it as a major source of consumer feedback!"

Atkins warns: "The vigilante consumer age is here - and they're not all tattooed & pierced. Some are your Auntie Milly!"

Marketers have to wake up, she reiterates, brand citizenship is very important. Recent research has in fact showed that the consumer doesn't trust marketers, particularly in the light of recent corporate scandals.

"Demonstrate your values - that is the demand from today's consumer. The result is brand evolution - it's not just good enough to have a functional and emotional benefit for your brand, but a holistic strategy. Today brands need to develop more humanely and socially. Cause related marketing is a strategic decision and an integral part of the marketing mix."

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: [Bizcommunity.com](#); Editor: [Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA](#); Editor-in-Chief: [AdVantage](#) magazine; Editor: [Marketing Mx](#) magazine; Editor: [Progressive Retailing](#) magazine; Editor: [BusinessBrief](#) magazine; Editor: [FMCG Files](#) newsletter. Web: [www.sourceagency.co.za](#).
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