

# Matrimony and makeovers top the mass-market trend this festive season

According to Lebo Motshegoa the MD of Foshizi, a local company that specialises in mass market research and strategy, there are unique mass market trends in South Africa that retailers and service providers need to be aware of if they want to benefit from them this festive season.



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"In South Africa, many people (primarily black people) still return to family homes in the rural areas over the festive season and this strongly influences the way in which they plan for the year-end holidays. Christmas and New Year is a time to reconnect with loved ones, to relax and have some fun and to take home supplies and other items as a special treat."

December is also peak season for weddings, as this is usually the only time of the year when far-flung friends and family can get together for a big celebration. In a similar vein, many people returning to family homes for the holidays take the opportunity to do home repairs and renovations because they have sufficient time off work to devote to these tasks.

This means there is a strong trend of saving throughout the year in order to fund special events, home repairs and the purchase of bulk supplies and large-ticket items.

"People have worked hard throughout the year and with bonuses, savings or pay-outs from stokvels, they want to let go and spoil themselves a little, organise a special event, do some home repairs or perhaps make a large purchase they've been planning to make for some time."

## Two-pronged approach

This indicates that retailers and service providers need to take a two-pronged approach to servicing this market.

In the first instance, they need to allow for Christmas lay-byes from quite early on in the year as mass market consumers tend to plan for the festive season. Secondly, special offers on large-ticket items such as sound systems and TVs are also

a draw-card at bonus time, as are similar offers on goods like clothing, bulk food supplies and cases of liquor. Packaged offerings such as food hampers, jewellery sets and kitchen appliance sets are particularly attractive, as these meet a very specific need to take home both supplies and luxury items over the festive season.

"Many people working in the cities plan to take special items back to their family homes in December and also prepare for big parties and family get-togethers. This results in a noted upswing in mass market spending at this time of year, which presents an excellent opportunity for retailers to put together customised offers."

## **Packaged deal high on festive list**

When it comes to home repairs and renovations, packaged offers and special deals are always a big hit.

"People who own homes in the rural areas or who have family in those areas find this is the only time they're able to undertake significant repairs, additions or renovations and, as building materials are more affordable in the urban areas, they often plan to buy what they need there and then transport it to the rural areas themselves. Again, this presents an opportunity for retailers to put together special offers customised to meet the needs of this specific market."

Another gap presents itself in the pre-owned car market, as some people prefer to save up for a car and to buy it in cash. Special deals at this time of year have great appeal for would-be car owners.

The wedding sector is also very busy at this time of year. "In order for service providers to benefit from this trend, they need to fully understand what the mass market is looking for in a wedding. This is an opportunity to splash out and show off a little, so many brides and grooms opt for the very best quality in order to impress friends and family.

"Retail chains that enable consumers to select and pay for a selection of items in one area and collect them from outlets in other areas can certainly benefit from this trend," he concludes.

For more information, go to [www.foshizi.co.za](http://www.foshizi.co.za).

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