



# Advertising industry well represented at inaugural Social Media Week

It's ground breaking and it's here. Johannesburg has joined cities such as Barcelona, Sao Paulo, London and New York as a host city of Social Media Week (SMW), an event that engages audiences on all things social media.

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#) · 4 Sep 2014

As an industry that is on the frontline of digital technologies, the advertising industry is well represented at the event, both through local speakers such as Mike Sharman, owner, Retroviral Digital Communications and Tom Manners, CEO of Clockwork Media and international speakers that include John Montgomery, COO of GroupM Interaction in North America. Nominated by *Adweek* as one of the 12 smartest people in media in 2013, Montgomery, who is originally from South Africa will be delivering an opening day keynote on "The Internet of Everything".

Agencies hosting events on the main stage in the Wits Theatre including NATIVE, Cerebra and Liquorice, while a number of agencies, including Quirk and Ogilvy, are hosting independent events.

## Create the events you want

The Week is a combination of organised events as well as crowd-sourced events, as Addiel Dzinoreva, Executive Director SMW Johannesburg, explains. "The community is encouraged to create the events they want. This year there are not as many independent events as we would have liked, but we hope next year, as the event becomes better known, that the number of independent events will increase."

He says the timing for SMW is perfect as the country and market is ready for this type of event. "While most people are aware that social is what is driving what is happening in mobile and data consumption, they do not always understand that is a key driver in our economy. Most businesses are unaware of how social media is able to assist them in making better decisions for their products and consumers."

There exists a need to delve into more meaningful discussions around social. This is a space that changes rapidly, one minute you are an expert the next, the space has moved on. "Therefore it is important that we engage with each other. We also need to figure out what is unique about us, in South Africa and our space. This event provides that space and gives people that opportunity to learn, have discussions and share," says Dzinoreva.

## Aims to be the first of many

Sherry Bitting, MD of SMW, Johannesburg is very familiar with the SMW model, having attended the event in London and New York as well as produced an independent event at the London Social Media Week. She says they want this to be the first of many SMWs to be hosted by the city. "The idea is to build on this the inaugural event so that we can compare year on-year what is happening in this space and what progress we have made. A key outcome is to encourage South Africa to innovate in this space, to invent the next Mxit, not wait for it to come from elsewhere."

SMW Johannesburg runs from 22 September to 26 September at various venues throughout Braamfontein. The organisers are also encouraging the use of public transport through Uber, the global taxi service that uses a smartphone app that allows users to hail the closest drivers.

## ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at [Bizcommunity.com](#). Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of *AdVantage*, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.  
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