

## Taking deep breaths in marketing and media

 By Chris Mberdyk

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The primary trend in 2014, in my opinion, will be taking deep breaths to try and make practical sense of the tsunami of technology and radical consumer changes that have taken place in the past few years. And top priority will be:

## 1. Understanding the consumer

There will be a concerted movement towards understanding the B2C and B2B consumer a lot better. Not only in terms of a focus on the aspirational aspects of consumer behaviour that in past years have not been given the weight they deserve, but also and very importantly, the way in which the consumer is accessing information.

## 2. Mass media

Hopefully, there will be a lot more in introspection by the mass media on the manner in which they are communicating commercial messages to target markets. My guess is that the current trend will continue with marketers doggedly sticking to the traditional commercial break and good old 30 sec commercial in spite of a growing amount of evidence to show that the ROI on this methodology is waning quite dramatically.

In the USA, research shows that 83% of TV viewers do not watch commercials breaks. The figure is 72% in Europe. But, in both countries, advertisers continue to go this route.

In South Africa, among top LSM's the figure is probably above 50% but the number of viewers who do watch commercial breaks increases dramatically as one goes down the LSM scale.

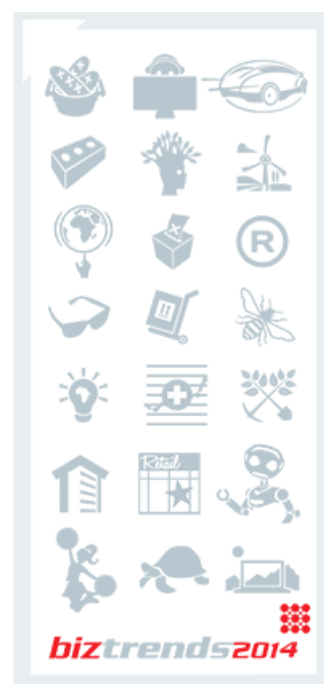
Newspapers will learn from their mistakes in the past, both in terms of the dangers of simply giving their content away online for free and also with regard to relevance. The process of changing newspaper mind-sets away from paper-first to the establishment of information resources will continue to be as slow as internet bandwidth in the 'platteland'.

### 3. Advertising bans

Government will continue to try and curry favour with voters, The World Health Organisation and myriad nagging Mother Grundies, by looking at the politically safe pursuit of banning advertising. 2014 will eventually see an outcome of the alcohol advertising ban saga (after the elections).

On one side, the Health Department is hell bent towards the absolute draconian while on the other, those ministers in the business and finance-related clusters in cabinet, have been putting up some strong arguments against overall bans as a potential for job losses. But, whichever way the liquor advertising ban pans out, you can be sure that junk foods and sugar just might well be next in the firing line. In fact, the Health Minister has already stated his intention to try and ban fast food advertising.

For the first time however, the media and advertising industries have been preparing solid submissions for when the time comes to debate the proposed Bill. The liquor industry has also spent enormous time and energy developing practical alternatives to banning advertising.



## **4. Accountability**

A lot more big advertisers will be demanding increased accountability and transparency in terms of media buying contracts, placement confirmations, discounts and other special incentive deals between media buyers and media owners.

## **5. Measurement**

An increasing number of boards of directors will continue last year's somewhat lackadaisical trend of insisting on being given meaningful return on investment and marketing funds employed data with far fewer corporates accepting the now debunked claim that "a lot of things in marketing cannot be measured".

Billions of rands are being wasted on ill-conceived marketing strategies and plain bad advertising. CEO's will be wanting to find out just how efficient they are in spending those massive budgets.

## **6. Social media**

The trend toward accessing myriad consumer and professional/technical information via mobile will continue apace as the world's big phone manufacturers tweak their products to be able to do all manner of new things from health checks and diagnoses to electrocuting muggers. So far, business has been exceptionally slow in even bothering to try and meet the consumer need via mobile.

In general, social media will continue to increase in terms of preferred private and commercial conversations. The big challenge to the retail sector will be to understand that social media conversations are conversations and not just one-way sales pitches.

## **7. Online advertising will continue to frustrate itself**

While it is the only media type to have actually grown during the recession, online advertising will continue to frustrate itself in terms of value-relevance. The problem is that right from the start online publishers discounted their advertising space massively to get attention. Now they're finding it hard to make it profitable. For example, a website attracting 1 million views a day charges far less for ad space than a newspaper with a circulation of only 40,000 a day.

But, the continued growth in online advertising will also depend on a paradigm shift in the way advertising is constructed. Successful online marketing will demand a completely different approach to that of conventional media.

## **8. In-store marketing will continue to grow**

Marketing will be all about getting closer to the consumer: Brand managers will look towards marketing strategies that involve closer contact with the consumer. In-store marketing that started gained impetus three years ago will continue to grow apace as marketers choose face-to-face strategies over faceless shotgun approaches.

## **9. Online shopping will grow bigger**

The trend towards more South Africans buying stuff online from all over the world will increase as connectivity improves and becomes more affordable. Once consumers start realising that online shopping is now a lot more secure they'll start picking up on the fact that a lot of products are cheaper online than they are in local shops - even including import duties and door-to-door deliveries.

With more and more big name retailers launching online shopping platforms and offering free delivery, the

competition is certain to hot up.

The winner, however, will be those online stores that make it as easy as possible for consumers to make a purchase.

The majority of business websites in South Africa will remain pathetic particularly in the B2B sector. The suggestion that once a consumer has found a product on the website to "send us an email and a sales rep will contact you" is just not acceptable.

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## ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK

Apart from being a corporate marketing analyst, advisor and media commentator, Chris Moerdyk is a former chairman of Bizcommunity. He was head of strategic planning and public affairs for BMW South Africa and spent 16 years in the creative and client service departments of ad agencies, ending up as resident director of Lindsay Smithers-FCB in KwaZulu-Natal. Email Chris on [moerdykc@gmail.com](mailto:moerdykc@gmail.com) and follow him on Twitter at [@chrismoerdyk](#).

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