

Customisation - for the big boys it's the best thing since sliced bread

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Why should I be stuck with what the chef decided...? I can't wait to build my own burger on home ground...

The South African market is a developing market that we always run to defend when our peers compare it unfavourably against the US and other First-World consumer markets. Of course, this does not mean that SMMEs should not adopt successful international trends such as customisation to attain a competitive lead within SA borders. After all, it has become the new song to sing for global institutions and serious national players. Ignore this and you face the possibility of being yesterday's news.

The International Markets Bureau released a markets analysis report on global consumer trends. Interestingly, the report highlights individuality as one of the key drivers that affect consumer perceptions of products. One company that knows this very well is telecommunications giant Telkom, as it gives the customer the pencil to design what they want with the aim to deliver. Of course, if choosing a predetermined (catalogue) product package tickles your fancy, they have that too.

Telkom is a special case because it exists in a monopolised industry yet it exemplifies marketing excellence, but OK, let's chuck Telkom into the pocket and get to the point... The SA consumer market is developing, and fast. Thus, market and business executives spend time trying to find ways to best serve (and engage) the customer, just as the servants in a royal household do when serving their king - call this 'The Royalty Effect' then.

The customer is spoiled for choice

This 'Royalty Effect' is much clearer in the Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) industry where the customer is treated as royalty, or at least should be. In this industry, competition for the buyer's last cent is stiff. This was made obvious by the existence of campaigns such as 'McMixa!' (McDonald's) and the exciting KFC's - Ka Ching! This gives the customer the ability to eat restaurant-graded meals from as little as R5.

Incredible is it not? If companies are competing for the customer's R5 it is clear that the customer is spoiled for choice and with other global brands such as Burger King entering the SA market, quick-service restaurants will have no other option than to resort to offering us consumers the chance to build our burgers.

CREATE-A-BURGER	
CHOOSE YOUR MEAT	PRIMO TOPPINGS
Grilled Chicken 8.75	Sliced Tomato .50
Turkey Burger 8.75	Grilled Onions .50
Veggie Burger 8.75	Pineapple .50
Classic Angus Beef 8.75	Onion straws 1.00
100% Grass Fed 8.75	Chili 1.00
Angus Beef 9.00	Fried Egg 1.00
	Guacamole 1.00
	Smoked bacon 1.00
CHEESE (1)	GARDEN
Provolone	Pickles
Mozzarella	Lettuce
Bleu Cheese	Cole Slaw
Pimento Cheese	Asian Slaw
Asheville Cheddar	Mushrooms
American Cheese	Sliced Onions
Appalachian Swiss	Baby Spinach
Carolina Goat Cheese	
CONDIMENTS	BREAD
Mayonaise, Ranch,	Burger Bun,
BBQ Sauce, Dijon Mustard,	Pretzel Roll,
Sour Cream, Hoisin Sauce,	Rye Bread,
Honey Mustard, Pesto,	Flour Tortilla,
Hot Sauce Remoulade	Hawaiian Bread,
	Gluten Free Bun 1.50

Burger King SA might have a lead in this regard, as they have an 'ace' up their sleeve. In a press release on the fast-food chain, GPI states that they are intending on affording SA consumers, as they have the chain's American consumers, the possibility of 'building' their own burger. This is better known as 'Have It Your Own Way'. Scratching your head and wondering what that menu would look like? Here is a Create-A-Burger menu from Mad Hatter restaurant.

The big boys do it differently based on the psychology of their consumers and because the SA consumer is developing as rapidly as a jet, companies in the QSR industry should seriously consider the factor of individuality as one that can affect consumers' product purchasing priorities. On the one hand, those who are in designer industries are at the right place at the right time to prosper. On the other hand, I can't wait to build my own burger on home

ground.

ABOUT MBONGELENI HLOMUKA

Behold Mbongeleni Hlomuka. A slinger of words, a super content writer working on his cape. Scout's honor. Don't have the time to read through all my articles? Well, get a rad dose of my commentary in 140 characters. Doctor's orders. @bonga_rh. See you soon. ;)

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