

Making the One Million Club meaningful

 By Leigh Andrews

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You need 1,000 Twitter followers to be seen as an influencer, but that figure climbs to 1 million when it's brands looking to crack that upper echelon of social media celebrity status. But you can't rest on your laurels once you get there... Here's how to sustain brand loyalty.

Heard of the One Million Club? It refers to brands that have more than 1 million followers on social media. Obviously celebrities are part of the one million club, simply due to their status. That's why Nelson Mandela, one of SA's best-known citizens across the globe, remains a member of the One Million Club with his legacy never more important than right now, #MandelaMonth, as brands scramble to make their CSI initiatives top-of-mind.



Claire Cobbledick

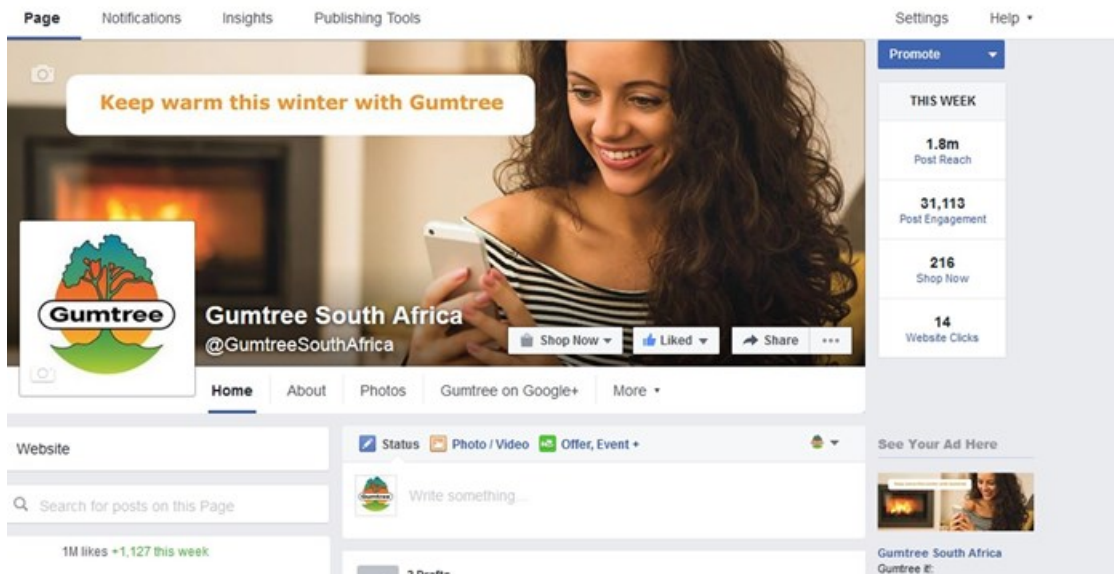
Sounds easy enough, but for brands to get those same figures, they need to produce content that is easily consumable, relevant and fun for the most part. Gumtree has just broken this mark itself, making Claire Cobbledick, head of marketing for Gumtree SA, ideal to explain how to emulate this success.

She shares Knorr South Africa, *Glamour* magazine SA, MTN SA, Cricket South Africa and *Soccer Laduma* as local examples that are getting that tricky content mix right, as they've just joined the One Million Club.

Keep them coming back

For brand pages in particular to resonate with the fickle local social audience, Cobbledick says: "Firstly, it takes investment – not financial necessarily, but in terms of valuable content and time. It is very difficult to keep someone going back for more every day, so think of the reasons why someone loves your brand and tie your posts to it." This means using quality images and links to earn their attention, while keeping the posting constant, as: "Too many brands lose interest and their pages die. If you remain active, you will grow."

Cobbledick says the same applies to responding to your followers. "Don't ignore them, even if they have something negative to say. People love to complain via social media; it provides a sense of empowerment to voice your dissatisfaction in a public forum. Treat their queries as serious and reply honestly."



Gumtree's Facebook page

This is important, because on social media you are again competing with millions of other pages and posts. Facebook in particular “uses a recommendation engine that suggests pages and people using your past browsing behaviour and known likes, as well as what you’ve bought and what you’ve searched. Imagine how many recommendations you **aren’t** receiving, because the guided search has decided that you won’t like it? If you aren’t in tune with your customers, you won’t be found,” she warns. That’s why it’s so crucial to know how, why, when and what social content your consumers engage with.

Good causes cause good brand relations

It’s certainly not a case of simply latching onto whatever is trending on social media at the time, as many brands do, come #MandelaDay and the like. The relevance to SA’s online audiences lies in the fact that Nelson Mandela as a brand continues to represent hope. Cobbledick says, “It’s not so much what he achieved in his lifetime, which remains incredible, but the message he left us with: South Africa can be a peaceful, unified, successful and happy nation, despite the hurdles we may face. People are hanging onto that message, and that is his legacy.” CSI projects shouldn’t be limited to a single day or even month of the year. Cobbledick agrees that the problem with an event like #MandelaMonth is that brands follow a ‘Me-Too’ methodology, doing something just because others are, and getting drowned out in the noise of everyone else doing the same as a result.

Her advice is not to get mired up in one-way communication and to start preparation for #MandelaMonth early – with the 2016 version having just come to pass, start planning your 2017 campaign. Cobbledick says to “Ask your existing followers to nominate causes and get them excited with you.” Keep them up-to-date and build up to the actual reveal in July next year. That way your community feels like they are part of what you are doing, rather than just witnesses. There’s no better way to build brand loyalty – who knows, it may be just the push you need to join the One Million Club!

For more on Gumtree SA’s social campaigns and projects, visit its [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) pages.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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