

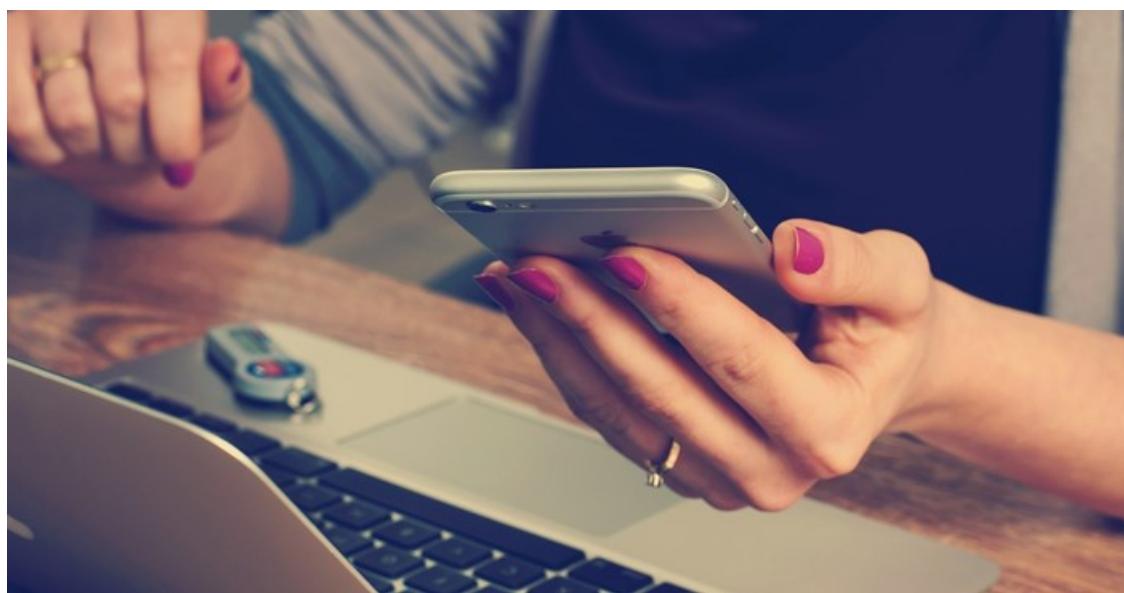
# Market research in the mobile world

By [Mpho Mpofu](#)

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So what does a combination of mobile, technology and market research mean for Africa and specifically South Africa. If the world is talking about market research in the mobile world, should Africa be having the same conversation or is our situation different?

So I found myself marinating with this question post our trip to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to attend the MRMW APAC 2016 conference on Market Research in the Mobile World. Delegates from Asia, Africa, Europe and even the United States had attended this conference to share thoughts and ideas around the topic of mobile in market research.



We spent the first day in client and agency workshops discussing case studies that outlined client problems and each group had to determine how mobile could aid clients in finding insights and solutions to their problems. In looking at some of the case studies, what struck me is that mobile has become a trend and a perceived solution for quick results even when traditional research should be the foundation.

In some of the case studies, it was apparent that client needed to go into a more exploratory traditional approach to gain a thorough understanding of the consumer, their needs and drivers of the category. In delivering our solutions, most agencies agreed that mobile, was potentially a secondary and tertiary phase to addressing some of the problems. It was also to be noted that mobile should not be seen as a replacement to traditional research but as a support tool.

One of the other interesting exercises we conducted was the client vs. agency debate on challenges and frustrations we faced with each other. The frustrations are universal and we've heard them all before. Clients find traditional research and agency approaches frustrating in that:

## 1. Delivery time is too long

This seemed to be the biggest issue as clients felt that at times, results came way after the problem has been resolved. The aim is for the research to guide in decision making but when the research is not available during decision making, what is the point?

- This was particularly interesting to me in looking at the equation of balancing time vs. quality of output?

- What other interim solutions can we offer clients to aid urgent decision making?
- Is there an opportunity for mobile here?

## **2. Costs too high**

So we take too long, cost too much and don't offer enough strategic solutions?

- So what does this mean for the way we deliver our findings?
- It is no longer good enough to merely report on findings but clients are looking for strategic and solutions based reporting
- Is the modern researcher a strategist as well?

## **3. Results do not sufficiently speak to business issues**

- Clients expressed a desperate need for the 'so what' in the findings
- No more data dumps but more strategic reporting

## **4. Lack of innovation**

How can we bring the client even closer to the consumer? How do we heighten the intimacy between client and consumer?  
Is there an opportunity for more extensive use of mobile here to aid in accessing the consumer?

- Video, audio, picture?
- How can we use mobile to access spaces of influence?

Traditional research on its own is considered one dimensional given the ever evolving consumer influenced by an ever changing world

Having had this experience, I ask again what is the role of mobile in South Africa and how can we leverage the technology to address client pressing problems?

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Mpho Mpofu is the founder and director of Masutane Consulting a qualitative research agency based in South Africa providing full research service to corporate clients and support service to international and South African agencies within the SADC region.