

Marketing's shifting trends in age of mobile revolution



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From the birth of print media in the 1500s to the dawn of outdoor in the 1800s, cinema (1910s), radio (1920s), TV (1950s), Internet (1990s), and the rise of mobile in 2000, marketing has undergone a major overhaul as the dynamics of each media mentioned above dictated and influenced the strategies of the game. However, experts believe mobile - the seventh media - has proven to be the most pulsating of all, judging by the way it has rewritten the rules of selling.

"Can you imagine living without a cellphone? No. Mobile is a small device but the access is massive. But the phone is no longer mobile, it is the audience... and we will all be mobile marketers. Why? Because it is social, we are tweeting and we are all connected," Brett St Clair, Google AdMob South Africa country manager, said last night, Wednesday, 27 October 2010, at the AMASA Forum held in Sandton, Johannesburg.

In ascendancy

For a country such as SA, where nearly one million new mobile phones were sold between January 2009 and January 2010 - according to GfK - mobile marketing is in ascendancy as more and more organisations take advantage of the benefits engendered by the consumers' rush to get connected and technology sophistication.

According to St Clair, mobile is about brand-building (mobile Internet, games, branded utilities and community), acquisition (mobile advertising, direct response and permission marketing), but also about growth (up sell, cross sell), and retention (service loyalty).

He pointed out that building brands through mobile guarantees instant interaction with consumers, assures consumer expectations, a permanent brand presence and commercial success, among others.

Furthermore, Silverstone CIS CEO Raymond Buckle said acquisition through mobile advertising will see an increase in available inventory and pressure on marketing budgets, while retention and growth will pave the way to growth in consumer acceptance and expectation, an 'on-demand' consumer and cost effectiveness.

Journey to loyalty

The journey to loyalty begins with increased data and technology sophistication, St Clair indicated, adding that multi-integration ensures more relevant customer communications.

At least 90% of South Africans have cellphones, compared to radio's 73%, said Buckle, adding that 23% surf the Internet

through a mobile phone compared to computers' 10%, and 24 million SMSes are sent every day across Vodacom, MTN and Cell C.

According to AdMob, 275 million mobile ads had been pushed by 16 000 publishers by July 2010. SA's population of cellphone users by race and gender is as follows: blacks 67%, Indians 4%, whites 22% and coloured 8%, while females account for 49% and males for 51%, according to Nielsen/AdMob figures. Nielsen/AdMob statistics also reveal the figures of SA users by LSM, stating that LSM 6 comes top with 27%, followed by LSM 5 (19%), and LSM 7 (15%), and LSM 10 (7%), among others.

But, despite the industry's phenomenal growth, some observers believe some organisations in SA are lagging in terms of breaking through the mobile tollgate and making a long-lasting impact.

Understand well

St Clair urged marketers to understand well the role of mobile in the marketing mix; take advantage of the new contextual of benefits of mobile, needs, location and time; deal with consumers as individuals; and ensure relevance.

Buckle said: "Mobile is here, not on the way... and as an add-on, it works best when integrated with other media into campaigns from the start."

St Clair concluded: "Everything you do, get into mobile."

The Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) said it will soon host a forum where local brands, media owners and agencies will share their experiences.

SilverstoneCIS founder and CEO Raymond Buckle and Admob Google country manager for South Africa Brett St Clair are the newly elected co-chairs for the Mobile Marketing Association's (MMA) South African Council. They have recently launched a [Certified Mobile Marketer Programme](#) for South Africa.

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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