

All Gold takes the lead as Icon Brands' winner

The 2014/2015 Ask Afrika's Icon Brand survey revealed that despite huge societal disparities, their palates mostly unify South Africans.

All Gold (condiments and sauces) was announced as the overall winner, with Koo Baked Beans (tinned food) in second place, Hulett's Sugar (sugar and sweeteners) in third and Albany (bread) in fourth place. The top 10 winners were announced at an event last week to an audience of over 250 business professionals.



Mnette Ferreira (Media 24), Lindiwe Brhhele (Tiger Brands), Maria Petousis (Ask Afrika TGI Director), Ken McArthur (Ask Afrika Executive Chairman)

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Research matters

"We can be agents of justice by giving our attention more generously, by learning to notice the less obvious, but genuinely lovely, things. This is what research does. It stops us; it helps us to notice things. Research matters, because it offers us assistance in getting on with our dreams, coping with our failures, remembering what matters, avoiding what harms us, and rebalancing the excesses of corporate enthusiasm. Research is not mysterious, it belongs to everyone," said Andrea Rademeyer, CEO and founder of Ask Afrika.

These ubiquitous and quintessentially South African brands cross all socioeconomic, race, language and cultural barriers. Consumers voted for their favourites with their hearts and

their wallets.

Thirty-one brands made the list for 2014/2015 and were celebrated, as were the top platinum brands and industry category winners (top of their target market, but were not necessarily accessible to the whole nation).

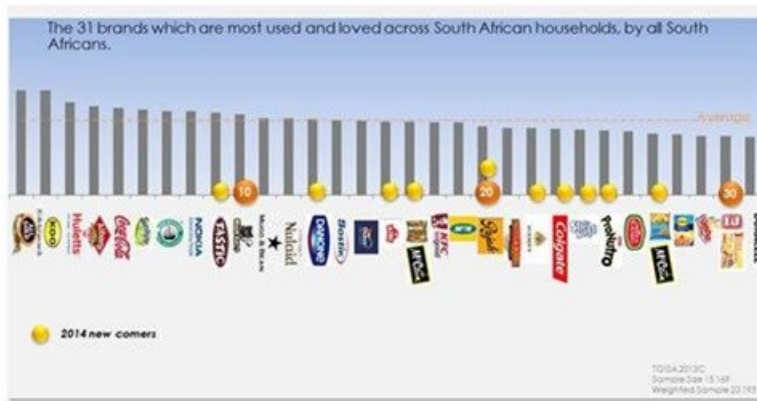
"The survey is about relevance across the South African demographic. It is not a popularity contest, not about what people like or say they like, but about which brands all South Africans use loyally. This is the differentiator between this and other surveys. It is important to understand that even though there is a diversity of brand measures, each looks at different elements of the brand and together they create a holistic picture of the market landscape," said Sarina de Beer, MD of Ask Afrika.

New category - restaurants & fast foods

South African's lives are becoming increasingly fluid and the current status quo is making citizens prone to indulgence and escapism. Restaurants and fast foods are a relatively new but popular industry category winner. There were certain industry categories that achieved iconic status amongst the top 10, comparable to food, that were somewhat of a surprise to the researchers. This was due to the lack of access to large portions of the population.

New performing industry categories included, travel and leisure, financial services and pet food. A large portion of South Africa is 'unbanked' and does not have access to formal financial services. This means that these industries had to punch well above their weight within their target markets.

Polygamous loyalty is increasing and is apparent in the cellular industry with many South Africans using more than one SIM. Some respondents chose one network as their main provider but their spend revealed that they favoured another.



Many brands, despite brilliant ideas and creative ingenuity have missed the mark in a very competitive market because consumer expectations were not their central focus. The survey is not only about footprint and preference, it is about loyal usage, which is the Holy Grail and the hardest to achieve. A multitude of factors influences consumer loyalty, including public relations, reputation and price. Out of 8000 brands measured in Target Group Index (TGI) by the company, only 31 have what it takes to obtain iconic status.

Rates dropping

The list of top performing brands has remained consistent over some time. These brands work hard at continuously earning their relevance. However, the majority of the 31 brands' ratings are dropping. The trends show that it is no longer enough to rely on trusted symbols that have been refined over many years. There is a shift in power taking place, with a new breed of exceptional brands that play by different rules.

Consumers are now attracted to unproven and unknown brands the way they were attracted to established brands in the past. In fact, established is now often just another word for tired, if not tainted. To remain at the top, brands have to be relevant, reinvent themselves and display congruence. Heritage brands have no guarantee of loyalty. The future belongs to clean slate brands.

Clean slate brands can be brands that enter the market for the first time and take over market share rapidly, such as the Gautrain, or they can be heritage brands that continuously innovate and re-invent themselves, such as Coca-Cola, to live up to the expectations of the constantly evolving consumer. Clean slate brands have universal appeal and are authentic. They stand out from the pack, are characterised by fresh ideas, new or newly represented values and are relevant.

Future marketers will be hard pressed to demonstrate relevance as consumer demand for innovation and putting values over value becomes increasingly stronger. Brand owners will be required to adapt to a changing retail landscape that includes formal and informal shopping. Marketers will be required to use meaningful segmentation without leaning on stereotypes to win brand success. Innovating to zero will keep brands alive.

For a full list of winners, email Maria Petousis at maria.petousis@tgi.co.za or call +27 (0) 12 428 7400.