

Back to their roots

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Family is what the youth cannot live without. This is one of the key findings of the Sunday Times Generation Next Study...



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"This is the first time in years we are seeing this answer. I believe that it shows our need for human contact, because of an over-stimulation of technology," says Jason Levin, Managing Director, HDI, which conducted the study.

Another surprise is the role of religion in young people's lives. "The youth is not disengaged from religion, as many think. Instead, we are seeing a return to religion by the youth."

Opinions and key trends

There are two components to the Sunday Times Generation Next Study, Levin, explains; brand preference, and lifestyle and consumer behaviour.

The first is the opinions of 5,433 young urban South Africans (aged 8 to 23) to establish which brands are the Coolest of the cool in 2015 across 72 different categories.

The second component of the study reveals key trends and consumer behaviour patterns amongst young South Africans. So questions include how would you like a brand to connect with you? And what are your plans for the future? How do you express yourself most? The results provide HDI with rich insight to help understand what makes young urbanites tick.

The brand preference component of the Study is how the Sunday Times Generation Next Brand Awards are determined. Held in partnership with HDI Youth Marketers (HDI) and sponsored by Waltons, the Awards - as well as the inaugural Generation Next Youth Marketing Conference - recently took place at the Convention Centre.

The brands that regularly do well, Levin says are iconic and have a strong brand proposition that they remain true to, while still doing something fresh, such as a packaging change. "Nike, Coca-Cola, Converse are brands that do well because they subscribe to this and the youth appreciate them for it."

This year's top brand was Nike, followed by Coca-Cola and then Samsung.

His advice to brands wanting to reach their market is to take an interest in this market. "Actually bother to go find out about them and what they like. Then show your commitment. Youth want to see that you are involved in their lives and believe in brands that believe in them."

His final words of advice are to:

- Be authentic. Be Direct, not pretend.
- The brand that does good.
- Be freely and readily available. If you are tough to get hold of, the youth lose interest.

Speaking about the conference, Levin says it is a natural extension of the business breakfast that use to be held on the survey. "The conference provides us with a far better mechanism as it gives business people and marketers access to information through a number of experts utilising a number of different formats."

The formats, ranging from panel discussions, expert presentations of varying lengths, to case studies and insights, make the conference interesting and keep it fresh. "The conference is also only for the morning, which means delegates do not have to sacrifice a complete day out of the office," adds Levin.

This year speakers ranged from Spur Corporation founder and Executive Chairperson, Allen Ambor to DJ Euphonik and Lazi Mathebula. Brand case studies on how to reach the youth were presented by KFC, LoveLife and Converse. The one panel discussion hosted a number of representatives from creative agencies discussing how brands should or should not be advertising to the youth. The other panel was comprised of HDI Junior Board of Directors, hosted by Pepsi Pokane, CEO, Bonngoe TV.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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