

5 great pieces of advice for South African marketing professionals

Marketing is a complex field where you are tasked with, among many other things, figuring out how people will react to everything from Facebook posts to big-budget TV commercials.

By [Kevin Lancaster](#), issued by [Broad Media](#) ⁹ Jan 2024



What if I told you I could solve all your marketing challenges with a single article?

Well, I would be lying.

Marketing is a complex field where you are tasked with, among many other things, figuring out how people will react to everything from Facebook posts to big-budget TV commercials.

While I may not be able to give you all the solutions in one body of text, I am able to share insights into what works well, based on my experience in the industry.

These are my “Five great pieces of advice for South African marketing professionals”.

Number 1: Be at the head of the boardroom table

It happens way too often that a company launches a new product or service, and a week before the big day, the CEO tells the marketing team they must urgently run an advertising campaign on a 'tight budget'.

Marketing professionals are the most important people in a successful company, and the work they do should never be treated as an afterthought.

When a new company project gets underway, marketers must be involved from the start – leading the conversation at the boardroom table on strategy and budget allocations – to ensure success.

An excellent example of this in action is Hollywood movies.

Marketing costs for big-budget movies typically equal 50% of their production budget, but can go higher.

The smash hit Barbie movie epitomises this. It had a reported production budget of \$145m, while its marketing budget was reported to be \$150m.

If we put this into a simple formula, we can state that for every R1 spent on making the Barbie movie, just over R1 was spent on marketing it.

Imagine if your business launched a new smartphone app that cost R5m to build, and your budget to market it was also R5m.

Spent wisely, you would be at the top of the app store download lists in no time and the app would be a smash.

Make sure you fight for your marketing budget from the start.



Number 2: Don't run a one-month campaign and think the job is done

Everyone knows that guy who met a girl on Tinder, they went on their first date, and a week later they were married.

You smile and say things like “congrats”, but what you are really thinking is “What the heck is he doing? He's in for trouble.”

And you would be right.

The same is true for marketing. You cannot promote your latest product or service for one month and expect all potential customers to immediately jump on board.

You have to constantly be in front of your target audience for extended periods of time to make sure they know who you are, what you offer, and why they should trust you enough to hand over their money.

As the price of your product or service goes up, the more relevant this becomes.

Our top-performing clients run marketing campaigns with us 365 days of the year – using sponsored articles, display branding, videos, podcasts and more.

This combination works incredibly well to build a connection to their audience and earn the required trust to make a sale.



Number 3: Tell your CEO you need more than just leads

Marketing professionals are under constant pressure to produce leads, with little-to-no regard for the value of brand awareness and educating their target market.

This is a tough battle, but you need to stand up to your CEO or CFO and tell them that without a well-rounded marketing strategy, your leads are going to dry up quicker than Eskom's diesel reserves under Stage 6 loadshedding.

This idea that after you reach someone for the first time they will simply sign up as a client is a huge mistake.

It's why Coca-Cola spends R75bn a year on advertising, despite almost everyone in the world knowing who they are.

If you are not constantly in front of your target audience, reinforcing your brand and educating them, you lose relevance very quickly and competitors will eat your lunch.

You can tell your CEO to contact me if they disagree, and I will be happy to help you fight this battle.



Number 4: Don't tell everybody everything all at once

This is a common trend I see in content marketing, where companies want to fit an entire advertising campaign into one article.

A good example of this is a software development company we worked with.

They wanted an article to promote their ability to develop mobile apps, websites, and backend-systems, while providing project management and dev team augmentation services – and stating that they served both South African and International clients.

We suggested they rather pick one thing and focus on it to start with in their first article, so it is easier for a potential client to connect with them.

For the first article, we focused on mobile app development, for the second article we focussed on systems development, and so on.

This proved to be the right call, and their marketing campaign produced excellent results, with each article bringing in leads from a group that was interested in a specific type of development service.



Number 5 – Don't skip the fundamentals to follow fads

It's so easy to get caught up in fads and hype in marketing, and sacrifice the fundamentals as a result.

Remember when NFTs were the hottest thing around and everyone from professional sports teams to global tea brands were launching their own digital tokens?

Now, almost no one gives a damn about NFTs and you have to feel sorry for people like the enlightened individual who, in 2021, paid \$2.9m for an NFT of former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey's first Tweet.

Today, that same NFT is estimated to be worth \$4.

Getting involved in NFTs was not an issue for companies which did this as part of a comprehensive and well-rounded marketing strategy.

But if you went all-in on NFTs and neglected the fundamentals like content marketing, display advertising, and social media campaigns, then you wasted a lot of budget.

The current trend which is threatening to be a repeat of NFTs is the metaverse.

Companies are buying digital properties which have no value and which no one is engaging with, and spending their digital marketing budget to do so.

VR environments and the metaverse are not silver bullets that will make everything amazing, and if you take away budget and energy from your fundamental digital campaigns – campaigns that work and deliver solid results – to fund your metaverse escapades, your business is going to suffer.

Exploring VR initiatives as part of a well-rounded strategy is great – just make sure you keep doing the things that work while trying new channels.



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