

SA Social Media Landscape Report 2025: Industry still putting its money where the people are

Social media has become a very deliberate ecosystem, and we see the idea that people are going there for a reason, and so in turn, brands are also becoming very deliberate, even when they're unsure about what is happening.

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#) 27 Jun 2025



Source: © 123rf [123rf](#) Key takeaways were shared at the SA Social Media Landscape Report 2025 webinar on Thursday, 26 June

TikTok is surging ahead as a platform of choice for video consumption. LinkedIn is becoming the professional voice that brands trust, and Facebook continues a steady decline, and all of this reflects changing tastes.

With Facebook, it's a marginal loss of relevance across all demographics, and for LinkedIn, it's a marginal increase in relevance for the big brands.

These are some of the takeaways that were shared at the *SA Social Media Landscape Report 2025* webinar on Thursday, 26 June.

Presented by Arthur Goldstuck, CEO of World Wide Worx, who, together with Ornico, produced the report with research by Ask Afrika TGI.

This year, the survey focuses on the concept of fake identity, with the theme, *Fake Identity: The Era of Digital Doubles*.

A reshaping of digital habits

The survey shows a gradual reshaping of corporate and consumer South Africa's digital habits.

While some platforms still dominate in usage, there is a slow but steady fragmentation of attention, purpose and trust taking place.

“Trust is truly significant as it is the core in the shift in people’s attitudes towards social media, following the

emergence of fake identity, fake videos and fake engagement,” says Goldstuck.

As a result, he says people are rethinking how and why they use these platforms.

“In short, it's a quest for purpose. So when people are on social media now, even if they don't realise it, that's what they want out of it.”

Industry dominant social media platforms

From the industry side, this year the survey comprises 143 brands, the biggest industry survey in the social media project to date.

For industry, last year, Facebook was dominant and number one, with 78% of major corporations using it.

In 2025, LinkedIn is the new number one, jumping from its 72% in 2024 to 85% in 2025.

“The platform has emerged as one of the trusted choices. This shift is because of the loss of trust in Facebook (and Meta),” says Goldstuck.

Instagram has risen significantly from 56% in 2024 to 73% and X has come back somewhat from 51% to 58%.

But the one that sticks out is TikTok.

This, he says, is not about trust but about user engagement and user interest.

The platform not only stands out in the industry survey, but it also stands out in the consumer survey.

It is way ahead of Facebook and LinkedIn, with only YouTube seeming to be challenging it.

Looking at short video platforms, which keep emerging and chopping and changing, Facebook Reels has jumped from 50% to 57% of companies using it.

Instagram Reels jumped from 53% to 61% so Reels are working for Meta.

TikTok has climbed steadily from 34% to 38% but with its stories adding 22% to 27%, the combination of regular TikTok and TikTok stories makes it a formidable competitor to Reels.

Following the people

However, he notes that companies are still sticking to what they're comfortable with, spending 40% (up from 24% in 2024) of their social media advertising budget on Facebook, while LinkedIn and Instagram only marginally increased.

Facebook is still getting the bulk of the budget because that's where the bulk of the population still is.

So, what we see is the industry still putting its money where the people are.

Brand returns from social media

Companies saying that they're getting brand returns from social media have dropped from 80% (2024) to 75%.

More significantly, those who are unsure have jumped from 12% to 22% in terms of getting those returns.

Investment into new technology

The number of companies that have allocated budget towards new technology has dropped, showing that companies are nervous about new technology.

The other side is that there is a massive jump in the utilisation of AI in general, from 47% to 75%, and in AI for search and chat from 59% to 76%, which means three-quarters of companies are using AI actively.

But they are just starting to invest in it. Currently, they are using the cheap and free versions.

The investment in AR and VR has plummeted by almost half, from 26% to 14%, showing the scepticism of the industry.

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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