

Moving brand ambassadors to grand ambassadors

A [recent article](#) in the New York Post describes the advent of Grand Ambassadors, which is a prognosis of where the experiential activation industry in South Africa could be, given training and investment in brand ambassadors.

 By [Michelle Francis](#) 16 May 2013

This investment will develop the brand activation industry and ambassadors in addition to offering customers a greater scope, marketing mix integration and ultimately increased sales.

Commitment to brand, not ad hoc approach

Working in experiential activations can offer tertiary students and young job seekers great brand exposure and skills development. Some students and job seekers have an ad-hoc approach to the part-time employment when it comes to experiential activation campaigns. It is often regarded as a gap-filler or a quick solution to earn additional cash before the holidays. One needs to drive solid commitment to the work and process continually. For passionate adoption of the process and work is delivered when you invest and treat each individual as more than just a number and more like a full-time employee.

Training and testing

Professional training sets the tone and importance of a specific campaign. Instead of representing an agreed mechanic or brand manual, meticulous composition and interpretation for total understanding from brand ambassador's experience facilitates better understanding and higher resonance. It is a fine art to translate brand speak into activation speak. This sets the course for the right behaviours, higher compliance and excellent execution. Training should also be repeated and divided into digestible modules. It is usually difficult to absorb all the information in one session. Stringent testing also indicates how serious the campaign should be regarded and in turn sends a strong message that one is only looking for dedicated, passionate and professional activators.

Certification

Repeatedly, I have seen that recognition supersedes additional cash incentives above what the brand ambassadors are being paid to do. Certification must be approached from two directions. The first is acknowledgment for top marks, in addition to those who passed where a high threshold has been set, and second is ongoing top performance during the duration of the campaign. This covers sales, engagement, punctuality, accurate reporting etc.

Promotion

Tier climbing is another significant motivator where brand ambassadors strive to be promoted to the next level, based on their performance, commitment and professionalism. As they progress up each tier, they earn more and again recognition drives commitment.

Skills Development

Having recently launched a training centre (<http://ow.ly/kymQ8>), it is focused on equipping the South Africa

youth with essential life and business skills to increase their employment opportunities in both the formal and informal job sectors. Not only is this a way of giving back to the community and our people but this delivers true loyalists and positive advocates helping to recruit even more talented ambassadors.

Brand ambassadors could become grand ambassadors given the time, focus and dedication. The knock-out benefit is two-fold - increased performance and investment in our youth.

ABOUT MICHELLE FRANCIS

Michelle Francis is CEO and founder of Tradeway. She is passionate about experiential execution, compliance, ROM and development of the youth for the formal job sector. Contact details: website www.tradeway.co.za | blog MchLeeFrancis.wordpress.com | Twitter [@MchLeeFrancis](https://twitter.com/MchLeeFrancis) | LinkedIn [View my profile and articles...](#)

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