

Why brand activations in Africa are evolving

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Stephan Botha of PMG division ProActive explains that, in Africa, to rise above the clutter a fully integrated approach is key and this includes the ever-growing use of social media.

We all know that for brands to be noticed, they need to rise above the clutter. Their messaging needs to shout louder than the rest and they need to be part of a consumer's daily life or risk being obscured by the competition.



This is even more pertinent in developing economies and holds true for most African countries. The markets are relatively untapped with myriad brands wanting to reach consumers. However, unlike other more developed environments, African countries require an even more strategic approach, one that includes numerous touchpoints across a variety of media.

By utilising numerous key touchpoints, brands, services and product information can be taken straight into the hands of the target audience. For a campaign to work and work effectively, that is, make a significant contribution to the bottom line, the approach needs to be fully integrated and turn 360 degrees, with all elements coming together in a seamless process.

Tailored activations for exceptional results

African countries and their regions do not present a one size fits all scenario. Think of Namibia, what works in Windhoek may not necessarily receive the desired response in Oshakati. Activations as well as the various touchpoints in the mix need to be tailor made to suit LSM group, language group, culture and, of course, environment.

A case in point was the Doritos campaign we recently implemented in Zambia. The campaign was a fully-fledged, through the line awareness drive that included radio commercials, static advertising, sampling activations, a digital campaign, social media and high-profile events that ensured objectives were not only met, but surpassed.

Furthermore, an original Doritos jingle was produced and choreographed for the promoters to create the "wow" factor. The dance moves were passed on to the audience who engaged enthusiastically with the song. Moreover, a drive to the Doritos FaceBook page encouraged interaction and also informed fans about Doritos events. Over the two months that the campaign was running, sales grew by 230% and the Doritos FaceBook community grew from zero to 3,600 with thousands of fans sharing branded content on their personal wall. The site is still extremely active with fan numbers growing incrementally by the day.

Another case study is the NIVEA campaign we rolled out across Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Well-groomed brand ambassadors went to popular locations in the main cities and created excitement around the skincare brand. The team travelled in a fully branded Quantum taxi and educated both men and women on the benefits of the various products. The campaign took the brand directly to the targeted consumer with blitz teams, sampling, mall stands and in store promotions.

An augmented racing game also attracted consumers to the promotional stands. The game was played on a Tablet and allowed participants to complete a certain number of laps, recording their time. The best time was placed on the NIVEA Hot Lap wall, in full sight of passers-by. The person with the best time received a NIVEA Grand Prize. The gaming competition element was extremely successful and it allowed consumers to engage with the brand in a way that was fun and memorable.

Connecting with an African audience through social media

In Africa social media has become a fundamental element, one that allows brands to become integrated in the lives of a targeted consumer group. A hundred and twelve million people use smartphones in Africa, there are 930 million handset users and only 100 million people do not own a mobile device. These figures show that for a large portion of the population, there is an eagerness to connect and communicate via phone and social media. When it comes to FaceBook, there are over 50 million FaceBook users on the continent and approximately 45% of smartphone users have a FaceBook account. Tapping into this is vital for brands that want to stay alive and thrive in this market.

Activating in Africa is not without its challenges. Power outages, transport problems, general infrastructure and other issues can put a spanner in the works. The key is to be prepared, know your environment, know your market and then do it bigger and better.

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