

Wikid Expo for tots, tweens and teens

Issued by [Heypenni Gold Marketing](#)

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Marketers have a powerful platform to interact with young South African consumers at Wikid, a new youth-focused expo from 17-19 September 2004 at the Sandton Convention Centre.

Owned and launched by exhibition and event organisers South Africa RAI, Wikid is the first show of its kind on the continent that directly addresses and acknowledges the massive influence young people ranging in age from toddlers to teens exert on shopping decisions.

Launched to the trade on Thursday 26 February, Carol Weaving, managing director of South Africa RAI elaborated on how Wikid provides marketers and brand owners with an omnipotent tool to create dialogue and research one of the most elusive and eternally evolving consumer segments.

"The under-18 consumer sector is highly fragmented with several different identities. It is the fastest growing market accounting for almost 15 million of our population and has tremendous spending power and influence on domestic purchases. South Africa's young people are highly intelligent consumers who are informed and connected. They are more sophisticated, more influential, more brand aware and marketing savvy than any other generation before them," says Carol. "What is critical in this market is to realise this is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Just because a group of young people are within a certain age range does not mean you can paint them with the same brush.

"Besides the obvious sales platform, Wikid offers an incredible opportunity for brand owners to research the personal drivers that motivate a young person to purchase or subscribe to a particular brand. Ultimately this means that you have information from a captive audience that is specific to your product, not simply broad weeping statements about youth culture derived from a research house," adds Carol.

Andrew Miller, a special guest speaker at the trade launch and well-known brand strategist and media columnist on SA youth cultures elaborates on the challenges for exhibiting brands. "Wikid exhibitors should be looking at the event as something other than simply a sales tool. Wikid should be looked at as an opportunity to create dialogue, garner research through intelligent direct marketing and learn how to align your brand alongside the youth rather than above them. This is the type of interaction that makes for long-term brand loyalty rather than just short-term monetary gains."

Andrew believes that current youth marketing leaves a lot to be desired. "Despite the fact that the youth population is one of the fastest growing and potentially most lucrative markets, brand owners consistently get it wrong when it comes to marketing to young people because they do not invest in their own research. What you see happening is a repackaging of a cultural trends, where marketers pick up on a specific element, turn it into an advert and seek to position their brand around a trend. The problem is youth are naturally resistant to this sort of tactic. It might work in the short term, at least as a positioning tool, but it does not engage the youth nor break through their resistance to create long-term brand loyalists," says Andrew.

"Instead, marketers need to look at dialogue as their positioning tool. As marketers we need to engage in cross-cultural and cross-racial dialogue and drive brands that are not looking to infiltrate or dominate but rather act as facilitators of culture."

"To do this brand owners must design campaigns around their own research. There is a very strong need for brand specific 'youth research' on a strategic level, as opposed to a product level. Drawing on research that hasn't been constructed with a specific purpose in mind then trying to extract meaning by applying this to your brand is futile. Wikid provides a perfect opportunity to conduct this research on a captive audience that is representative of our population," concludes Andrew.

About Wikid:

An exhibition for Tots, Tweens and Teens ranging from 2 – 18 years where kids are respected for their independent purchasing power, influence on trends, opinions and attitudes.

Venue: Sandton Convention Centre from 17-19 September 2004, Hall 2, Level -2.

Show hours: Friday and Saturday, 10h00 - 20h00; Sunday, 10h00 - 18h00.

Entrance Fee: R25 per person; Children under 6, R10.

For more information contact Lidia van Straaten

Tel: (011) 549 8300

e-mail:

Editorial contact

Heypenni Gold Marketing

Jill Dial

Tel: (011) 894 3831

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