

# Africa is leading, defining mobile creativity according to Facebook VP of Global Business Marketing

In her keynote address at the Loeries: DStv Seminar of Creativity on 19 August 2016, Sarah Personette, VP of Global Business Marketing Facebook, New York, will talk about how Africa is leading and defining mobile creativity.



Personette

Mobile is bringing about a worldwide transformation in technology, connectivity and accessibility, in the process it is catalysing about a fundamental change in the way the world works. Moreover, Africa will lead a mobile revolution that is unlocking new levels of human potential and creativity.

Africa's young population and mobile-only mindset puts it in a perfect position to lead the next wave of technology-driven change. Connectivity is rapidly transforming the continent, inspiring people and businesses with the power to imagine bigger, better ideas. Just consider these facts:

- By 2020 there will be over 500 million smartphone connections and
- 1 billion mobile broadband connections, representing 60% of the connection base
- The mobile ecosystem will drive well over \$100 billion in economic value across Sub-Saharan Africa
- And it will create or influence over 6 million jobs

Already new-generation makers, doers and builders are launching companies that are radically disrupting established businesses and even entire industries. Today, with nothing but a smartphone and some code, you can create an auto brand, a supermarket, a fashion label or even a bank.

What does this connectivity mean to people? Everything. In Africa, connectivity matters. It is a lifeline to a world beyond the borders and boundaries that people have always known. It is not a luxury; it is a truly transformative opportunity to create a

different kind of life.

Mobile is...

- A bank account
- a small business
- an education
- a pharmacist

Facebook's mission is to make the world more open and connected, so it is no surprise that we have a ringside seat for the shift to mobile. In South Africa, we have 14 million monthly active users, of which more than 90% is on mobile. In Nigeria, we have 17 million monthly active users, and in Kenya, 5.7 million; in both countries, most people come back to Facebook on mobile.

## **Exporting creativity from Africa**

Given its mastery of mobile, I believe that Africa will lead the creative revolution and I think that creativity could become one of Africa's most important exports. As mobile has established itself as the connective tissue for billions of people worldwide, it has also established itself as one of the most important creative and communication channels we've ever known.

Even though mobile is a major emerging platform in Europe and the US, we still have deeply ingrained habits. We are hardwired to think about creativity in the context of what we know best, and what we have known best for 50 years is television. Africa is less locked into that culture of the big, TV-led creative execution but not only that, the things that make mobile matter, also matter more here.

- Personalisation is important in a country such as South Africa that has 11 official languages
- Africa's businesses understand the constraints that will face the next billion people to come online – cost of data, slow connections, older devices, multiple sims – and are already thinking about how creative can solve these challenges
- They also know how important it is to understand how local customs fuel unique use cases, like message to buy, cash on delivery and missed calls
- And they can harness global connectedness and local innovation for rapid scale across markets

## **Africa is the millennial continent**

What is more, Africa has the youngest population in the world:

- There are 200 million people aged between 15-24 in this continent
- And that figure will double by in the next 30 years

Africa does not need to import the skills, ideas and creativity to reach this audience. The skills are already there. The work we're celebrating this week at The Loeries – from established agencies to the New Frontier – is among the best there is anywhere in the world.

Young Africans are the generation that will define the mobile medium. They will write the future; not follow it. This is not about the future; it is about today and today the reality is that people are moving faster than businesses. Around 25% of media time globally is spent on a mobile phone, but only 12% of ad spend has followed.

When we prove that mobile delivers real value and unlocks sustainable growth for businesses, we will close the gap that is opening between people and brands. Mobile may be a new kind of canvas but the goal remains the same: Create something beautiful, something meaningful, something valuable. Create work that lasts.

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