

Promoting brand relevance through meaningful change

By  Gayle Edmunds

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Credible newspaper editors remain deeply opposed to publishing paid-for content that mimics the design and layout of the paper, but flies in the face of editorial ethics. Recently though, the demand for businesses and brands to become ambassadors for the greater good has opened the door to collaboration and the creation of award-winning campaigns.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Businesses readily share what they do and how they do it – it's the 'purpose paradigm' that is often overlooked.

Pressure is mounting on companies to report on their commitment to matters as diverse as climate change, gender-based violence, education, entrepreneurship plus safety and security. At the same time, there is growing awareness of the impact credible and well-crafted content can have on corporate brand building. Content marketing neatly fills this communication gap, delivering value to shareholders while addressing the needs of society at large.

“ *“These partnerships can transform our country and impact the lives of South Africans at all levels” - Mondli Mhkanya, editor City Press* ”

This budget item often falls outside the scope of traditional advertising media campaigns, instead of being driven by public relations and communication specialists who regularly address issues close to the heart of the business.

Is content marketing good for my brand?

By its very nature, tackling brand relevance and efficacy requires business leaders to take a deep dive into their purpose and intent. Expressing this purpose through credible, independent content distributed across reputable media platforms is priceless, as is the editorial team's endorsement.

No one knows the values, needs and desires of their users better than editorial teams. Product and brand information is packaged to inform, educate and inspire, with communications spread across platforms and formats offering choice, reach and frequency. Word of mouth, a significant shaper of opinion, is enhanced through words and visuals that resonate with users.

Communicating shared values can deepen brand relationships with current and future users, and a thoughtful campaign can build a targeted community of active users who influence future messaging.

In short: yes.

Thought starters

Ads24 Content Hub has created several opportunities that aim to pursue a meaningful social agenda while offering a potential synergy with a range of important brand values and purposes:

Kazi Bizniz celebrates and supports township entrepreneurs, recognising their importance in addressing unsustainable levels of unemployment, increasing poverty and food insecurity. This initiative addresses the need to revive and sustain South African township economies by creating opportunities and coaching existing entrepreneurs in a bid to increase revenue from economic activities and keep township consumers' spending power closer to home.

Africa Eats is an annually updated guide to authentic African eating experiences. African food entrepreneurs and writers identify and describe the best epicurean experiences in selected African cities, for a global audience – so that it is Africans who lead in commercialising their continent's cuisine at home and abroad. This goes beyond celebrating heritage – it is an important step in preventing bio-piracy and cultural appropriation, and ensuring that African cuisine and hospitality benefit all sectors of African society.



Digital-first brands dominate the 2021 Kantar BrandZ's Most Valuable South African Brands

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Buy Local encourages South Africans to support small local businesses, which are under severe pressure following the nationwide lockdown. This initiative enables major retailers and companies to showcase and support local goods and the small businesses behind them. Our brands will work with relevant sponsors to focus on brands produced in South Africa, celebrating local heroes and products that support a value chain of jobs - for example, retailers who champion local designers of clothing and home décor items, small food enterprises creating special sauces and condiments, or the produce of local farmers and winemakers.

Shaping the Future confronts the reality that humanity will change more in the next 20 years than in all of human history. Forward-thinking, innovation-driven enterprises have the opportunity to educate and challenge perceptions around the rapid changes society faces over the next few decades, and so solidify their place as industry leaders. Shaping the Future is a multi-sponsorship opportunity working with renowned SA experts to engage readers with agenda-setting content, unpacking global shifts within a South African context.



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Get started

Begin with your business's core values and purpose. Consider linking this purpose – gender equality, health, financial literacy etc. – to a national need such as reassurance, education and skills development. If appropriate, link it to a particular event such as Heritage Day, Youth Day and Savings Money.

Who should be involved?

This is a team effort, requiring a range of skills and insightful opinions. Depending on the size of the project (as dictated by the budget), members could be drawn from client communication and brand teams; the public relations consultancy; media owner sales, content and editorial staff; advertising agency creatives and media agency strategists.



The 3 features purpose-led brands have in common

Dan Mbyane 17 Aug 2021



Members need to debate topics including the concept, presentation, platform choice, data, influencers, hosts, formats, key messaging, target audiences and measurement criteria. The media owner manages the processes of delivery, measurement and communication

“ *“This was collaboration in the true sense of the word. Not once have we felt like a sponsor, we are a family, so thank you Media24 and City Press for allowing us to be part of building people's lives”- Songezo Zibi, Absa head of Group Communications* ”

A case study to inspire

The Money Makeover campaign, a financial literacy partnership between Absa and *City Press*, is a good example of this approach. Now in its fifth year, the campaign uses Ads24's wide range of platforms to deliver financial literacy, create reader engagement and change people's lives through real stories. Zibi puts it, “Money Makeover is about fulfilling our purpose of bringing possibilities to life.”

Stay involved, it's inspiring.

ABOUT GAYLE EDMUNDS

Gayle Edmunds is the special projects editor at Ads24.

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