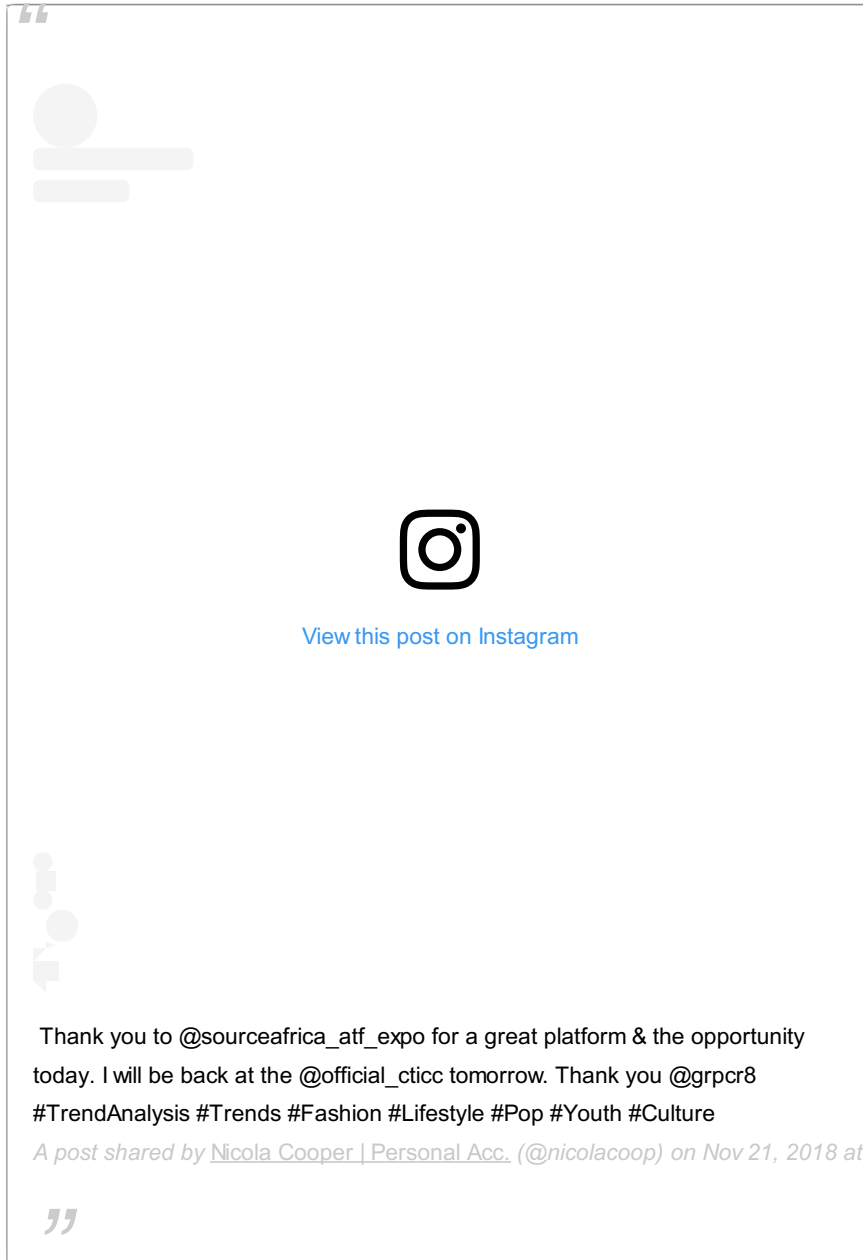


How to localise global trends for the SA consumer - Part 1

By  Maroefah Smith

4 Dec 2018

The moment you provide the South African consumer with what they need, they will start purchasing whatever you are selling. This was the main message from trend analyst Nicola Cooper when she delivered a tailored trend talk on the localisation of global trends at the recent ATF Trade Expo, which was held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.



Recognise, represent, redistribute

Cooper narrowed down the Rs that are required to appeal to the local consumer: recognition, representation and redistribution.

She says that it is crucial that your consumer recognises that you have identified them in your products and in the marketing of those products. She further advises that when you are developing products, you should bear in mind who the consumer is as a citizen and acknowledge them as a citizen and money spender.

In representing the consumer, Cooper says that you cannot take a global trend and simply copy and paste in the South African context. Adding that there needs to be a representation of our consumers and how they look, especially when taking things from an Americanised or Eurocentric perspective. According to Cooper, if the South African consumer cannot connect or identify with the models used in a campaign, it creates a defunct and disjoint between what's being advertised and the consumer.

The idea of the redistribution of wealth or the building of a community is becoming increasingly important to the local consumer. The consumer wants to know that you are building communities or environments in which someone could potentially get a job or know that he or she supporting someone in a developing job or in an economic turn-up in the South African economic climate.



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Maroefah Smith 26 Nov 2018



Rise of womxn

According to Cooper, one of the trends that captures the three Rs is the 'rise of womxn'. The 'x' is replacing the 'e' to allow for more gender inclusivity and being mindful of those who do not identify as male or female. This is particularly relevant for the younger consumer, generation Z aged 12-21, as they no longer identify.

Countries like the Netherlands have started issuing gender-neutral passports and educational institutions like Harvard have allowed students to use whichever pronoun they prefer. In the retail context, American department store Target unveiled a children's gender-neutral clothing line.

Furthermore, womxn empowerment takes centre stage in this trend. The fight for gender equality was put at the forefront given developments like the Harvey Weinstein case in Hollywood and the #MeToo Movement. This global mind-shift has impacted the way the womxn consumer approaches brands and similarly with how they view themselves within the brands that they engage in.

American fashion designer Tory Burch's Embrace Ambition campaign falls in line with this. The campaign aimed to encourage womxn to go after their ambition and do away with the stigmas attached to a successful and power-driven womxn. Cooper says that this is particularly important because when you start supporting and pushing womxn, they get the more disposable income they get, and, with that, the more consumers you will have.

This approach should also consider the older womxn. According to Cooper, even though the older womxn consumer is retiring, they aren't tired and are still excited by the prospect of working. They're getting their retirement packages and they're still working, thus they have even more disposable income and they're willing to spend it.



Rihanna as muse and artist

You can't talk about inclusivity and womxn empowerment without acknowledging the Barbadian beauty mogul in the room. Rihanna has taken the beauty and fashion world by storm. Her beauty line, Fenty Beauty has completely disrupted the beauty industry and many long-established brands are having to play catch up.



Image credit: Fenty Beauty

Fenty Beauty's Pro Filt'r foundation range, which comes in 40 shades across a vast spectrum, was considered revolutionary. The newcomer to the beauty industry was even included in Time Magazine's list of genius companies 2018.

"As a thought leader and a celebrity, someone we refer to, in the trend world, as a gatekeeper, she's someone to keep a really, really close eye on because she is unapologetic, she is who womxn want to be," says Cooper.

Rihanna also took her inclusivity to the fashion world and unveiled a size-inclusive lingerie line. In another move that may also be seen as revolutionary, given Victoria's Secret's ongoing lack of diversity, Rihanna's Savage x Fenty debut at New York Fashion

Week showcased womxn of all sizes and skin colour and even pregnant womxn were allowed to embrace sexiness in their life-giving form.

Rihanna's success may be attributed to recognising that the lack of inclusivity in the markets that she is currently dominating. Cooper says "If you're not giving the items to the womxn, womxn is going to create it for herself. You might as well jump on that bandwagon and start developing products that align to this, otherwise womxn are just going to take that power and start supporting one another."

In South Africa, this can be seen through the success of media publications that feature black womxn on their covers. Cooper says that *Elle Magazine's* readership recently started increasing as the magazine has been putting leading South African womxn on its covers. "If people are not purchasing something within your environment, it doesn't mean that they don't have the money, it means that you are just not giving them what they need. The minute you give them what they need, they will start purchasing," says Cooper.

ABOUT MAROEFAH SMITH

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