

Day 2: The smart phone and the marketing game

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It is estimated that by the end of 2012, there will be 735 million mobile subscribers in Africa. By 2014, the smart phone will be the main gadget that will be used to access the internet. What does this mean? If you are a brand, you have no choice but to ensure you are on the mobile space. In Kenya for example, 84% of those who access the internet use their mobile phone while 54% use their desktop and 29% their laptop.



Future of marketing in Africa

Delegates at the 14th Pan African Media Research Organisation (PAMRO) and All Africa Media Research Conference held in Kampala, Uganda dedicated the second day of the conference to discuss the future of marketing in Africa. "There is a strong appetite globally for mobile features that allow consumers to engage," noted Aggrey Maposa, chief executive officer of TNS RMS Nigeria. According to Maposa, 50% of smart phone users are using applications that help them get information about the best price deals when looking to make a purchase.

Apart from basic product or service information, an opportunity for marketers exists in offering location based services. Brands should therefore go further and give details of where a product or service can be found and at what price. "We are seeing phone applications showing the best price you can get a product and the location of the outlet," noted Maposa.

For consumers, they are looking for more than features or price of a product/service, they are looking at the best possible price they can purchase the item and the nearest outlet it is being sold at. For marketers it means the content they put on mobile must have an interactive element in it.

Social opinion

However, even as brands go online on various platforms, they have to be aware of the role social opinion plays. "People buy brands based on the recommendation of third parties and smart phones provides consumers with social media access and user generated brand content which they typically assign more weight to that the marketing messages from brands," said Maposa.

In Egypt, the country in Africa with the highest number of people on social media, 15 million people - 18% of the population use social media and 11% of the population are on Facebook. Since January 2011, there has been 166% growth in the number of Facebook users in Egypt. The top four brands on Facebook with the highest number of likes on their fan pages include: Vodafone Egypt, Coca-Cola Egypt, Pepsi Masr and Nokia Egypt.

Vodafone Egypt has 1.05 million likes, Coca-Cola Egypt has 887 000, while Pepsi Masr and Nokia Egypt have 759 000 and 728 000 likes respectively. Out of more than 50 million phone subscribers, Egypt has seven million smart phone users.

6 types of information consumers look for

Brad Aigner founder of Freshly Ground Insights (Pty) Ltd, South Africa, says there are six types of information that consumers look for namely: introduction (information about a new product or service), entertaining, educative (that offers explanation), informative, comparative and persuasive. "Consumers are very clever, they know exactly where to find the information they want so you have to ensure brand messages have the six elements.

However, Matthew Froggatt of TNS advises that the key is to understand your target audience and what they want from your brand.

"Social networks aren't always the right approach. If consumers in one market don't want to be talked to, can you use an alternative online method - creating owned digital media platforms, targeted sponsorship or search campaigns - to engage in an appropriate way that will achieve business results, without adding to the digital waste pile."

For the best effect, there is need for a proper media marketing mix. Activations have to be on different platforms that mirror the lifestyles of consumers.

According to Froggatt, digital waste is the accumulation of thousands of brands rushing online without thinking who they want to talk to - and why. Although brands have recognised the vast potential audiences available to them on social networks, they are failing to understand that these spaces belong to the consumer and their presence needs to be proportionate and justified

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