

# Top five insights for businesses to win with the SA female consumer

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Women make up an increasingly powerful and lucrative target market that cannot be ignored. However, winning with women can be tricky.

The modern South Africa woman is complex, shaped by an ever-changing world, filled with tensions and paradoxes. Her reality is plagued with demands of society, family and, sometimes, her pivotal role as a mother. Understanding her and the world she lives in is critical for your business to succeed. Here are my top five insights to help you win the heads and hearts – and rands – of the South African woman.

## 1. She is juggling many balls and needs business to help lighten her load.

South Africa has an unprecedented number of single mothers, placing most of her women under significant pressure. The typical South African woman is a mother, father, employee, part-time business owner, nurse and teacher all in one! This makes her time-poor, yet open to finding new efficient ways to deliver on her multiple roles successfully.



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The businesses which win with her are those that make it simpler, better and faster. They acknowledge and celebrate her ability to perform all these roles.

## 2. She is balancing traditional and modern ways of doing things, and needs businesses to live in both these worlds with her.

The South African woman is deeply proud of her heritage and traditions which shape her identity and values. However, the modern world brings new, fresh ways of doing things that can sometimes conflict with the traditional way. She is often caught between how her mother would have done something versus what is portrayed in most media channels. Everything, from how to raise her kids to how to cook meals and run her home, is always subject to this 'traditional versus modern' tension.

The businesses that win are those which understand and appreciate tradition, and yet offer modern solutions that work

without being condescending. Is your business and its offering or culture in conflict with traditional ways? How can you help to resolve this conflict and make things simpler, not more complicated?

### **3. She values inter-dependence over independence and needs business to help her access the right networks.**

Globally, businesses and brands have been quick to jump on the 'girl power' and 'independent woman' bandwagon. This approach of aggressive individualism could be quite flawed in the South African context. because South African women value community, interdependence and *uBuntu* – a philosophy that says people are people through other people. However, the world is changing and the South African woman needs new types of communities and networks, as the community she comes from and her existing networks may not be enough for her to progress.

As the modern South African woman's journey becomes ever more complex, she needs businesses and brands to help her connect to the right networks. What is your business doing to help support such structures?

### **4. Her children will live out the dreams she could not, and she needs business that can help enable this.**

South Africa's ugly political history was rooted in white patriarchy, which meant that most South Africa women could not freely live out their dreams and destinies. This left them with a desire to create a better world for their children, a life in which they can accomplish so much more than their mother ever could. South African women have made many sacrifices to make this new world possible, devoting all the resources at their disposal into their children's future.

How could your business play a supporting role to mothers raising the next generation of South Africans?

### **5. She does not want to be 'spoken at'. Businesses and brands need to engage her in meaningful conversations.**

Gone are the days of businesses and institutions dictating and shouting out messages to submissive women. The modern South African woman has a lot to say and wants brands and businesses to engage her in meaningful conversations. Ignore this at your peril. Young South African women were the leading face of the #FeesMustFall movement, speaking their minds and being heard. The businesses that win with these young ladies are those geared up to engage in a dialogue with customers.

Is your business open enough to listen and agile enough to respond to South African women?

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## ABOUT MARILYN DUTLOW MUNGA

Marilyn Dutlow Munga has been appointed Associate Brand Director at Added Value South Africa, a member of the global marketing consultancy and research firm of the same name.

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