

Sunday Times Top Brands Awards: Be outstanding

By  Danette Breitenbach

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It was all about being the best of best at this year's Sunday Times Top Brands Awards and this year the best of the best was Vodacom. The brand made a clean sweep of the Business category, winning all three the Grand Prix Awards - the Green Award, the Community Upliftment Award and Overall Favourite Brand - in that category. It also won its Consumer category, Telecommunication Providers, for the fifth year running.



Overall Top Brand Grand Prix - Business - Vodacom (Lana Strydom and Zinhle Modiselle) with Bongani Siqoko, editor of *Sunday Times*.

In the Consumer categories Coca-Cola also nearly ran away with all three awards winning the Green Award and Community Upliftment Award in this category. Overall Favourite Brand was won by KFC in a significant shift from last year. Ogilvy won the winner on the Robyn Putter Award.



Winners of 2017 *Sunday Times* Top Brands survey announced

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Lana Strydom, head of digital marketing for Vodacom says it is a fantastic feeling winning the Awards. “We have worked hard for it,” she says, explaining that digital is a big focus for the brand. “The last brand studies we did show that digital is 60% of our brand affinity. The fact is that we are a technology company and digital is the norm for our customers and it is how they engage with us.”

What Vodacom provides its customers is a lifestyle she adds. “Part of that is access and connecting people to each other. Digital is what provides that access.”

A brand with purpose

Zinhle Modiselle, Vodacom’s executive head master brand, says the brand has worked over the past year to be a brand with purpose. “We talk to people and connect people. Winning the Green and the Community Awards goes back to this, so we are really thrilled with these Awards as they affirm what we are trying to achieve. At the heart of all of this is our purpose of connecting people and making a difference in their lives.”

We are super excited and very proud of team for winning the Overall Favourite Brand Grand Prix, says Jacques Cronje, marketing manager of KFC. “The work behind this has been immense. It represents a couple of years of consistent hard work when we started the journey to contemporise the brand and speak to consumers in a new and fresh way.”

What makes this Award special is that it is the consumers who have spoken. “For me as a marketer and for the marketing team at KFC this is wonderful as it means we are doing the right things – things that are resonating with consumers,” he says.

To achieve this, it was key for the brand to understand the needs and wants of their customers. “We are living in an age where it has become increasingly difficult to reach the consumer. Media has changed completely, so we had to fundamentally change how we talk to the consumer to cut through the clutter.”

He adds that this is a collaborate effort with Ogilvy, their agency and Mindshare.

Understanding the consumer

Ogilvy was also a winner on the night, taking home the Robyn Putter Award, which recognises creative agencies behind brands. Charity Ndisengei from Ogilvy and managing partner on KFC account says the Award reaffirms what they believe in. “It is about understanding the consumer and then creating work that resonates with them and moves the needle for our client.”

Charmagne Mavudvi, marketing manager for Ogilvy, says this gives them confidence in their work. “In the words of David Ogilvy:

“ *Blaze newtrails and compete with the immortals.* ”

It's a great honour to have received both the Green Award and the Consumer Social Investment Award at this year's *Sunday Times* Top Brands event, says Sharon Keith, the brand's marketing director, Southern and East Africa.

“These awards are particularly important to us because they reflect how South Africans feel about the work we are doing every day in the communities we serve. Whether it's recycling the packaging materials we use or building in sustainability to our production and sourcing process, or whether it's just showing up and refreshing people at a community event – we are grateful to be a meaningful part of the fabric of our communities. Thank you, South Africa.”

There were a few surprises on the night. In the Business category, Cars, Toyota took first place ahead of Mercedes and BMW, while FNB won top spot in Corporate Banks for the fifth consecutive year.

'Be outstanding' theme

However, it was not all good for all brands. In the Long Term Insurance category, Old Mutual dropped from first last year to sixth. It was a similar situation for Cell C which moved to sixth; offering up its previous third place to Telkom in Telecommunication Providers.

In the Consumer Category, Bonaqua secured top spot in the new Water category with Red Bull taking the other new category, Energy Drinks.

Koo won the Tinned Foods category for the ninth time in a row and Shoprite the Groceries Store Category for the fourth year in a row. Spur also won its category, Sit Down Restaurants for the fourth consecutive year.

In the Beauty and Cosmetics category, Nivea and Dove as well as Maybelline and Clinique appeared in the top 10 for the first time. Engen continued to top its category, Petrol stations. In cell Phones, Huawei jumped from seventh to fourth. Nokia was placed second in the category which was won by Samsung. Apple's iPhone was placed third.

This is the 19th year of the Awards and the theme "Be outstanding" reflects what it takes for brand to be successful in today's world.

"The brands that are successful because they are doing brave work in the marketing arena says Reardon Sanderson. General manager at Tiso Blackstar Group. "The 'Be outstanding' theme also reflects the resilience of South Africans in what has been a year that has be eventful," he adds.

[Click here](#) to download the full list of winners and click [here](#) to view images of the event.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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