BIZCOMMUNITY

Simple solutions for growth: Rules for winning marketing in Africa

By Marilyn Dutlow Munga

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With a population of 1,1 billion people, 65% under the age of 35, growing economies and increasing middle class spending power, Africa is every marketer's dream...

But, with no room for half-hearted attempts at brand-building, it will take guts, passion and determination to ensure your brand can win a part of this beautiful booming market. Here are five top tips to enhance its success:

1. Communicate simple superiority and meaningful value

Winning campaigns in Africa communicate a clear and superior reason to choose your brand with a compelling visual and seven words or less. That's right, consumers in Africa are savvy shoppers and do not have patience to decipher clumsy advertising. Procter & Gamble has embraced this approach for Ariel in South Africa and Kenya, and its advertising is fuelling solid growth in both those countries. The simple visual and powerful claim 'helps remove tough stains in 1 wash' elegantly communicates superiority and value.

2. Get the right balance between local insights and global best practice

While Africans appreciate and respect global brands, the successful brand truly meets local consumer needs. Clinique's 'Shades of Africa' initiative, rooted in deep consumer understanding and African-oriented product design to create the right shade offerings for black skin, is an example. Its solution hits the mark when it comes to meeting local needs while it maintains its glamorous international credentials.

3. Innovate and use technology continuously

Africa is ready for technology, and product innovation, that makes what can be a challenging life a bit easier. Brands and industries that have used technology to address some of Africa's biggest challenges have been rewarded handsomely with sustained growth. Safaricom's Mpesa has grown to become one of East Africa's largest financial services solutions by bringing Africa a simple mobile money transfer system that has step-changed commerce in East Africa.

4. Get in tune with the African entrepreneurial spirit

Africans have an almost universal desire for progress and sense of optimism, a deep belief that tomorrow will be better than today. Education and entrepreneurship are seen as a way to secure a better future. As a result, Africans seek brands that celebrate and enable their journey to a brighter future. Luxury alcohol brand Hennessey has experienced double-digit growth on the continent, with Nigeria and South Africa ranking in the brand's top 10 global markets. The brand has become a statement of progress and determination for the African entrepreneur, with the 'never stop, never settle' campaign and special editions to celebrate 50 years of Nigerian and Kenyan Independence fuelling local relevance.

5. Invest in consistent, long-term brand building

Brands are ultimately a mark of consistent quality, and brand trust escalates in importance when disposable income is limited. African consumers don't have the luxury to experiment on unfamiliar options that may or may not work, and will chose to invest their hard-earned cash on products that are well-known, tried and tested. Consider the success of Coke in Africa, loved and present on every hot and dusty corner of the continent, even a currency of sorts. In short, an iconic brand. This status was achieved by investing over the long-term to deliver brand awareness and a consistently great consumer experience. It took years and millions of dollars to set up, but it pays off every time someone opens 'happiness'.

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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