Navigating media trends in 2024: adapting strategies for consumer engagement

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By Senamile Zungu, issued by Kantar

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As we usher in a new year, the South African landscape of media and its touchpoints continues to rapidly evolve. 2024 is an opportunity for brands and marketers to stay ahead of the curve by effectively connecting with consumers in an environment where fatigue with online targeting is on the rise.

This highlights the need for adaptability, innovation and more consumer-centric approaches. Here’s our expectations for the key media trends of the year:

Consumer fatigue

Consumers are becoming increasingly frustrated with the excessive targeting they face across online, e-commerce, and video streaming platforms. Part of this fatigue stems from the perceived invasion of privacy via the use of personal information. Brands and marketers must pivot their strategies to focus on the platforms where users are most engaged and tailor their content to be more relevant. Brands must work with consumers, not against them. Our research shows that consumers are actively engaging with “how to” content and tutorials to acquire new skills. This presents an opportunity for brands to create valuable and educational content that not only meets the consumers’ needs but facilitates a positive and meaningful connection with audiences.

Blurring the lines between advertising and entertainment

South Africans have an affinity for entertainment and humour. Understanding this preference for engaging and stimulating content will be key for brands to create content that feels less “salesy”. Successful brands in 2024 will be those that seamlessly integrate their content with the platforms on which they advertise. This will mean crafting engaging content that blurs the lines between advertising and entertainment. By making advertising on social media enjoyable rather than intrusive, brands can create a more positive connection with their audience.

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Kantar 5 Dec 2023

Rise of advertising on streaming platforms

Advertising on podcasts and across free versions of subscription platforms (e.g. Spotify) is already established behaviour. However, with the imminent launch of advertising within paid-for subscription services offered by the likes of Netflix, DStv or Disney+, we expect to see consumers becoming increasingly discerning about the packages they select and the relative cost of advertising. As streaming becomes an integral part of consumers' daily lives, brands should explore innovative ways to leverage this opportunity carefully and effectively.

Optimising TV advertising for impact

Although the growth of TV usage is slowing overtime, accelerated by loadshedding, TV advertising remains a powerful medium with a massive reach. However, consumers are frustrated with the frequency and repetitiveness of TV ads. In 2024, successful marketers will be those that optimise TV advertising by reducing saturation frequency and reallocating budgets to other effective touchpoints. This approach will ensure that the impact of TV advertising is maximised while preventing audience irritation.

Embracing digital out-of-home advertising

Our data shows a growing receptiveness amongst consumers towards digital out-of-home advertising. Brands and marketers have a golden opportunity to leverage this medium by strategically placing content where it resonates most with their target audience. The dynamic and captive nature of digital out-of-home advertising allows for greater creativity and engagement – it really is the one place that consumers are forced to lift their heads from their screens!

Campaign integration and cohesiveness across platforms

Consumers are noticing (and appreciating) advertising campaigns that seamlessly integrate across various platforms, creating a cohesive brand experience. Taking note of this trend in 2024, marketers need to pay attention to how their messaging, visuals, and tone remain consistent across different touchpoints, while being true to the equity and expectations which that platform holds. A harmonised approach enhances brand recall and reinforces a unified brand identity.

We hope this gives you food for thought to help you navigate the dynamic landscape and evolving media trends in 2024. The driving force behind these trends is the consumer, and the test will be which brand reads the room correctly!

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Senamile Zungu is a commercial lead for the Insights Division at Kantar and loves helping brands make the most of the media and creative budgets by better understanding consumers.

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