

Why and how to add ephemeral content to your marketing strategy

By Leigh Andrews

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Temporary content and impermanence is the name of the game when it comes to social media for consumers in 2018. Here's why you're missing out if Snapchat, Periscope, Facebook Live and Instagram Stories aren't part of your brand's marketing strategy.



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Whether you're a Snapchat user or not, you probably heard the news a few weeks ago that Ms 'Umbrella-ella-ella' herself Rihanna sent Snapchat's share prices tumbling when she denounced the platform on rival Instagram after a Snapchat ad for the Would You Rather game app, known for asking provocative questions, asked whether respondents would rather "slap Rihanna" or "punch Chris Brown."



Rihanna hits Snapchat over beating ad, sending shares tumbling

19 Mar 2018



Ouch. But the ephemeral content hype is definitely still there, and it's certainly not fleeting, even if the content on the platform is. [The Digital Marketing Institute](#) shares that those user stats are nothing to sneeze at:

Ephemeral content stats by numbers

- Snapchat has 173 million daily active users
- Instagram Stories has overtaken that, with 250 million users
- Combined, they account for around 18 billion daily video views

And yes, they are young, with 53% of Snapchat users under the age of 34, but they should definitely matter to your brand.

Especially as the average South African consumer is just that – a black middle-class female under the age of 35. Extend that to the rest of the continent and she's more likely to have access to a mobile phone – and yes, that's increasingly a smartphone – than to running water or electricity. Take a moment to take that in.



#BODCT: Surprise! THIS is today's African consumer

Leigh Andrews 11 Oct 2017



The Digital Marketing Institute adds that the spending power of millennials is set to surpass \$1trillion by the year 2020 – that's just 20 months away. With the speed of technological change making it feel like time is ever more fleeting, that's just around the corner.

That's why brands are paying attention.

For example, Fagan Abrahams of Carat Johannesburg [says](#):

“ Snapchat is a rising threat to the likes of Facebook, Twitter and even YouTube. Due to Snapchat's recently released ad technology and inventory, the powerful engagement that happens every second of the day and the subsequent growing user base – all of which stems from and leads to the thorough understanding of the target market. ”



Fagan Abraham, Dentsu 7 Oct 2016



If you're wondering how much ROI you can really get on content that's only available for a maximum of 24 hours, you're in luck as the [Castleford](#) content marketing blog explored just this and says you may be surprised at the answer...

The ROI of Fomo and Yolo

According to Castleford, Fomo can be a powerful force, as the fact that the content is only available for a limited amount of time means your audience tends to be more engaged.

That's why ephemeral content topped *AdWeek's* list of [social media trends that would have the biggest impact in 2018](#).

AdWeek goes on to say, "ephemeral content gives you potential customers' attention, which is undoubtedly the most prized commodity on the internet today."



#BizTrends2018: Rewind from attention spam back to attention span

Leigh Andrews 8 Jan 2018



Of course, there were doubts that apps offering fleeting content would first, take off among fickle millennials and second, add value to marketers.

This is not your 'log on to Facebook a few times a week and like a photo here or there' Gen-Xer. Castleford explains that up to 60% of Snapchat's users contribute daily, with the average in-app time per day an impressive 30 minutes.

It's free, it's fast, and there's little pressure to be 'perfect', as the content shifts so fast.

Then there's the added benefit that advertising on these platforms feels more personalised as you can be quirky and 'young', change things up by adding filters and text and you can do it all from your phone – much more budget and time-friendly than traditional ad creation.

How to get started – sharing ephemeral content for your brand

When sharing his tips for live experiences in 2018, Magnetic Storm owner Glenn Van Eck said to focus on creating 'seamless journeys' for your often-millennials-aged as follows:



The top tips for live experiences in 2018

Glenn van Eck 27 Feb 2018



Brand experiences transcend physical activation, meaning all live experiences should be designed to complement and amplify the consumers' digital experience. A key consideration in events is creating spaces that capture the spirit of the moment and culture, and seamlessly translate it into the social realm.

“ Make areas for generation Snapchat and Instagram, create them as part exhibit, part installation to encourage engagement. ”

If you're not in the events and exhibitions space, think of all those 'branding wish list' items and zip through them, fast:

- Try your hand at a quick 'behind-the-scenes' office video.
- Periscope the action from a market or concert
- Film a fast 'how to' tutorial from your phone.

Once you start playing around, you'll likely get hooked. You really don't need to be scripted and formal. Real-time is the only time with ephemeral content.

In fact, in her 2017 BizTrends prediction, Desere Orrill, co-founder of Ole! Media Group and managing director of HoneyKome, said:

“ Welcome to the stage the 'new kids on the block: Snapchat, Periscope, Beme, Meerkat and others. Had these apps tried to launch a few years ago – while we were still desperately seeking perfection in our every image, move, and moment, they would not have made it out of the starting gates. But now, as we grow bored with the over-glamorisation of ourselves to our peers and the idealisations from brands to their consumers, there is a craving for a more realistic view and authentic

experience. ”



#BizTrends2017: Real time and real people, living real lives will count in 2017

Deseré Orrill 16 Jan 2017



[Innovation Enterprise](#) says brands should be focusing on is finding innovative ways of exploiting a medium by **producing content that is as native as possible.**

“ In a world of ad blockers and declining interest in display advertising, users will reject any message out of line with the other content on the medium. ”

That's the crux of ephemeral content.

[MO Brands](#) adds that it's set to remain a top trend in 2018, largely due to the fact that the content's 'expiry date' means users can't bookmark or view it later, which creates urgency and makes the content seem that much more special.

I echoed that sentiment in an overview of the [rise of on-demand viewing pleasure for consumers](#), as ephemeral content that's only available for a limited timeframe adds to the exclusivity-must-have angle – log in too late and you miss out.



Tips from Netflix for your consumers' on-demand viewing pleasure

Leigh Andrews 17 Jan 2017



Of course, this plays heavily on the current Fomo/Yolo trend that the attention spam has created – ephemeral content is exclusive and it's the social media promotion or 'limited time offer' of 2018. Time is tight to access it before it's gone, so consumers need to make the investment of time and attention, now.



People who are green with envy don't have to be #TravelHaters

Aisling Holmes, McCann Johannesburg 23 Mar 2018



Bye-bye, Snap! Create your own ephemeral content

Just a few weeks ago, [The Verge](#) reported that one of the social imaging app's most popular users Kylie Jenner had tweeted she doesn't open Snapchat anymore.

That doesn't mean ephemeral content is going anywhere, just that you don't necessarily need to go through one of the obvious channels. Brands can offer their own content for a limited time - like a special PDF download or preview trailer, with a countdown clock added on site to build hype – just beware of constantly extending the 'deadline' of the limited offer as that gets old, fast.

In conclusion, [Innovation Enterprise](#) says it best: "You can't 'like' a Snapchat post, and if it's ill-thought-out then its damage won't be truly lasting." So what are we waiting for? Time to get out of that brand comfort zone!

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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