

The shopper revolution

By  Charlene Olivier

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Rewind a couple of years and you'll find that it's not so long ago that we had to wait all weekend for the store doors to re-open.



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Remember when we purchased en masse on a Saturday morning, just to be sure that we were stocked up until Monday? Back in the days where you would, most certainly, not have access to any alcohol on a Sunday... unless you knew the owner of the corner café, of course. Today the consumer world has become a 24/7 environment as opposed to the 7/11 world of yesteryear.

It's a romance that has gradually gone from a loyal shopper-based living arrangement to one of superficial promiscuity, where the newest, fastest and sometimes most affordable is far sexier.

The most important participant in this new relationship status quo is of course digital. The digital retail platform has allowed us to satisfy our hunger for that shopper rush, without getting out of bed and dressing up to go face the masses... guilt-free.

2015 might just have been the turning point year for online shopping in South Africa. South Africa's internet penetration lies at 17%, this coupled with an 86% adult mobile phone penetration rate, and a highly developed telecommunications network, tells the tale of a population that is by now comfortable engaging in technology. As our payment gateways and financial

institutions tediously ensure that complex money transfers are robust and secure, the everyday South African shopper snuggles up more comfortably to another year of clicking the 'add to cart' button.

More and more South Africans are quite happy to hold the hands of both the traditional mall shopping experience, as well as the online shopper experience. The shopper realm has thus diversified and we, as a creative industry, need to be at the forefront of this movement. Shopping no longer only takes place in the aisles and we need to hijack all opportunities to engage with consumers on online and social platforms. Take the GREY New York "Gun Shop" social experiment for example, a PR and "shopper experience" which spoke to only a few people on the ground, but which had a engagement factor that surpassed any impact a real store could have made. A shopper experience that changed lives and behaviour. Watch the video embedded below:

We are able to enrich the consumer journey on another level when considering a holistic approach and the opportunities are rife to be innovative. We need to win a moment with consumers. Whether it is by making their lives simpler by redesigning the consumer journey in-store, or allowing them to have a 360 'real-time' shopper experience online. ONLY.com, an online retailer, saw this opportunity and created a unique interactive retail environment for the launch of their new jeans. They created an integrated solution which allowed their consumers to experience an online catalogue whilst interacting on multiple layers. "The Liberation" is a fashion catalogue, a music video, a movie, a game and a retail experience that transcends the online platform and enters the real word by participating. Watch the video embedded below:

So whilst you are lying sandwiched between these two shopper partners, please consider the benefits in letting them live happily ever after, and in doing so creating a world more integrated for all shoppers.

ABOUT CHARLENE OLIVIER

As a solutions-driven creative with a passion for collaboration, Charlene is the newly appointed creative director at Grey Johannesburg's shopper division.

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