

Engaging with connected consumers - Part 2

By  Danette Breitenbach

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It took 14 years to sell 40 million laptops, but only four years to sell 40 million tablets...

Technology has moved rapidly, but what it has really done is provide opportunities on the software side, or what is commonly referred to as apps.

In a continuation of this series on the findings of *Connected Life*, a leading global study from TNS of the digital attitudes and behaviours of over 55,000 internet users across 50 countries, exploring how technology is transforming the lives of consumers across the world, we look at the influence of the mobile and how marketers need to communicate with consumers.

The real money in the digital world is in apps, as Facebook and WhatsApp have shown. Part of the success of these apps has been the rise of the mobile. Even though laptops are big and tablets growing, smart phones have taken over (despite the fact that most people use feature phones in Africa) with the majority of people with access to the internet using smart phones. If you are an internet user, you are likely to be on a smart phone.



So, what does this it mean?

The point? Marketers who want to conduct internet marketing have to realise they are talking to consumers on their smart phones. With 80% of South African consumers on smart phones, it changes the thinking for marketers. This is not only the case for South Africa, but for other markets as well, such as Ghana (81%) and Indonesia (74%)," says Maposa, Regional Director, TNS Connect Africa, Middle East and Mediterranean.

In the developing world, people on the internet are most likely to be on smart phones. He says, as the cost of smart phones continues to drop. "The Chinese are also working on versions of a smart phone that will retail for R125. Then the sale of smart phones will outstrip feature phones, and that means only one thing," he says.

New opportunities to reach the young

More youths will be online on mobile across all the different segments. "This will give marketers more space to talk to youth, if that is your target, because they are spending more time in front of these screens."

Emerging markets spend more time on their mobiles than the rest of the world. This is because emerging markets have one device, not many, while the rest of the world has 3.8 devices per person, says Maposa.

"So we maximise our time on our one device. This means in Africa, marketers have a better chance of reaching me on my mobile."

Social media is not a simple 'easy win'

"People are spending more time on apps, more time browsing and chatting. These are new spaces and a whole new game," says Maposa. This gives marketers several opportunities to communicate with their audience throughout the day on their mobile. But it is more complex than that. "It is not just about reaching the consumer but reaching the right consumer in the most relevant ways with the right media at the right time."

He adds that too often, when marketers have no or very little budget, they tend to go straight for social media, thinking that it is an easy win. However, it is about how you apply social that means it successful or not.

Talk to the consumer

"Marketing online gets creative when the marketers look at how to (creatively) turn that space into a marketing space."

How can a WhatsApp group be a marketing space? "You cannot sell your product. You have to talk about what matters to this WhatsApp group - to this community. This means being relevant and sensitive and belonging in the community. It is not stopping a programme - or what the consumer is engaged in - and showing them your advertisement, regardless whether they are interested or not. If you do run an advertisement in the community, it must give them extra benefits, and be relevant and valuable to them."

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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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