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# Just how tasty is your piece of the pie?

By Lorrianne Cloete

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In the category of lifestyle PR, ask not how big your slice of the proverbial editorial pie is, but rather just how tasty.



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Let's face it, the media landscape has changed, the market has changed and surely now too should the measurement of editorial. PR practitioners in the lifestyle segment should have stopped chasing volume and begun focusing on creating value around the brands that they represent. This is fundamentally the difference between a thick, juicy, two-hands-needed 'Ou Meul'-type pie and the dry 'plat' subway special that comes with a coke for under R20.

South Africa is the gateway to Africa. Global brands are looking at new territories and brands from the north, the east and the west are arriving a dime a dozen on our post-apartheid brand starved shores. With all of them the intention is to access the gateway to our glorious continent, the land of milk and honey (albeit with not all that much money) and media can play an enormous part in aiding the process.

"Rah rah rah, look at us, we have arrived," they all shout, dishing out launches, media packs, samples and press releases. Lifestyle journalists are literally spinning with new available brands and products to feature.

#### Old school principles abandoned

The old school principles of sourcing, lead times, availability etc have been abandoned and literally it's a free-for-all where journo's can simply trawl the mall to pull for their features. The fact that the products featured won't be available in three months time doesn't seem to be much of a concern for the journalist who, quite frankly, is too busy trying to juggle content for digital, print, their blog and other channels and to whom deadlines and lead times have become something of a blur.

As a result of this however, agencies are grappling to explain their dwindling piece of the editorial pie to clients who are used to seeing their products featured at least six times across twenty magazine titles every month. And so they shouldn't try. Instead, they should be introducing their clients to what is technically becoming a mature media market and change their game plan. They should be creating value or should we say, cooking up the gravy.

A brief look in the US and UK where the media market has long since been considered mature, the role of the niched communications specialist has become pivotal to creating this value. So, with the maturation in SA and the tsunami of brand competition, we hail the rise of the niche practitioner who is literally worth their weight in gold.

## Not simply turning on PR101

I do not knock the generalist as I do believe the principles of PR can be applied across categories, but in the case of creating real, meaningful long-term value, there is no more effective player than the niche agency.

These communications specialists are able to orchestrate and sustain a nuanced conversation with long term strategic intent through their entrenched relationships. They are not simply turning on PR101. They are in fact over qualified in the given conversation, experts who are able to operate beyond simply being a well-principled conduit.

### Get ready to grab your share

Essentially the niche player is equipped to drive the brand conversation beyond the flurry of the here and now and towards the long-term and the sustainable. This is what will drive the difference between longevity in the game and the one hit wonders, here today, gone tomorrow, of which there will be many.

So as the pie gets dished out, get ready to grab your share. But if you want it to be meaty, thick, rich and tasty, brands may want to consider a niched agency who's expertise can add the lashings of hearty gravy to their somewhat reduced slice.

#### ABOUT LORRIANNE CLOETE

Lorrianne Qoete is the owner and founder of the Press Room, a Cape Town based boutique IR and marketing consultancy specialising within fashion and retail, as well as the founder and co-owner of Press Stick, an online content portal for the media industry. Contact her on tel +27(0)83 4482557, email Lorrianne@pressstick.com and follow @lorriannecloete on Twitter.

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