

Ask Afrika's Orange Index Awards: Taking away our emotions

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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While service levels are at their highest level ever (at 91%) the opposite is true for emotional satisfaction. Technology might be assisting us to deliver the highest levels of customer satisfaction ever, but this is at the cost of our humanity.



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“It appears the better we get at customer satisfaction systems and processes, the further away we move from real relationships. Sarina de Beer, MD at Ask Afrika, told attendees at the Ask Afrika Orange Index Customer Satisfaction Awards recently. The Awards, which took place at The Venue, Melrose Arch in Johannesburg, saw the highest customer satisfaction ever.

Technology is like a drug

“We have become better at the functional stuff, but we are not making connections. People are going through the emotions, but engagements are leaving them numb.” Technology is like a drug – with a fantastic upside that has made it faster and easier for consumers but the downside is loneliness, expecting too much and a disconnect. “We expect more from technology and less from each other,” she says.

Yet, for service it has been a successful year. “Services is a good news story. Last year we thought we had seen the highest level and we thought this is as good as it gets, and it will decline now, but instead this year services have risen to its best level (at 91%) the highest we have ever seen.”

Ironically enough, the reason for this success, is the investment into technology. “Technology is allowing customers to access businesses in a convenient, fast and easy way. We have become very good at building systems.”

The top service driver is the ability of employers to make a customer feel confident about their ability to help you. “Technology is about trusting myself; self-help provides easy access with no waiting time. The customer is enabled to do what they want to do when they want to.”

We don’t deal with emotions anymore, we use emojis

The opposite is true of the in-store scenario where the customer is required to interface with someone. “Personal interaction is about trusting you, the business/brand/company and this makes customers uncomfortable. The concept of perfection comes into play here, as technology allows scripts to be formulated properly to generate responses. The opposite of this is direct engagement with humans by consumers which they find tricky.” Yet we still have a 91% customer satisfaction score.

Emotionally satisfied customers have strong experiences and relationships with a company.

“We do not deal with emotions anymore. We use emojis to communicate, but these are not real. In reality they are hollow emotions. Advertisements are not real emotions or real brand engagement; they are just a “feel good” moment,” she says.

Increased expectations are on my terms because I am used to everything on my terms, yet a relationship is about compromise and cannot be one-sided, she explains. “So how do we deal with unsatisfied customers, if they only use to everything being on their terms,” she says.

“We have everything we need at our fingertips, so how are we going to move to the next level – building real relationships with customers,” she adds. Going forward this will be customer services’ biggest challenge.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

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