

Authenticity; the proof is in the pudding

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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Consumers can tell when brands are trying too hard to be perfect on social media. The key instrument to getting positive attention from people who are swiping through videos at the speed of light is to grab them with authentic, native content.



Source: www.unsplash.com

That was the theme of TikTok creative strategist Deanne Hofhuis' masterclass - the magic of authenticity.

Content that does not connect

Hofhuis said most consumers are immediately able to tell when a video on social media is an ad because it is removed from their reality.

“When you see something that is so clearly an ad then you swipe,” she said. “We are all so sensitive to inauthenticity and we have all heard someone who sounds like a car salesman. That is such an insult [to consumers] because we all really value authenticity and value people who put themselves forward as real.”

She said brands need to create content that feels natural and that belongs within the online community.

“Make sure that it feels native and it feels authentic for the platform,” said Hofhuis.

How can brands do this?

- Lose the smoke and mirrors: Hofhuis said brands are obsessed with perfection and putting their “best foot forward” which loses the relatability aspect.



An example she puts forward is airline RyanAir which has taken ownership of the worst parts of its brand to make itself appealing. They own that they have very few perks and sometimes do not deliver on their promises, but this makes them cheap and affordable.

"There are some brands that have started seeing how people actually use their products and are rethinking them and remarketing them...so we need to keep checking how the products are used," said Hofhuis.

- Speak with the community and not to the community: Historically brands have taken the approach of speaking too the community. Hofhuis said strategists need to start realising and recognising what brands mean to a community and go with the flow.

Hofhuis' three drivers of influence:

1. Platforms that lend themselves to communities and not networks
2. Creators and users that champion authenticity and not aspiration
3. Content that allows participation between brands and consumers and not one-way storytelling.

When brands move away from idealism this is when they will see a real return on investment on their campaigns.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

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