

Marketers urged to innovate during tough times

Ugandan marketers have been advised to be more innovative during tough times to enable their businesses to thrive, instead of pursuing bigger budgets to achieve their targets.

 By [Walter Wafula](#) 1 Nov 2011



Wale Akinyemi, CEO of Power Talks Consultants

Speaking at the Marketers' Night Out in Kampala, Wale Akinyemi, CEO of Power Talks Consultants said innovation in business is the best solution to the boardroom fights between CEOs and marketing managers over marketing budgets.

"If you can't innovate without a budget, your ability to innovate with a budget is questionable. If you cannot innovate without a budget, please keep quiet," Akinyemi told Ugandan marketers. The consultant added that marketers should imbibe the law of incremental innovation and start innovating in small areas.

To get quick approvals from the top, he further advised the marketers to align their ideas and expected results with those of their bosses. "Make sure that your proposal tied up with what the CEO once said so that you take it back as his idea." Akinyemi's remarks came on the back of a heated debate between marketers and CEOs over the relevance of marketing to business today.

Marketing strategies need results

Azim Tharani, managing director of Goldstar Insurance, had earlier told the marketers that they need to come up with impressive marketing strategies that give results. "Marketers should take the initiative to advise business on what to do in tough times. You should not wait for the CEO to invite you," Tharani said.

His argument comes at a time when many businesses in Africa and other markets are grappling with high inflation, high interest rates and depreciating currencies which have made the cost of doing business expensive. Yet, consumers' purchasing power in many markets continues to dwindle as a result of job cuts and stagnant salaries.

In his submission, Fabian Kasi, managing director of Centenary Bank called for marketing plans that are valuable and show results if the CEOs are to approve marketing budgets.

Elizabeth Kyambi, marketing manager of East African Breweries Limited, noted that in the face of a difficult 2011, marketing budgets have been the biggest victims of cost cutting as business leaders pursue the presumed risk-free strategies.

Marketing is relevant to business

Going forward, to prove that marketing is relevant to business, she called for Evidence Based Marketing (EBM) - a scientific approach to marketing that is based on facts that are measurable.

"Evidence Based Marketing is a differentiator, it allows you to tackle specific measurable issues, proves Return On

Investment, but most importantly, establishes a benchmark on which future initiative will be built," she said.

But to achieve their results, marketers like Susan Nsibiriwa, marketing manager of Vision Group called for the support of business leaders. "CEOs should be sitting with marketing managers and directors to think about how to grow the business difficult times," she said.

Tharani concurred that marketing is an important part of business that must be supported to achieve results.

ABOUT WALTER WAFULA

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