

Young researchers excel at the 2012 SAMRA conference

The increasing consumerisation of technology, the role of the mobile phone and social media in consumer marketing and brand research, and the relevance of behavioural economics to research were just some of the issues and trends under scrutiny at the recent 33rd annual Southern African Marketing Research Association (SAMRA) conference themed *Reflection and progress: from the present and into the future*.



Kyle Findlay (right) receives the gold award from outgoing SAMRA chair Prof Adré Schreuder for the overall best paper at the 2012 SAMRA conference.

The topical keynote presentations, the wide variety of research papers, expert Q&A sessions, the introduction of opinion pieces, and the beautiful venue at the Rosebank Crowne Plaza, all contributed to the success of the 2012 conference.

Like last year, the conference was preceded by a practical, insightful ESOMAR workshop where BrainJuicer's Juicy Evangelist Will Goodhand put the spotlight on Measuring Emotions.

In his entertaining opening keynote address, well-known branding and advertising expert Andy Rice also provided some serious food for thought. Examining the death of creativity, he concluded that a 'dirty dozen' all, to a greater or lesser extent, were complicit to 'assisted suicide' of creativity, causing their own potential downfall.

Have you responded to fundamental changes?

Illuminating delegates on the extent to which technology has been consumerised, keynote speaker Andisa Ntsubane, Microsoft South Africa Marketing and Communications director, among other things raised the question whether marketing professionals have sufficiently responded to fundamental global and consumer changes, as well as the way people interact and engage with technology.

Likewise, Facebook national account manager Sifiso Mazibuko focused on the phenomenal rise of social media and the extent to which brands can leverage Facebook to enhance social connections to connect with their customers in a real and

authentic way.

Describing how the human mind thinks and reacts, Goodhand, in his keynote presentation, vividly illustrated the importance and financial success of emotion-focused advertising. "Emotional advertising campaigns are more effective and more profitable than rational campaigns - even in 'rational' categories," he pointed out.

SAMRA restructuring; awards

Various topical issues ranging from the powerful potential of stokvels, the South African political Twittersphere and gamification in market research, to the extent to which social networkers and mobile phone users engage with brands, and search engine optimisation and the importance of good content, were addressed in some of the other conference papers.

Concluding the official conference programme, SAMRA CEO Leonie Vorster shed light on the restructuring of SAMRA to play a broader role as representative industry body, as well as the strategy to broaden the organisation's membership base and improve stakeholder value.

The awards event was one of the highlights of the two-day conference. The gold award for the overall best paper went to Kyle Findlay for his informative paper titled Gamification in Market Research. Along with co-author Paul Oosterveld, he also took joint-silver for his paper titled *Mapping the South African Political Twittersphere*.

Marilu Smit also took home two awards: as the best first time speaker and joint-silver for overall best paper for *Optimising advertising ROI on Print - The contribution of eye tracking now and into the future*.

Likewise Kambe Mwaba notched up two awards: the 'Bright Young Minds' award (for researchers under 25) and bronze for the overall best paper for *Making the Small Screen Part of the Big Picture: Understanding how South African Internet and Mobile Phone Users Interact with Brands Online*.

Zinzile Ntoyiwa's presentation titled *Stokvels - A Hidden Economy: Unpacking the potential of South African traditional saving schemes*, earned her the People's Choice award.

Besides Mwaba, Findlay, Smit and Ntoyiwa who received awards, Ruane Bester, Mathilda Eloff, Kathryn Kure and Tessa Nowosenetz were also commended for outstanding contributions.

According to conference chair Kim Larsen, SAMRA is "encouraged by the interest shown in the conference by young researchers, both as presenters and as delegates, as this bodes well for the future of the research industry."

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