

# Online webinars look at brand experience in African context

GfK South Africa has launched a series of free online webinars on delivering positive brand experience in order to grow sales in South Africa.



Image via [123RF](#)

## Brand experience

"Our global research found that 60% of consumers identify their experience with a brand as the biggest factor in deciding to purchase a product or service," said Rachel Thompson, brand and customer experience expert at GfK South Africa, on a recent webinar on brand management in the 'experience economy'.

The full transcript of Thompson's presentation and the recording, are available [here](#).

The series of three online webinars continues on 14 May with a presentation titled "*Where does brand loyalty begin and how does it evolve?*" and concludes on 11 June with "*Ten steps for strategic innovation success*". Participation is free and places can be booked by [clicking here](#).

Thompson said that in South Africa, and on the rest of the continent, brand experience is particularly important. "A recent company study found that 44% of urban consumers in South Africa consider experiences such as holidays and travel more important than possessions. In Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria, the importance of experiences is even higher. Many African consumers cannot afford to travel and have not experienced holidays. Their only exposure to such experiences is through brands.

Thompson, the company's specialist in brand and customer experience in sub-Saharan Africa, pointed out that many low-income consumers in South Africa experience life as mundane and routine. Companies that can deliver positive experiences to these "experience-hungry" consumers will boost sales and increase market share, she said.

## Importance of consumer experience

During the webinar, Thompson identified how brand management is changing because of the growing importance of the consumer experience. The new experience economy requires companies to deliver consistent, positive experiences throughout and beyond the consumer's journey to purchase. They need to build long-term brand relationships with consumers, based on experiences that encourage trust, honesty and loyalty. Moreover, companies should incorporate research into every consumer experience.

"By combining the tracking of brand advertising with the tracking of consumer experiences, organisations can obtain a full picture of the brand's performance. They can see what is happening to the brand."

One of the key factors driving change in the experience economy is social media. "Social media analysis enables organisations to monitor their brand and react quickly if things go astray. Our research shows that consumers are actively defining the success of a brand. They are also engaging in the brand experience of other people. When consumers talk about a brand on social media, they influence how other people experience that brand."

"This is very important in Africa. Around 103 million African consumers are active on social media. There are an estimated 72 million smartphones in Africa. This is expected to reach 525 million by 2020. Companies targeting African consumers must be able to engage in the digital experiences of their consumers."

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