

Brands do not market effectively to women in Africa

Marketers believe that a staggering 75% of budget spent on communicating with and marketing African women is wasted, including their own.



Just over 75% of marketers on the African continent don't believe that brands on the continent are marketing effectively to African women; and 70% of these marketers say their own marketing efforts don't strongly resonating with that target market.

These are the unsettling findings of a Kantar Added Value thought leadership study into the struggle marketers face when marketing to women on the African continent.

Utilising expert interviews, cultural and consumer insights, and perspectives from marketers on the continent it unearthed insight into the evolving face of African women and what it would take for brands to better 'win with African women'.

According to Kantar Added Value South Africa's brand project manager, Rebone Masemola, globally the power of women to influence a brand's success is undisputed, and brands are taking advantage of this.

But, brands struggle to connect and win with women on the continent, and brand owners and their agencies regularly bemoan the 'female marketing challenge'. They might acknowledge the importance of marketing women, but few are getting it right.

"Global brands have become experts at understanding the underlying complexities that most women universally identify with. Within that, they have also mined and applied the nuanced cultural dynamics that represent the lived realities of women across the globe," she said.



Rebone Masemola

“In doing this, they are creating layered narratives that resonate strongly and empower women to express themselves freely. Proctor & Gamble’s Always #Likeagirl campaign, for example, not only won awards and mindshare for the brand, but paved the way for more brands, like Under Armour, to change perceptions and empower women to be #UnlikeAny.”

Layered narratives

“Likewise, by tapping into relevant cultural movements and aligning themselves with strong, iconic women athletes like Serena Williams, Megan Rapinoe and Dalilah Muhammad, Nike has managed to deliver a triple threat in its marketing efforts: being disruptive, championing a great ‘women cause’ and staying true to its overarching brand essence,” she said.



Masemola added that Kantar Added Value’s study unfortunately conclusively highlights that African women are yearning for brands to better connect with them; from their perspective there’s still a major gap. For them, the marketer fails to recognise an African women’s complex and multifaceted nature; and her need to live without limitation, but still be represented with dignity.

“The unrefuted message from African women consumers to brands on the continent was that it is time for brands in Africa to better understand and connect with women on the continent as well as take a stand on real issues affecting them today,” Masemola said.

In Africa, with over 600 million females on the continent and a projection that 75% of household spending power will be controlled by women by 2028 (*Source: US Chartered Financial Analyst*), the opportunity for brands is clearly enormous.

The Kantar Added Value's Evolving Afro-Feminine study study identified six spaces that marketers need to understand and master to better connect and win with African women. These were:

- Rise of the Matriarchs
- The Untaggable Force
- Authentic Power
- Sexual Empowerment
- Defining Afro-Feminism
- African Parenting Redefined.

“Each space juxtaposes the global reality with the African nuance, with examples, implications and recommendations for brands to win with this market,” said Masemola.

African identity

“For instance, ‘African Parenting Redefined’, details how African women want to see brands portray and address the challenges they face as parents in Africa. One of these challenges is wanting their children to succeed in a modern world, but not at the expense of losing their African identity.

“To this end, they want brands to acknowledge that an African parent’s priority is about preserving culture through the next generation, because culture is integral to who the African woman is. Thus, brands in their world need to use their influence to empower African women with the skills to teach their children to be proud of their heritage; and show true representations of African families that they can identify with.

“However, to successfully do this, brands need to understand the intersectional nuances that form the foundational makeup of African women’s lives and needs. ‘Copying and pasting’ the depiction of global women and their challenges into an African context, was not the answer and, importantly, so too was painting African women with broad brush strokes.”

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