

Brandsh Media reveals African mobile figures

There are 63 million mobile subscribers in Nigeria out of a population of 149.2 million, 44 million in South Africa, and 15.3 million in Kenya, Brandsh Media founder Angus Robinson revealed yesterday, 30 March 2010, highlighting the need to turn these numbers into business opportunities and improve lives.

 By [Issa Sikiti da Silva](#) 31 Mar 2010



“Is there any opportunity in mobile? And what do we do about these big numbers and how do we apply the principles of mobile marketing to turn these numbers into opportunities in SA and in the rest of Africa - that's the big question,” he said, speaking at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Sandton, Johannesburg.

Focus on the masses

African mobile providers should focus on the masses, and start designing programmes that interact best with their users in order to effectively integrate their brands, Robinson said, adding that there is a need to provide social applications that could improve African livelihoods.

Ghana (11.9m), Uganda (8.2m), Angola (6m), Mozambique (4.8m), Zambia (3.8m), Botswana (1.6m) and Namibia (1.2m) complete Brandsh Media's list of Africa's top 10 countries in mobile subscription.

Africa's mobile industry has grown by a massive 1370% in the past nine years, research shows.

High-cost devices

However, many analysts continue to be outraged about the high cost of cellphone devices in Africa, a continent still plagued by state corruption, political intolerance, war, dictatorship and where close to 60% of the world's poor live.

There are only 65.9m internet users in Africa (6.7%), and it is believed less than 1% of the SA population uses smart phones.

“Smart phones are difficult to get in Africa and I believe that they should be funded by donors, including corporates, to help people improve their social well-being,” Robinson said, adding that Africa must get to a point where phones become cheap and easy just like the market itself.

Empowering the youth

Furthermore, he said: “We need to embrace all the mavericks of this world and give them funding or employ them.

“In many parts of the developed world, most innovation came from young people and we must empower ours by all means.”

Brandsh Media strategic director Gabrielle Rosario urged Africans to become more educated consumers news and learn what to trust and what they cannot trust.

Rosario has recently returned from Austin in Texas (US) from the SXSW conference attended by some 14 000 people, and was part of SA's 25-member delegation.

She said citizen journalism's intermediary models are not established yet despite its rise, with one example being that most of the youth in the US, for instance, continue to choose mainstream media (linking out/fan-pages statistics) as a preferred source of trusted information.

Rosario's learnings presentation was meant for African media, ad agencies, strategic partners and key clients.

Social relationship management

“The people own social media and when they use it they expect their problems to be heard and solved.

“The “illusion of control,” for example blocking platforms, needs to be addressed, the entire company needs an outward focus. Social media is forcing change in business from the bottom-up.

“Everything starts with listening and research, but when it comes to monitoring social media, knowing what you want to measure means everything.

“I have my own audience too, and if I don't think you are authentic, I'll call you out,” she said, adding that customer relationship management has now become social relationship management.”

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.
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