

Brands behaving badly on social media

 By [Banele Rewo](#) 7 Jun 2012

If you believe that social media enables brands to build relationships with consumers you are dead wrong. The technology merely provides a platform to connect the two parties then everything else goes back to basic psychology, group dynamics and social science.

What do I mean?

Brands along with every service supplier in the marketing chain contribute extraordinary efforts and research into communication, advertising and marketing campaigns. Social media deserves the same meticulous attention. The trusty reinforcement and other one-way approaches worked well enough to survive the ice age by telling the consumer what to want.

But then the world became smaller, choice exploded and competition grew fierce. Needless to say this is time to gamble a multi-million campaign with a 140-character PR blunder. Unfortunately; that's the risk unwitting brands pay for; a person to "manage" their social media accounts with the simple instruction to keep its account up-to-date. Up to date with what? Nonsensical updates such, as "Good morning, how is your Monday?", "Please RT and you may win surprise hamper"? Where is the involvement?

The Culprit List

Superga...

The Italian shoe brand takes the number one spot, albeit my suspicion that the profile in question is a parody account and Superga is not responsible for the evident everyday dismal Facebook antics.



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The profile is a personal/individual type profile, which means that it is limited to only 5 000 friends. It also means they can't produce insights of content loaded and people reached.

For such a quality, trendy, stylish and ubiquitous street brand it is startling to observe that it only has 300+ friends and the content is dominated by content about debauchery in Soweto and a few photos of the actual shoes. If Superga is not aware of the [TheItalianstreetstyle Superga](#) profile then it's an epic fail. If it's official then it's a monumental fail.

Nampak Bevcan's Can Do

Their campaign is so contemptible I have to fight the temptation of smearing my TV set with black paint every time one of their ads come on. (See their [TV Ad Campaign](#)).

The idea of a man ordering a drink at a bar and his choice of a can over bottle drives a female spectator in an instant hormonal reaction that sends them straight to a house party is ridiculous and an absolute can't do



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Then you try making sense by going on the web address but it's too small and passes too fast so you have to wait for a second round or torture. You finally get it and the site is static and styles a circa 1996 motif.

The copy is botched *kasi taal* sure to irritate anyone. Then you try click prominent social media tabs only to realize they are decorations, the functional links are hidden at the bottom of the page and they don't even lead you to their Twitter handle, you land on yours. Useless!

8Ta...

I had already taken advantage of their great data bundle offer but I wanted to upgrade and give them an ex R100 every month. So naturally, being on the move, I posed a question that did not require anymore than two calories to answer. They answered quickly enough but with an empty "please find out by calling 08XX". This would have required me to find a phone then, load my sim card then call the number - imagine all those kilojoules needed. I could complete two blog entries with that energy. I have since forgot why I needed the upgrade to begin with. Time consuming!

To Do list

- Engage with consumers and talk with them, not to them.
- Listen to the conversation rather than just monitoring.
- Value your fans, friends and followers then add value for them.
- Provide exciting content that will make the consumer think you are a reliable friend.
- Stop asking for a "like" or "retweet", that is abuse.
- Speak with a tone representative of the brand not the writer.
- It is unacceptable for a social media manager to fail in projecting the brand's personality whether in-house or not.

If the brand chooses to have a social media manager internally or externally there should be a service level agreement that will provide progress reports on the activity of the page. The tasked person or company should also know each and every aspect of the brand's product if not at hand then on speed dial.

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