

Using YouTube to tap into African audiences



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

13 Jul 2021

YouTube's recently hosted the first-ever Sub-Saharan Africa Festival and Zanele Hlatshwayo, YouTube Lead: Africa - Google, and Lorraine Landon, Specialist Lead SSA - Google, unpacked YouTube's ability to help businesses tap into African audiences and achieve effective business results.



Source: www.pexels.com

■ *How would you describe the current state of YouTube in South Africa?*

YouTube is a vibrant ecosystem of creators, users, and advertisers who come to the platform every day to express themselves. Alongside entertainment, YouTube has become a place of learning, growth, and development.

Advertisers have leveraged this surge in content and user growth to connect with their customers across all points of a marketing journey. The availability of different ad formats means that there is the opportunity for experimentation of message and content. The campaigns that do really well on YouTube are those that [apply learnings from these experiments](#).

Creators like [Financial Bunny](#) champion personal financial wellness, while [Kay Yarns](#) helps fans build self-confidence through beauty and fashion inspiration. There's [Lasizwe Dambuza](#) whose viral comedy sketches have entertained us while cooped up at home, just like [Ofentse Mwase Films](#) who produce everything from music videos to short films.

■ *Years ago, YouTube was seen as an entertainment platform. Now it plays an essential role in our lives. How has it evolved?*

As the pandemic drove us all to stay indoors, we saw people turn to YouTube to [fulfill their need for connection](#). There are five distinct areas where this was most apparent:

- **Work from home:** As more and more people came to terms with the reality of turning their homes into their offices, we saw creators offer [helpful tips](#) for how to get started.
- **Study from home:** Students were also affected by the pandemic with schools closing leading to studying at home.

Creators helped by producing '[study with me](#)' videos to offer companionship and motivation.

- **Meal preparation:** Cooking isn't everyone's speciality so to help those who struggled, creators made life easy by sharing follow-along [cooking videos](#).
- **Stress reduction:** In order to deal with this new reality, many people turned to creators for assistance with stress reduction, be it through yoga or guided [meditation](#).
- **In-home fitness:** Gym closures affected the routines of those who regularly visit fitness clubs so creators responded with [home workout](#) routines.

■ ***YouTube offers the ability to connect with potential consumers. What's one thing marketers should know about YouTube to make their marketing on the platform more effective?***

There's a common misconception that successful YouTube ads have a certain look and style. In reality, YouTube ads come in all sorts of formats - some of them don't even necessarily look or feel like ads.

“ The most important thing to remember is that your ad should be clear on what it's communicating and how it makes people feel. ”

This is more important than how the ad looks.



If YouTube isn't in your marketing plan, you're missing out!

Emily Stander 5 Jul 2021



■ ***Audience viewing habits have changed dramatically. How/What can brands do more of to connect with consumers?***

As viewing habits continue to change, experimentation is the best way to find success on YouTube. According to internal Google data, advertisers who used video experiments successfully saw 60% higher ad recall from better performing creative.

Experiments don't have to be a daunting task. Start by changing one element like copy, pacing, or the opening frame. Measure the performance of this change against a control and repeat. As you work through these experiments, apply the learnings to future ads.

Keep in mind that consumers in the awareness phase (upper funnel) respond to different messages than those in the purchase decision making phase (lower funnel). Lower funnel ads often get misconstrued as being less creative than upper

funnel ads. But we've seen brands get really creative with lower funnel ads.

“ If your aim is to encourage a purchase decision, your best bet is to focus on passion points, rather than demographics. ”

With this type of personalisation strategy, [we've seen brands reach millions](#) of people and achieve best-in-class ad recall.

Advertisers can also extend their reach to audiences who may not be watching as much TV anymore. We've found that some of the most effective and efficiently performing campaigns are those where [YouTube is planned alongside TV](#) in order to capture the attention of these light viewers.

■ ***In your opinion, what's the best digital marketing practices when it comes to YouTube?***

Because YouTube is a content platform, it's important to pay particular attention to your creative and messaging. BrandLift is a measurement tool that allows advertisers to measure the impact of the creative on ad recall, awareness, and purchase intent.

Having run thousands of successful YouTube campaigns across the globe with BrandLift measurement, we have collated our findings regarding best-practice for creative for the digital space.

These creative best practices are called the [ABCDs of effective creative on YouTube](#) and form the foundation of how we support our clients in creating the most impactful YouTube creative:

- **A for Attract:** No matter the format, it's important to capture attention early on. Make sure your ad has an immediate hook, such as an action packed intro or a familiar face.
- **B for Brand:** Place your brand naturally and with purpose within an ad. Brands that are placed within the first five seconds are associated with higher ad recall.
- **C for Connect:** YouTube offers the optimal space for storytelling and it is where we have seen some of the most emotionally compelling ads find their home. The data also shows that humour in ads delivers on higher connections with viewers, resulting in higher awareness and recall.
- **D is for Direct:** Advertising's purpose is to elicit action from the person viewing the ad. BrandLift studies have shown that where that call-to-action is clearly highlighted, the objectives of the campaign are more likely to be met.

■ ***According to research, campaigns planned across both TV and YouTube deliver better ROI. Why do you think this is?***

The consumer journey is not linear. It involves a multitude of touchpoints as a consumer considers a product or service. Traditionally, TV has had and continues to have a large reach. However, research shows that when [brands combine both TV](#) and digital as part of their marketing strategy, the return on investment is much larger than the sum of just one medium.

With that consideration, when advertisers craft messaging for these different mediums, they're able to be exactly where their consumers are as they navigate the non-linear consumer journey.

Interestingly, we have found that YouTube as an advertising medium allows advertisers to get TV's large reach at a much lower cost. And as audiences in Africa and around the world consume more content on the platform, why not leverage this screentime as a brand?

■ ***How can brands tap into African audiences?***

There are three ways advertisers can reach YouTube's engaged audiences:

- **Bring Your Own Data:** First-party data is a marketer's most valuable asset. It allows advertisers to engage with their most loyal customers, as well as people who have interacted with their brand before but haven't made a purchase. By utilising first-party data, you're able to deepen your connection with your audience.
- **Leverage Google's Reach:** With seven properties that reach over 1 billion users, we have more signals from more sources than ever before. Google signals help you to reach those who are your best potential customers.

Advertisers are able to reach their audiences based on affinities, lifestyles, and needs, by tapping into what their consumers are passionate about. Google distinguishes users that are truly passionate about a topic from those who are merely interested, delivering high-reach and high-accuracy segments.

- **Build Custom Audiences:** Beyond Google's curated audiences, you have the option to build your own audience by bringing together the power of Google data and your own audience definitions.

For instance, you can build broad audiences around passion points by using Google signals like app downloads or URLs that deliver substantive reach. You can also capture attention during a purchase decision by reaching people actively searching for your products on Google.com, to drive action on YouTube.

■ **When it comes to YouTube and standing out from competitors, what can brands do better?**

There are few hygiene factors to consider when running ANY digital campaign:

- Are you clear on what you are setting out to achieve? Tangible marketing objectives are key to setting up campaigns on YouTube to make use of the best combination of formats available.
- Do you have the means to measure the outcome of your campaign? In other words, have you set up your measurement strategy to measure the impact of YouTube on your business outcomes and do your objectives align with the metrics you are looking at?

“ The best campaigns start with a clear marketing objective in mind. Think of a marketing objective as the foundation of your campaign. ”

If it is not clear from the outset, it's easy to miss the value that a campaign may bring. Aligned goals and measurement are the infrastructure of a great campaign.

■ **YouTube's first-ever Sub-Saharan Africa Festival just wrapped. What were the key announcements?**

The Sub-Saharan Africa YouTube Festival was a chance for our clients to be exposed to the entire ecosystem of YouTube — that of consumer, advertiser, and [content creator](#). Advertisers got to learn more about the kind of content that is available on YouTube, who is creating it, and how YouTube is curating all it to build effective advertising campaigns.

“ It was a moment to celebrate how Africa has adopted the platform with incredible creator content across the continent. ”

Key announcements included the launch of YouTube Select and YouTube Audio Ads which will help advertisers reach people interested in specific content categories, as well as those who use YouTube for ambient listening.

YouTube Select is a new packaging approach that helps brands find the most relevant content to align with their advertising. Advertisers can tap into curated packages, called Lineups, which feature some of YouTube's most popular and relevant content, based on topic, audience, or moment. This allows advertisers to easily target the content that resonates most with

their audiences and is aligned with their brand.

YouTube Audio Ads is a new format that allows advertisers to reach people on YouTube in a new way. Audio Ads are designed to reach people using YouTube in the background and those on the free version of YouTube Music. To start, advertisers will have the ability to launch 15-second, non-skippable ads, with more formats coming soon.

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