

# Events: Use them to build close relationships with consumers in a fragmented market

In a fragmented media landscape where digital technologies are on the rise, a combination of events and regional radio helps marketers engage with consumers in an up-and-personal manner.

That's according to Warren Bedil, business development director, [Mediamark](#), who says that a shift towards digital advertising, shopping and service has removed a lot of the face time brands used to enjoy with their customers.



Against this backdrop, real-world events and activations offer a way to develop personal relationships with their customers, he adds.

"With the advent of digital technology, the marketing mix has become fragmented and advertisers battle to spend their budgets in the right places," says Bedil. "Something that advertisers and consumers alike miss when it's not present is the human touch."

## A great platform to meet customers

Face-to-face interaction is the oldest form of advertising and one of the most effective ways to have a conversation with a prospect or a customer. But with limited budgets, companies are looking for ways to have these interactions with customers at scale - which is where events come into the equation.

"A well-chosen event is a great platform for talking to customers," says Bedil. "Activations at events are successful at driving consumer behaviour because they are voluntary, active engagements with people who are interested in the brand."

Bedil says that the key to using events successfully in the marketing mix lies in choosing a platform that is aligned with the brand. The context of the event matters as much as the audience demographics, he notes. For example, an insurance brand will be more successful in addressing new homeowners with a short-term insurance offering at a personal finance breakfast than it would be by sponsoring a rock concert.

## Synergising with regional radio

Events work especially well in synergy with regional radio. Mediamark's radio partners have a range of annual events that advertisers can leverage off, giving brands access to broadcast airtime and event face time. These events come ready-made with a credible media partner, which has a vested interest in making a success out of these happenings.

"The station uses all available platforms - on air, online, and on-the-ground - to blanket the audience over the promotion period," says Bedil. "This involves multiple contacts with consumers over multiple media types, culminating in the final engagement with the attendee at the event."



Warren Bedil

One example of events in action is Sisters with Blisters, presented by First for Women and Jacaranda FM. Over the seven years of its existence, this annual walk has retained the same sponsor and has grown into larger and larger venues as it has become more popular.

## Strong sponsors give events credibility

In 2013, sponsors such as Pick n Pay, Mangwanani, Eukanuba and Kia are all playing a role at the event. The event takes

a stand against violence against women and children, with all proceeds distributed to charities involved in this cause.

"Having such strong sponsors gives Sisters with Blisters credibility, and also allows the event to offer great giveaways and competition prizes to attendees," says Bedil. "The brands benefit from advancing their CSI agendas and getting out into the public space."

The key to the event's longevity, however, is the long-term commitment of First for Women as headline sponsor. "The lesson is that immersing the client into the campaign and aligning the event with the client's business objectives makes an event a success," says Bedil. "The radio station and client must work together to give their audience value to make sure that their events succeed."

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