

# Does your brand packaging encourage customer engagement?

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It seems as if even the avalanche of soundbites around the cultivation of genuine brand engagements hasn't reached some of the marketers, as some are still steeped in the 80s mindset when it comes to brand packaging.



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There is a lot of yesteryear OMO-Mailbag marketing still at play. For those not familiar with OMO-Mailbag marketing, it was a very popular marketing genius where customers of the washing powder, OMO, were encouraged to write and tell their experiences of using the washing powder. Some well-written letters even became part of the TVC and radio campaigns as they were used as content thereof. It worked.

It worked partly because there was a group of special people called "housewives" with time on their hands they could write 'properly' without using emojis and LOLs and I guess the South African Post Office was still reliable, slow as it has always been, but reliable nevertheless. Hear me out, this is not a dig at Mark Barnes, he is only mopping up the recently-created mess, I suppose.

## Postal addresses and landline numbers on packaging

Looking at the packaging of various FMCG brands, it shocks me to see some of the well-known brands and not so well-known still trapped in the: 'write-to-us' or even worse: 'phone-us' mentality. In the era of instant platforms like Facebook and Twitter, who in one's right mind will ever write you a love letter like the customers of OMO? Even for complaints, customers would rather email than write a letter.

## Paying lip service to customer engagement

Brands who still offer limited options for customer engagements are paying lip service. If that is not the case, they would extend their touchpoints and make contact easier than what some are offering at the moment. Options for communication channels have to be multiplied and made bold on the packaging. Some contact details, like "Terms & Conditions" of a loan-shark credit contract, read so small you would need triple-lens spectacles.

## Brave new world of WhatsApp

It's a fact that South African internet is relatively unaffordable, thus keeping a healthy number of consumers away from the exciting online space. However, all is not lost, as there are cost-effective platforms to create brand followers/groups. One platform that is not used effectively, or at all, is WhatsApp. I'm not too sure what stops marketers from including WhatsApp numbers on their packaging. The application has proven to be quite popular across different market categories – it's like

Capitec Bank, which is used by anyone without any particular class or specific market.

But, whatever you do, remember that OMO-Mailbag marketing is so 80s.

## ABOUT MUSA MSANE

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