

Bigger Than Me partners with Box Smart Media and Hashtag Our Stories

Bigger Than Me, Box Smart Media and Hashtag Our Stories have partnered together to educate local brands on how to authentically connect with their audience with social impact marketing.



Yusaf Omar, the co-founder of Hashtag Our Stories

Marketing and advertising have come a long way since the days of early mass production. In the '20s it was all about pushing product and making the sale, but by the time the golden marketing era of the '50s came round, the hotshot marketers realised that they had more success if they slowed down on the hard sales pitch and actually considered the consumer's needs.

This 'people-first' approach became a tried and tested method that continued to morph in its application throughout the years. Marketers believed they were truly onto something, and perhaps they were at the time. But the fact that research says most consumers today wouldn't care if 74% of brands disappeared for good, tells us that something isn't quite working.

Then needs of modern consumers have changed so drastically and quickly, that not even the charismatic and charming ad man himself, Don Draper, could pull the wool over their eyes. Living in an age of information and technology, where a quick tap of the finger can get you almost anything you want, it's only natural that people's desires are growing in complexity. Not only do consumers have more choice, but in a world full of noise and constant product promotion on digital feeds, an evolved social consciousness has given rise to a craving for emotional truth and connection with a cause.

The future for brand growth

According to Greg Viljoen, CEO and founder of social change agency, Bigger Than Me (BTM), the future of marketing lies in purpose-led business strategy driven by powerful storytelling.

“ To connect with current and prospective customers, brands have to communicate what they stand for, not just what they are selling. This is especially important post-pandemic, as consumer values continue to shift. If brands have the power to affect social change they should, it's what people can get behind in a crowded marketing space. ”

Viljoen's agency has recently been appointed as the South African partner of Hashtag Our Stories (HOS), a global video platform and network of mobile storytellers.



Boosting brand purpose by solving value-action gaps in Africa

Adeola Tejumola, Kantar 25 Mar 2021



Together with Box Smart Media, Bigger Than Me is tasked with selling HOS's unique digital offering to South African brands, educating companies on how to authentically connect with their audience with powerful storytelling and social impact marketing. The partnership aims to help local brands grow their market share in a way that advances people, planet, and profit.

A recent [Kantar Purpose Study](#) showed that over a 12-year period, those companies with a purpose-led business strategy had a brand growth of 175% versus 70% for brands that didn't. Further to this, a Nielsen [study](#) reported that two in three consumers will pay more for brands that show a commitment to positive social change and/or issues. This indicates that consumers expect brands to appeal to emotional needs and they are more likely to support businesses that are trying to make the world a better place.

“ When brands understand that they are speaking to real people with real lives, they can better identify the positive impact they can make with their marketing. ”

“It's all very well to have a CSI campaign, but if it's not reaching anybody on a deeper level, there are missed opportunities for real brand engagement. This is where the art of storytelling comes in, and brands who are already doing this are reaping the rewards. Not only are they engaging their audience, but they are also boosting their brand value, all while contributing to social good. It's a win-win,” says Viljoen.

Have a real cause

Businesses do however need to be quick to realise that consumers won't accept disingenuous or empty marketing tactics. They are far more adept at sniffing out those brands who are dedicated to a real cause from those that are just jumping on a bandwagon. Authentic social impact storytelling is driven by the benefactor's point of view, and never overrun by a brands marketing goals or boardroom objectives. This is what makes the expertise that HOS has to offer so compelling.

HOS uses mobile journalism to share local stories with a global audience and has trained thousands of ordinary citizens across the world to use their individual voice to harness video and social media to share news for change.

“Our work has given citizens a voice, but it’s time that more brands use their clout to influence behaviour for the good. Unfortunately, not many know where to start, and that’s where the right mix of technology, strategy, and creativity come in,’ says Yusaf Omar, the co-founder of HOS. He says that by empowering people on the ground in various communities to share their truth, brands can be a part of something more meaningful than just making a profit, they can bring people together. He also believes that the technology available to us today is primed for user engagement and full immersion, allowing for content to make a powerful impression with impactful storytelling. “That’s why we are excited to partner with BTM because they are at the intersection of social impact and storytelling. Together we can help South African brands develop their purpose and map out a clear call to action to make a difference. “says Omar.

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