

The cheese has been moved

 By [Joseph Neusu](#)

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The mobile phone is now the most dominant mass media channel in South Africa, having overtaken desktop PCs. Reports show that over 37.2 million in the adult population (15+ years) in the country own a mobile phone, and according to the Mobile Marketing Association (MMA), "mobile is... as close as you can get to your consumers in South Africa". Another interesting statistic is that 84% of internet users in SA access online content via mobile technologies.

The online desktop environment is fast representing a ghost town as users continue to flock to mobile platforms in large numbers. Brands should take note of this fact as their continued tenure on PCs will make their messaging sound like grandstanding in a cemetery.

So overwhelming has been the proliferation of mobile devices and our dependence on them that a strange condition called nomophobia has induced in mobile users.

Nomophobia is an irrational fear of not having one's phone within sneezing distance. Sounds trivial but survey results published by SecurEnvoy, a mobile phone security company, show that 66% of participants in a poll of 1,000 suffered from this condition.



Sergey Nivens via [123RF](#)

It is quite ironic then that, given such stupendous and glaring ownership statistics, the majority of South African brands are still light years behind in terms of creating mobile-friendly content, let alone mobile-compliant digital properties.

Those that have responded to mobile's reign have opted for an ineffective bolt-on strategy that is tantamount to applying lipstick to a frog. Creating content for the desktop environment and then shrinking it to fit the smaller screen resolutions of

mobile phones and tablets is flawed at the core. The reason for the failure is simple: The desktop and mobile environments are worlds apart.

What brands should rather do is to re-create their content strategies in line with the nuances of the mobile universe and become mobile-first in their strategy and operations. According to Jayson Demers, Founder and CEO of AudienceBloom, "If you're not delivering your marketing messages in a way that's tailored specifically to the experience of a smartphone or tablet user, chances are you're turning customers away."

So what constitutes the secret sauce of a successful mobile content strategy?

How the target audience uses mobile

Brands should glean insights into the manner in which their customers and prospects actually use their mobile devices, the type of devices they are on and the extent to which the mobile phones have become an extension of their lives.

Audience profiling should include an analysis of the customers' expectations in relation to the brands' offerings.

The mobile mindset

Mobile is more than a channel as it also represents context and the behaviour of the customers when they are on their smartphones and tablets. Feature phones are also included in the mix as the bottom of pyramid (BoP) statistics show heavy usage of mobile data as well.

Do customers use their mobile phones heavily when commuting or when lounging at home, and whether they use them to search for products or for social networking purposes, are important considerations that inform a cutting-edge content marketing strategy.

A match between content and context is a priority for any brand that expects to unlock value from the market-place. "To not leverage the contextual power of mobile would be a miss. But, get the content wrong and that contextual power is nullified. So more than ever, mobile demands the best of both," said Warren Zenna, managing director of digital and mobile at Woods Witt Dealy & Sons, New York.

Snackable content

Long-form content is falling on deaf ears and blind eyes. One of the drawbacks of the digital economy is the fact that attention spans have dwindled and this is truer for mobile users. Customers expect to find engaging content that is easy to access, understand and digest when they use their mobile phones.

The winning formula for brands is to create content that grabs attention, is visual and triggers powerful emotional responses or risk being ignored. It is simply that stringent.

On the other hand, brands can also curate snackable user-generated content from their customers. This can include videos and photos about or related to their products posted on social media platforms.

Location-sensitive content

Geo-location technologies enable brands to connect and engage exclusively with customers that are in close proximity to their businesses. Promotional messages, surveys and even offer discount codes can be transmitted to these customers.

What makes location-based mobile content marketing key is that it provides information that prospective customers need to enable them make purchasing decisions.

Mobile content marketing offers exciting opportunities that were not hitherto available in the desktop environment. However, brands have to accommodate the peculiarities of the mobile universe by being mobile-first. Content strategies that are not in tandem with the demands of a mobile environment represent the folly of looking for cheese at the same place when in actual fact it was moved elsewhere.

ABOUT JOSEPH NEUSU

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