

Should your brand be posting to the trending hashtag right now?

By Babalwa Nyembezi

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Lately, I've been feeling mad demotivated about connecting meaningfully with the work that I do for my clients. Working during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown has been difficult for many of us.

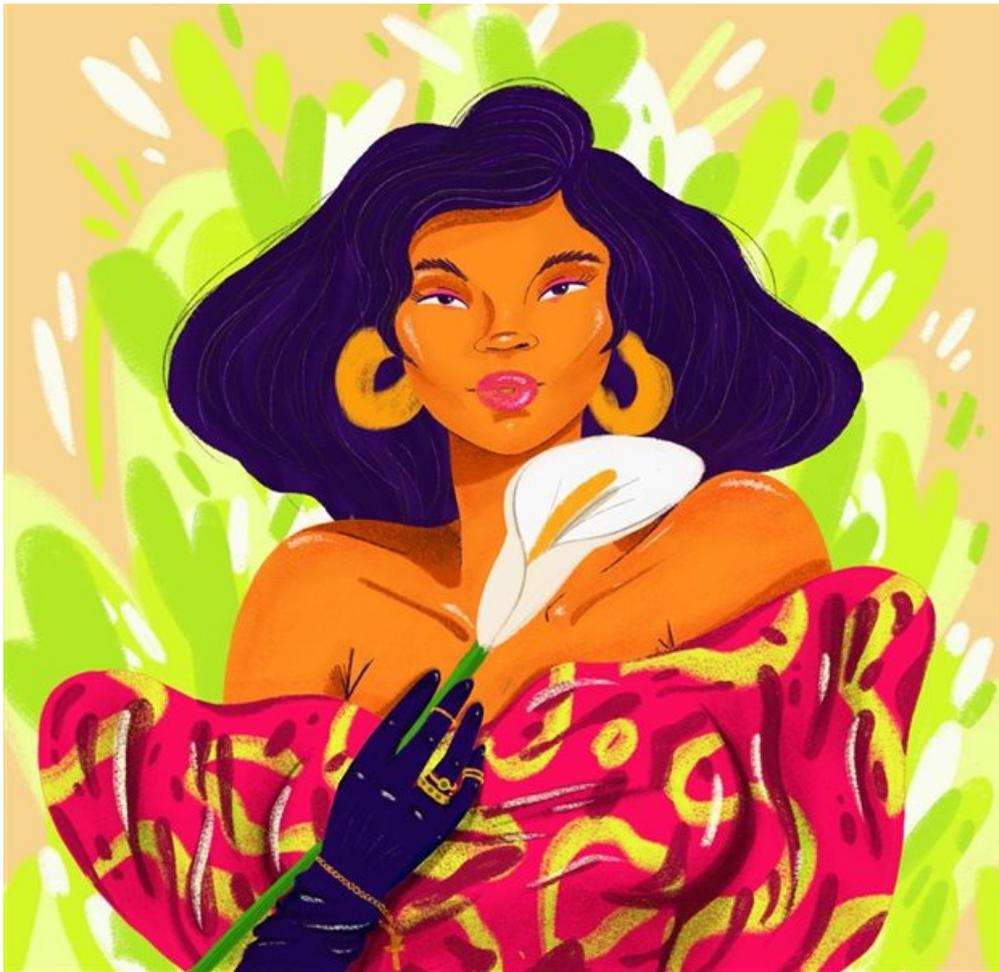


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I'm a content director who currently has the title of "digital lead" in an ATL agency. This week, a colleague messaged about one of the brands we work on sharing content to contribute to the #BlackOutTuesday conversation that's taken over our timelines. I was thinking before responding to explain - how this particular brand has no right to speak up about the value of black women and by extension, black lives right now.

Why should your brand avoid speaking about #BlackOutTuesday?

Unless you've been quite obvious and vocal in your communication about speaking to black audiences over the last few months — what are you doing capitalising on black people's anger right now?



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Earlier this week I spoke to someone who works on a South African brand. They shared “ALL LIVES MATTER” creative that the brand was planning on releasing and I freely advised against going out with those comms. It’s important that as people who work with brands we remember those brand values when putting together any type of comms from the brand speaking to our audience.

For a brand who doesn’t primarily amplify black lives, and support movements it feels disingenuous to suddenly have comms that allude to black lives matter while saying “ALL LIVES MATTER”.

Why is this an issue?

Because while all lives do matter. Right now the conversation is centred on the value of the lives of black people. It comes across as very opportunistic if as a brand all you do is contribute to the wave of conversation currently without having invested in the very important and relevant conversation about how black lives (specifically) matter.

Why is this important?

As a brand that is communicating with a millennial audience right now. We know that millennials are prone to paying attention to brands that share the same values. If you are only sharing your brand’s investment in the values of black women right now (and have never before had messaging targeted at black women) it would come across as opportunistic and disingenuous.

So, before you go out with that #BlackOutTuesday post on your brand ... Think about how you can actually, IRL, invest in the lives of black people. Beyond a social media post, what is your brand doing to show up for black women and black people right now?

If you’re not thinking beyond a hashtag then ask yourself if you should even be engaging in the conversation that’s happening amongst young people right now?! Do you care about what they care about or do you just care about making more money for your brand?

If it’s the latter, your audience will pick it up in a heartbeat. Just, be authentic. Whatever that looks like for you and your brand.

Peace (and hoping that your brand is contributing meaningfully).

**This article has been updated*

ABOUT BABALWA NYEMBEZI

Babalwa is an award-winning Social Media & Digital Consultant who consistently leads her clients to create work that meaningfully connects with audiences across the African continent. She’s young, and unafraid to make her voice heard from telco to tech to the financial sector she has worked across a number of brands as a content strategist.

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