

Adapt to the consumer-driven world or die

 Bylssa Sikiti da Silva

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[[Flux Trends](#)] In a world where technology-minded consumers have wrested power from editors, publishers and brand managers, bringing a whole new set of opportunities, brands need not to fear these changes but should rather embrace them and understand these technologies and start looking for new business models. This has emerged at the Digital Lab workshop taking place today, Friday, 26 February 2010, at the University of Johannesburg, in conjunction with the 2010 Flux Trend Review conference.



Interconnected 'scary' social planet'

With over 350 million subscribers in FaceBook, 6.2 billion videos watched every single month on YouTube and close to 300 million Internet users in China, some say the world has become an interconnected 'scary' social planet where brands must quickly adapt to the current realities or 'die'.

"Consumers' tool boxes have been significantly upgraded and new digital tools of expression have dramatically increased to give consumers a voice," Simon Bond, global head of business development at Proximity Worldwide, said.

"We are moving away from mass advertising and edging towards mass customisation, and it is no longer about pure advertising but about consumer engagement. It is also no longer about creating campaigns but creating human experiences. Consumers want to express themselves and social webs are changing the way brands relate to customers."

Listen to what consumers say

Research shows that just over 50% of consumers now listen to what the brand says, while more than 90% of brands now listen to what consumers say about the brand - a clear indication that consumers are taking control.

The new strategy clearly consists of delivering a brand in a more compelling and relevant way in an environment which is dialogue-driven, he said.

"A new model is now called the push-pull peer-to-peer model and social media planners understand very well what is going out there in the social world. Customer relationship management should now start to engage and involve, deliver value, listen

and modify, be relevant and be customer-centric,” he advised.

“Go beyond the ad unit, create lasting connections and harness the power of consumers because if you don't do it, the results could be very negative. You can however still reach a lot of people out there but in negative way,” he said.

The Digital Lab has been organised by Studio 4332 (formerly proximity#ttp) in association with Flux Trend Review. Speakers include Arthur Goldstuck, Ian Calvert, Clifford De Wit, Brendan Wade and Stuart Stobbs.

For more info, go to www.studio4332.com and www.fluxtrends.com. Bizcommunity.com is a media partner.

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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