

Today's experiential marketing is all about content creation

 By [Jameson Hlongwane](#)

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Experiential marketing starts from a narrative. Events marketing, on the other hand, focuses on a one-time, snapshot event - which takes place in a pre-defined period in time making room for one-way communication.



Image credit: Joanna Kosinska on Unsplash.

Typically, at events, you'll find that a brand is speaking directly to the consumer with their marketing message and, in all of this, the consumer doesn't get the chance to respond.

Experiential marketing, meanwhile, focuses on an intrinsic, authentic narrative that builds opportunities for the customer and the brand to come together, and engage in conversation. Ultimately, forming a strong relationship, leading to that which every brand is after: content.



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In my 13 years of working in event marketing and experiential marketing in sub-Saharan Africa – where everything in eventing and creating experiences was physical – we shifted to a point where anyone could experience anything and everything online.

But true luxury, value and innovation in experiential marketing lies in being able to merge the digital world and the physical world. And right in the middle of that, sits content creation.

“ *“The digital world, ironically, has made live experiences more interesting.”* ”

Content creation – whether it be in the form of audiovisual content, social media content, web content, photographic content – combine and merge to allow the experience to be lived beyond time and place.

Here’s my take on the reasons why your next event needs to be all about content

Lasting connections with consumers

Contrary to other forms of marketing, experiential marketing provides immediate feedback when executed correctly. Consumers can interact with the brand, product or service tangibly and immediately – allowing the content generated to be authentic and live.



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The African continent, specifically, has connected consumers who are eager and willing to engage and provide feedback, with a growing smartphone penetration exceeding 41.6%.

In South Africa, brands that successfully integrate digital elements into their event experiences will not only see their bottom-line profits grow, but they’ll also see their consumer retention rates increase and provide content that can be used to further grow the brand.



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More data at the moment

Knowledge is power, which is why collecting and analysing consumer data has become a top priority for most brands and businesses.

CEOs need insights to steer the direction of their companies. The marketing team needs insights about consumers to know where and how to reach them most effectively. And R&D product developers need insights to know which products appeal most to consumers and how to produce them.

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"What gets measured, gets improved" - Peter Drucker

A post shared by [DN \(@dataninjasuk\)](#) on Sep 13, 2019 at 3:54am PDT

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Experiential marketing allows us to gather real-time data for brands. When we're able to gather key insights on customers' behaviours as well as behaviours of potential customers, and with content creation in mind, we're able to do much more.

Picture it this way, by gathering data on-site during your physical experiences and combining them with data gathered related to the content that was further shared digitally, your brand can draw a more realistic and full picture surrounding your brand's product, service or activity.



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An active understanding of your product

And, lastly, one of the complexities of working on the African continent is the very beauty of it. Every country is fundamentally different – and within every country could lie a multitude of uniqueness.

And what a lot of global marketers don't necessarily understand with dealing with Africa, and South Africa particularly, is that the way one market/region/tribe may perceive and understand your product, may be completely different to how another perceives it.

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The combination of experiential marketing with a focus on creating content is important, as it allows every individual to experience the brand, product or service in a manner that is customised to them.

Collecting the content from this experience, allows a brand to portray the diversity in understandings of the product, whilst speaking to many.

ABOUT JAMESON HLONGWANE

Jameson Hlongwane is the Deputy Managing Director at the VWV Group South Africa, a multi-award winning experiential communications agency. Beyond his technical abilities and know-how within experiential marketing, Jameson has been instrumental to the company's success due to his ability to manage large dynamic teams from different cultures and adapt to rapidly changing times.

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