

Real Heroes Connect success shows South Africans are eager to increase coronavirus knowledge

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South Africans are eager to update their knowledge about the coronavirus pandemic and its spread, as shown by a report detailing the viewership of edutainment video series Real Heroes Connect.



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Almost 26,000 information-packed videos were watched in the period between 28 May (when Real Heroes Connect was first launched) and 30 June, growing the viewers knowledge about what, exactly, a pandemic is, how to prevent the spread of Covid-19, what they should do if they experience symptoms and how to self-isolate.

Jo Watt of Talent Brand, who conceptualised Real Heroes Connect, says that this is an excellent sign that South Africans are willing to educate themselves about the virus and help share the facts. "That's important, because information is the antidote to fear," she points out. The platform offers viewers a chance to be entered into a daily draw for airtime if they complete watching a video and if they share the content. Points are also awarded for completing a test which gauges their understanding of the information.

Watt explains that she came up with the idea for the platform after she realised the potential of the virus to wreak devastation on the FMCG sector. Initially targeting essential workers in this vital industry during the first stage of lockdown Level 5, the scope of the platform has broadened as South Africa's economy has opened up with the easing of lockdown regulations.

According to the report, 93% of the visitors to the Real Heroes Connect's landing page went on to watch the videos, with 76% being watched through to the end (compared to an industry average view through-rate of 57%). Of these, 95% completed the quiz and 31% went on to share the link. A massive 26% of the competition entrants won airtime through their participation in the campaign.

Watt noted that this unusually high rate of engagement could be attributed to three factors: the absorbing nature of the animation, the incentive of winning airtime and the fact that the subject matter was of interest.

She added that the viewership of the videos increased significantly from June as the initiative started to gain momentum. The most watched video covered the topic 'Let's beat the virus with Ubuntu' (watched by 20% of viewers), while 14% watched 'What exactly is this Covid-19 thing?' and 'How do I know I have it?'

"An estimated 6,000 people watched only one video, but 1,000 binged and watched all nine," Watt says. Although the videos are available in four languages (English, Afrikaans, Sesotho and isiZulu), 80% of viewers watched in English – but this started to change as word of the initiative spread. Tuesday was the most popular day for viewing video, with viewers logging in at all hours between 9am and 11pm. WhatsApp was by far the favourite platform they chose to share the link to watch.

Importantly, the tests completed by viewers at the end of each video showed that 85% of the content had been understood. Watt says that this is most likely due to the use of vernacular languages, enhanced by clear questions and visual prompts. "The questions that were answered incorrectly most often related to physical distancing, and that hugs are not the way to greet each other, which shows that we need more education in this area," says Watt.

Watt adds that, as 88% of viewers provided some basic contact and profiling details, Real Heroes Connect is able to deduce that 63% of viewers are female, and 44% fall into the 18-25 age cohort. This was followed by 34% in the 26 to 35 age category. An overwhelming majority (44%) hail from the Eastern Cape, with Gauteng following at 21%. At least 14% work in the food and beverage production industry, although a significant number (59%) gave their industry as 'other'.

Going forward, the Health and Welfare Seta has consent to communicate further with those that have given their permission to do so.

"These results are incredibly encouraging. They prove to us that our work has hit its target – if this knowledge translates into action, we have a huge army of soldiers ready to play their part in the fight against coronavirus and due to the fact that we have recently received further funding from HWSeta, we will be adding more video topics soon to ensure we arm and protect more South Africans with the facts; from essential workers to schools, to SMBs, in fact every South African's own responsible actions will help to change the course of this pandemic," Watt concludes.

For more information, visit www.realheroesconnect.com

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