

Kantar BrandZ lesson 6 of 7: Vodacom on messaging that reflects the consumer reality through exposure

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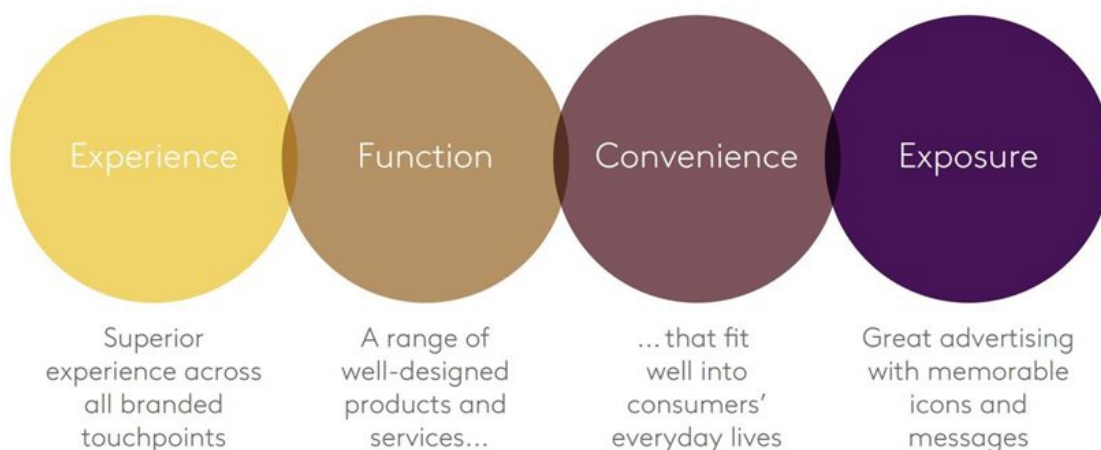
28 Feb 2022

There's no denying that the right messages, resonating through memorable devices and stories, are a vital part of marketing. Here's how category leader Vodacom took this to heart, leaning into messaging during the pandemic with a wide range of welcome adverts and campaigns centred on humour, connection, and resilience...



In a year that saw mixed brand equity results for the category of telecom providers, 'doing it all from home' certainly brought an increased demand for their services, but the continued lockdown also constrained consumers' budgets and kept them from accessing physical stores. That's why in addition to moving up the Kantar BrandZ Most Valuable Brands of 2021 ranking to #2 overall with a brand value of \$2.57bn, Vodacom currently leads as South Africa's top brand for exposure, one of the four fundamental areas of brand building that drive consumer demand in the digital-first era.

The four fundamentals



Its reliable network, innovative products and services are advertised in a way that reflects South African culture, telling real stories of personable characters who have combined their indomitable human spirit with tech to achieve their ambitions.



MARKETING & MEDIA

New Vodacom ad celebrates nation-building through digital education

Ogilvy South Africa 31 May 2019



Abey Mokgwatsane, [outgoing](#) managing executive: brand and comms, Vodacom, explains how this fits in with their current strategy: “Brands are a heuristic for customers in a cluttered world. Brand building is about creating an easy-to-understand reference to the solutions customers seek – this is where a brand is critical to the success of any business. Vodacom has done this through consistent communication that amplifies innovative products, embedded in purpose, that offer great value for money.”

Rethinking connectivity to enable a digitally connected economy

Delving deeper, Mokgwatsane reveals that the Vodacom brand is now at the forefront of creating a digital society. The business has evolved from providing mobile connectivity to individuals, to connecting homes, businesses, and society. Weaving in their brand purpose, Vodacom now builds and implements innovative solutions that leverage that connectivity layer.

As a purpose-led technology company that uses its resources to connect Africans to a better future, their ambition to improve 100m more lives and halve their environmental impact on the African continent manifests in initiatives such as e-School, where over 1.2m children have free access to the entire public-school library on the Vodacom network, and funding of the Gender Based Violence Call Centre in partnership with the Department of Social Development to fight the scourge of GBV.



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Abey Mokgwatsane, outgoing managing executive: brand and comms, Vodacom

The brand's technological innovation also creates value for customers through products such as Just4You, the first customised special deals platform offering the best value for money deals for each customer, and Vodabucks, the largest loyalty programme in South Africa that rewards customers just being on the network.

Innovations to simplify customer experiences include Tobi, South Africa's largest chatbot, saving customers time by circumventing the call centre or the Detailed Data Usage App, where customers can easily track data utilisation at any time, giving them peace of mind. VodaPay, South Africa's largest super app, with over 1,5 million registered users, is an online megastore for customers and merchants to buy anything from data for any network to TVs.



FINANCE

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But the best brands are created in the minds of consumers through great communications that define them and condition the customer's experience of the product or service, so how well you communicate that value determines how much

consumers resonate with what your brand stands for.

Cutting through with advertising, featuring memorable icons and messages

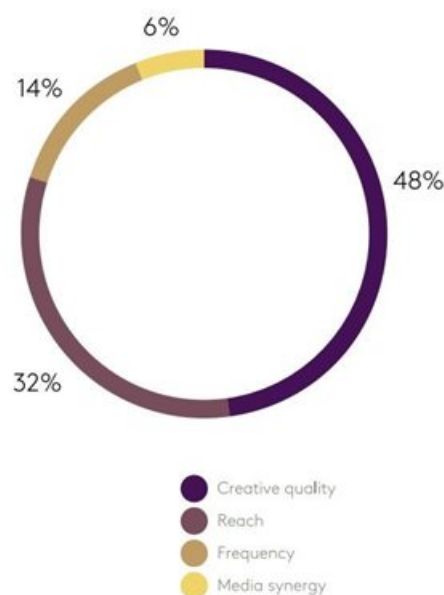
Notching up both creativity and effectiveness of your communications helps build up a store of positive brand associations. Our global CrossMedia database explores the key levers of paid media that drive greater brand exposure, with creative quality being the single largest driver of increased brand awareness, followed by reach.

You also need to understand how the content will be consumed and adapt it to the right media to increase its impact, as campaigns that are integrated and customised to a channel perform 10% better than campaigns that have integrated ideas but are not customised. Done well, your content will gain attention, reach the right audience, and create lasting memories of your brand. Looking at Vodacom's success in this regard, brands therefore need to question whether they are investing enough time and budget to ensure they are creating the most compelling content.

This holds true no matter the size of your marketing budget. Natalie Botha, Director of Creative Development, Middle East & Africa, Kantar, clarifies, "Investing in impactful creative allows any brand to punch above its weight and cut through the clutter to connect with your audience, whatever the medium."

Mokgwatsane concludes: "The best brand building not only amplifies products and services but also drives the business it represents to continue to build products that meet customer and societal needs, such that the brand expresses only what is true and authentic – nothing less will suffice in the connected world we live in, where customers and stakeholders expect brands to build a sustainable future. The acceleration of technology has in a sense accelerated society's willingness to embrace the future Vodacom has been preparing for."

Drivers of awareness (campaign level)



Source: analysis of Kantar global CrossMedia database (424 campaigns)

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What is your brand's growth formula for 2022?



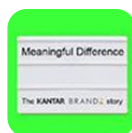
[Learn more](#) from South Africa's most valuable brands, with a focus on [how to build strong brands and engineer for growth](#) in 2022 and beyond. Also [reflect](#) on SA's most valuable brands from 2018 to date and what the top brands have been up to in the last year.

Bonus lesson: [Download](#) our comprehensive guide to brand equity and growth.

Read up on the rest of our Kantar BrandZ series:

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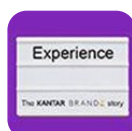
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About the Kantar BrandZ Most Valuable South African Brands Ranking

Kantar BrandZ is the global currency when assessing brand value, quantifying the contribution of brands to business' financial performance. Kantar's annual global and local brand valuation rankings combine rigorously analysed financial data, with extensive brand equity research. Since 1998, BrandZ has shared brand-building insights with business leaders based on interviews with 4 million consumers, for 18,000 brands in 51 markets, including opinions from 31,335 South African consumers on 660 brands in 47 categories.

The ability of any brand to power business growth relies on how it is perceived by customers. Grounded in consumer opinion, Kantar BrandZ analysis enables businesses to identify their brand's strength in the market and provides clear strategic guidance on how to boost value for the long-term. The eligibility criteria are:

- The brand must originally have been created in South Africa and be owned by an enterprise listed on JSE or a credible stock exchange.
- For private brands originated in South Africa, their complete financial statements must be available in the public domain.

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