

Marketers stand to benefit richly from Afrikaans advertising

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Research study after research study has confirmed that the Afrikaans speaking segment of the population continues to have considerable buying power, so companies that target this lucrative market with Afrikaans advertising should reap rich rewards as Afrikaans speakers tend to open their hearts, minds and wallets more readily when they are addressed in their mother tongue; the language of their thoughts.

So says Franette Klerck, GM of the Pendoring Afrikaans Advertising Awards.

Included in a mountain of information gathered, ROOTS 2010 - the Newspaper Advertising Bureau (NAB) and Caxton/CTP's recent urban retail and readership consumer research survey - revealed some interesting facts regarding the Afrikaans speaking Purchase Decision Makers (PDMs).

Of the total sample of 23 000 PDMs surveyed in 100 areas across the country, Afrikaans speakers accounted for the second biggest group - 27,7%. Moreover, while logically the Afrikaans-speaking market is made up of mostly white and coloured households, they tend to be middle- and high-income earners with a high LSM status (close to 50% LSM 9 and 10). This makes them an important and sought-after market.

Of the survey sample, English speakers totalled 38,9%, isiZulu 15,7%, Sesotho 8% and isiXhosa 6%.

Of the Afrikaans households surveyed in ROOTS, 30% earn between R12 000 and R24 999 household income a month, only slightly less than the 34% of English speakers, while 18% of them earn more than R25 000 plus household income a month (24% English speakers).

A total of 19% of Zulu households surveyed earn between R12 000 and R24 999 household income a month and 6% more than R25 000 plus, while 14% of Xhosa households earn between R12 000 and R24 999 household income a month and 5% more than R25 000 plus.

"Marketers and advertisers hoping to tap into the Afrikaans market first need to understand where they live, what they do and how and where they shop," comments John Bowles, Joint MD of NAB.

Although the market has experienced its worst recession in decades, ROOTS 2010 has identified that, over the past 12 months, Afrikaans-speaking PDMs are still spending. They have spent their money in and around the home on repairs and maintenance of their gardens (15%); repairs or maintenance to their homes (12%); bought or built a new house (1%), or changed homeowners' insurance (1%).

In terms of tourism, 6% of Afrikaans-speaking PDMs have stayed in a hotel or guest house or paid for holiday accommodation and 13% have made use of a commercial airline.

"The health sector has also been appealing to this market as 15% of Afrikaans-speaking PDMs have tried to improve their health by taking vitamins or health supplements, 11% have visited specialists, 7% have bought specialised cosmetics or skincare products, and 6% have been to hospital for tests, operations or emergencies," says Bowles.

ROOTS 2010 also revealed that the Afrikaans market enjoys entertainment and attending live shows, with 6% having watched a live sports event and 5% going to theatre or a live show over the past 12 months.

"This market tends to be above average in its support of the services industry, particularly the financial industries. Life insurance, medical aid and car insurance are high on their priority list. Over one third of car instalments and home security contributions come from this language group. Clearly, they are serious about security financially and emotionally," says Bowles.

Other than that, Afrikaans speakers love the good life, just like English, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho and any other speakers. They go to restaurants, make use of take-aways and maybe tend to entertain at home more than others (41% vs 38%).

"Clearly, the bottom-line of companies and marketers that tap into the strength of the lucrative Afrikaans-speaking market by acknowledging its language preference and addressing Afrikaans-speakers in their home language, should benefit handsomely," argues Klerck.

Precisely because of the strength of the Afrikaans-speaking market, gold Pendorring sponsor Ads24 has just launched a national advertising campaign to encourage marketers in South Africa to use Afrikaans as a medium to speak to the hearts and minds of a market that has a healthy disposable income and therefore boasts great spending power.

The campaign, conceptualised and executed by Mortimer Harvey, drives home the message of the efficacy of advertising to the Afrikaans market in Afrikaans in a humorous and entertaining way.

Ads24 CEO Linda Gibson points out that 10,6 million (33%) of South Africans can read or understand Afrikaans. "The Afrikaans market accounts for 28% of South Africa's household spending power and it's certainly worth noting that both local and global research show that people identify more positively with products, services and brands advertised to them in the language in which they think," she reiterates.

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