

Building youth-centric campaigns for Gen Z

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A brand needs to demonstrate how it resonates with the values of young consumers and this requires a youth-centric marketing approach.



Source: Fcha [pexels](#) Gen Z is unapologetic about self-expression

The definition of youth in South Africa is wide, ranging from 15 – 34-year-olds, but within this definition, the experiences are very different.

A Wunderman Thompson SA report profiling the South African youth to understand how they interact with brands and, in particular, study their relationship with financial institutions, shows that the South African youth is not a monolith.

Millennials remember using analogue technologies, like rewinding an audio cassette tape using a pencil and sitting around the TV to catch M-Net's Open Time, while GenZ has grown up in a world where touchscreen camera phones and DSTv Catch Up are the norm.

The report shows that Gen Z knows they have options, which impacts how they perceive and interact with brands.

Resonate with Gen Z's values

Heritage brand companies have used their heritage to capture consumers' attention and highlight products to entice consumers to purchase.

While the Boomer generation of consumers is proud of their loyalty to the heritage brands they associate with, Gen Z is not loyal to brands because of how long they have been around.

Rather they connect with brands based on shared values and what they believe that brand can do for them.

Allow for self-expression and exploration

Compared to the previous generation, who were happy to consume content disseminated to them from media, Gen Z is unapologetic about self-expression.

They are the primary creators of their own content and curate their own cool, rather than wait to be told what is cool by outside influences.

Wunderman Thompson report shows that while it's important for brands to create content for audiences to consume, the brand needs to use that opportunity to provide an experience that allows Gen Z to discover new things.

It reinforced a key insight: Gen Z is not logging on to platforms to engage with brands, they're logging on to explore.

Building campaigns that ask questions and allow the audience to explore and discover the answers - and make their lives better - keeps young audiences engaged.



Gen Z are the hottest new audience

Nadine Lerm 5 May 2022



Youth-centric campaigns

Wunderman Thompson's Telkom team created a campaign that segmented products based on the lifestyle interests of six target audiences within the youth market.

The team did this by understanding that, while data and connectivity are valued by most of South Africa's youth, people have different reasons for logging on.

We used that insight to drive interest with them around our product offerings. What the campaign set up was an experience where young people could go down a path of discovery learning more about their connectivity needs and finding solutions that were relevant to them through Telkom's offerings.

Telkom Varsity Vibe

For a youth brief in 2021, Wunderman Thompson's Absa team built a campaign using influencers creating content that would only live on Tik-Tok.

Many influencers posted videos demonstrating how Absa's student offering 'upgraded' their lifestyle.

This campaign was unique in that we co-created the campaign with young TikTok Influencers and created the opportunity for young people to discover the value of the student account through the content.

Absa Zero Fee Swag

Understanding how young people relate to brands ensures that a strategy and creative work can evolve and resonate with the audience. This evolution toward brands leveraging this generation's penchant for self-expression and exploration through content is here to stay.

Wunderman-Thompson's Team Pulse Strategy team who worked on this report included Lesole Kodisang, Tulisile Mhle, Modjadji Mashatola and Eugene Enslin.

ABOUT BABALWA NYEMBEZI

Babalwa is an award-winning Social Media & Digital Consultant who consistently leads her clients to create work that meaningfully connects with audiences across the African continent. She's young, and unafraid to make her voice heard from telco to tech to the financial sector she has worked across a number of brands as a content strategist.

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