

Get ready for fluid reality and a collapsing conversion funnel in 2018

 By [Nunu Ntshingila](#)

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Our world is moving at a rapid speed, with technology changing the way we behave and how our society operates at a pace that demands agile response from South African brands. By 2020, more people will have mobile phones than running water or electricity at home. And for the first time in history, more people will be connected to the internet than not.



Nunu Ntshingila, regional director of Facebook Africa.

Connectivity is changing Africa, too. Among connected Kenyans, Nigerians and South Africans, our research shows:

- One in five would give up public transportation to maintain their connectivity.
- One in four would give up eating out to maintain their connectivity.
- One in three consider the internet an extension of themselves.

Sitting at the intersection of over 2 billion people and 6 million advertisers, we think the future is brimming with opportunity.

Here are a few of the trends we believe will shape the marketing world in 2018 and beyond as new technologies come of age.

The solely mobile generation

There is a new global generation on the rise, defined not by age (though many are millennials and Gen Z), but the fact that they connect solely through mobile. Facebook data underscores the importance of mobile, with 97% in Sub-Saharan Africa accessing the platform on mobile each month. Now is the moment to get well acquainted with these mobile citizens. They will drive global growth for businesses in Africa and will increasingly shape our world.

Convergent commerce

People's paths to purchase are more complex than ever. But there is also a unifying force across those journeys—the smartphone. Shoppers will use mobile to condense their journeys into a single moment in time – with research from the US highlighting this fact:

- Nearly one in four people in the US use express (1-click) checkout on their phone.
- Mobile-to-mobile conversions are 13% faster than computer-to-computer ones for US retail/ecommerce shoppers.
- US travellers spend 75% less time when booking on mobile than on desktop.

Messaging means m-commerce

By 2020, 80% of smartphone users are projected to be using a mobile messaging app. But we can see people using messaging apps to pave new paths to purchase today. Customer service is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to messaging apps—which are already demonstrating their ability to serve as one-stop shops and m-commerce machines.

Mobile video explosion

The world's appetite for video is undeniable. As we look ahead, we see mobile and millennials fuelling the continued growth of video—especially as global connectivity becomes faster, screens get better and both become more affordable.

Fluid realities

Pokémon Go was perhaps the first big mainstream mixed reality app, but it won't be the last. From gaming to documentary storytelling to [inspiring social good](#), the possibilities for creating empathy, connection and immersive experiences will only grow. And as the lines between augmented reality, mixed reality and virtual reality (VR) blur, people's enthusiasm and expectations for the future seem increasingly clear.

Marketer shifts

Consider these thought-starters as you prepare for future success:

1. **Capitalise** on the collapsing funnel: With shoppers seeking shorter journeys and marketers needing to accelerate conversions, the move towards a condensed path to purchase is a win-win. Look to remove friction from your consumers' journeys. Transform three steps into one-click checkout, [unlock the power of messaging apps](#) to help streamline this, place "Buy" buttons where people might expect to find them and reimagine your ads as ["targeted storefronts."](#)

2. **Build for everyone:** Don't let screen size or network speed dictate the quality of people's interaction with you. For example, consider light mobile sites rather than heavy mobile apps, find creative ways to be visually immersive but data-light and explore how "offline experiences" can help you stay close even when people don't have Wi-Fi.

3. **Catering to context:** People like options and will appreciate the flexibility to engage in a way that suits their needs at any given moment. You could "watch" a video at work by listening to just the audio or alternatively, go "sound off" and simply read closed captions. You could call your hairdresser to make an appointment—or choose to do it silently through [Messenger](#). People will expect experiences to be optimised for efficiency (think emojis or messaging) or immersion (think VR or in-store experiences).

4. **Deliver on people's need for speed with mobile video:** Capture your customer's eye with [video built for mobile](#)—creative that instantly rewards attention and makes its message known within seconds. And as people's mobile viewing patterns evolve, consider planning around three types of experiences: "on the go" (short and snackable), "lean forward" (interactive) and "lean back" (immersive).

5. **Consider "reality planning":** Marketers can prepare for the shift to VR by leveraging [360 photo and video](#) to extend your creative across more channels and to a wider audience than through VR devices alone.

ABOUT NUNU NTSHINGILA

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