

Talking about youth marketing, is not being about the youth

 By [Banele Rewo](#)

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After all the conferences, seminars and talks have been attended, marketing and brand managers have drawn up graphs and scrutinised the numbers on the next sure fire formula to sell to the youth, there is one glaring deficit: Talking about it is not being about it...

Be about it (according to UrbanDictionary.com)

An ethnocentric phrase of African American origin, meaning: 1.) Taking a specific endeavour seriously and putting forth an honest and prudent effort. 2.) A call for a common mindset and elevated standard of professionalism, honour and dedication to a cause or action. 3.) Exhibiting extreme courage and bravery in times of stress or overwhelming odds.

Street cred

The worst kind of individual in any tribe with a common cause or culture is the one person that talks and looks the part, but is not practically committed to the advancement of the group, a fraud. This is the very same position many brands, seminars and conferences find themselves in, with the added detriment of not being aware of their real status amongst the youth. The staple solution has always been to be cool and more cool and more more cool.

Cool is not cool any more, brands need to be credible to be offered the opportunity to be listened to and most importantly assisted by the target market. An outsider can be seen from all the way in their Sandton offices trying to make money from youth culture in the city centres and townships without being about youth culture support. Before you begin earning street credibility you have to understand the youth of South Africa today: They are:

- Taking initiative and responsibility for self-education and capacity building as a solution to breaking down the exclusive barriers of entry established by capitalistic specialised education institutions.
- Applying entrepreneurship to build and sustain an economic youth culture. From education, incubation of concept, funding, product, marketing to retail then throw in a party for good measure, literally host a party for research's sake. These can all be done by a string of companies owned by under-25 year olds with no landline.
- No! They are not anti-brand, they actively seek brand support. They understand commerce and seek a transaction. Fake pro-bono is an insult to their intelligence.

According to Instant Grass International report 2015, there are seven rules to credibility:

- Tribal codes
- Identify and reward
- Relinquish control
- Enhance and support
- Transparency
- Slow adoption
- Feedback

Be a youth brand, tell your story and be about it

In February, I Create We Create, an education development agency, launched the The Business of Creativity Youth Conference, a multi-disciplined development conference that focused on financial and operational best practices in Music, Fashion, Art , Branding and Film and instantly became the largest annual developmental youth conference in Africa. An independent conference entirely created, operated, owned and headlined by established young entrepreneurial creative practitioners actively developing other young people.

Hansa Pilsner, Joe Public and Velocity Afrika identified an opportunity to not market their brands when it comes to youth but to tell their story through the South African youth with South African youth's success narrative. The question then is, how do aforementioned entities sell their product by aligning themselves with this particular initiative, isn't none of their business? It is their business, redirecting CSI spend and sponsorship to an industry relevant education initiative that affords learning opportunities through narratives is the real personality of the brand. Consumers are not stupid they want to see good business through good-to-me-and-my-community business strategies.

A youth brand is a youth brand when it is fabric of the tribe. Brands like Red Bull, and Ballentines are not marketing themselves, instead tell stories through acknowledging and elevating youth success narratives. And creating branded content that markets itself. Amaru Da Costa is the young professional behind the marketing and management of South Africa's number one international DJ export Black Coffee at Soulistic Music. Legend Manqele saved up for a ticket to come to the city of Johannesburg from the KZN fast tracked to Content Producer for Don't Look Down and Urban Brew Studios. Kgomotso Mautloa dropped out of Vega School of Branding and now commands a full service integrated communications agency patronised by SA's top youth culture brands. These are the people that create youth culture economy while engaging tertiary level young people who are getting acquainted with the reality of unemployment after leaving school.

I Create We Create will host the first ICWC: The Business of Branding: Stories Behind South Africa's Successful Youth Owned Brands on Saturday, 27 June 2015 at Instant Grass International, 73 Juta Street, Braamfontein from 10am till 3pm. To maximise engagement and interaction and not just talk only the attendance is capped at 100. For content, branding and sponsorship contact Banele@icreatewecreate.co.za.

ABOUT BANELE REWO

Banele Rewo - Media Entrepreneur, Business Author, and Content Creator focusing on youth entrepreneurship, content marketing and youth mental health in the digital era. Founder of We Are Coming For Everything a group media companies and platforms providing content and digital marketing solutions. For content and all relevant links linktr.ee/Rewo

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