

Wake up, go digital to maximise your opportunities

 [Bylssa Sikiti da Silva](#)

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In developing markets in general and in South Africa in particular, where computer Internet penetration is low, mobile is a proxy of Internet connectivity and is often the first screen, said Rick Joubert of Yonder Mobile Media, speaking at Tony Koenderman's Brainstorm conference in Johannesburg and Cape Town earlier this week.

Joubert said brands should not see mobile only as a stand-alone medium of communication, but it should also be considered as a whole world of marketing opportunities.

"When 70% of SA adults use a mobile phone, it shows that the reach is there and the phones are there, we only lack strategy to exploit it," he said, adding that brands often lacked good understanding of the opportunities available to them in the mobile medium.

"There are a whole lot of people emerging from the lower end of the market to the higher category, and that is your future market. If you don't know that then you are missing the trick," he told delegates.

Is mobile your hero... or...?

Companies should ask themselves if mobile is a hero or a support medium for their brands, and wonder if they have done the easy stuff, Joubert said.

Easy stuff, to Joubert's understanding, comprises among others, a basic mobile presence, building a community around your brand, having a basic distribution of information and a basic self-service.

"Think big and do the right thing for the brand. Extend your thinking that there is a market in the developing world."

Furthermore, it has been established that as the world is changing and brands are changing, new means of production and distribution are emerging. This is according to Fernanda Romano, Euro RSCG global creative director of digital and experiential.

We're citizens of the digital world

Romano said: "Facebook is a new geography in this virtual connected world. We are no longer citizens of Brazil or South Africa but we have become citizens of Facebook and Twitter."

“In these groups we create micro-countries where rules of social relationships (social networks) apply and our pictures are shared among ourselves in the world,” Romano pointed out, perhaps emphasising the importance of using these outlets for an effective distribution of brands.

“Crowdsourcing is the new player in the production world where anybody becomes a producer. YouTube is also a very good platform for crowdsourcing, and most websites have been crowdsourcing their news - this is what we call today citizen journalism.

You can buy what you want online

“We now have different ways to distribute our products and a lot of things we produce are now digitised, meaning you can buy everything you want online.”

Romano also said that major changes in production and distribution can only mean that ways of payment have changed as well, prompting businesses to make available new means for people to transact.

“Google is now the seventh largest brand in the world, but nowhere do you see a banner of Google, let alone a TV or magazine advert of Google. Apple has also grown...

“These companies have understood that as the world, the consumers and the brand change, they have to create customer relationships,” she said, adding that marketing costs must not always be the big chunk of budgets.

“Brands have become more personal because ways of production, distribution and payment have changed, so if you want to sell me something you will have to talk to me personally.

“Yes, we have Internet penetration problems, but you can still hit the reset button and jumpstart the digital revolution.”

This year, Brainstorm was part of The Bookmarks week, which culminated with The Bookmarks Awards evening on Thursday, 12 November 2009, at Movida in Johannesburg.

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ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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