

Keep it simple... making a great mobisite

 By [Dr KF Lai](#)

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The number of cellphone connections is set to increase with cheaper handsets, better wireless technology and new initiatives being forged between carriers and web companies, such as the most recently announced collaboration between MTN and Opera Software.

These new developments, which aim to provide South African users with a faster and more affordable mobile web experience, will provide added impetus for mobile sites in South Africa to become more engaging and user-friendly.

At BuzzCity, we get to see a many mobile sites on a daily basis, particularly because there are thousands of publisher partner sites on our ad network. Here are my top five picks of some great mobisites in SA that have remained successful because of their design and user-friendly features.



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1. tropikaisland.mobi

This is one of the most fun mobile sites I've come across. Besides using African celebrities as a draw, the site also has an 'interactive' element where users can request an action from their celebrity of choice by typing an action in the space provided. After which, a short video will be shown of the celebrity performing the requested action (or something similar to it).

Users also stand a chance to win R1 million in a lucky draw. All these features, coupled with easy navigation and 'less text', make this a great website.

2. www.kfchowzat.mobi

Combining two popular pastimes of South Africans - cricket and eating fried chicken - proved to be a winning success formula for this site. Users were able to play a mini cricket game with other users and compare their score by keying in their mobile number.

Another highlight was the use of SA cricket star AB de Villiers to front the site, which would have been a hit with cricket fans.

To keep users coming back for more games, users would have to key in a 'unique code' provided in a KFC meal.

Apart from the minimal text and large font used, which is essential for a good mobisite, the 'call to action' feature and appeal to cricket fans made this site a winner.

3. m.ackermans.co.za

Ackermans is a SA value retailer and stockists of affordable family clothing, footwear, textiles and cellular. Although it may look rather simple, the site fulfils its objective in getting the information across to the user (Where we are? What we have? etc), with as little clutter and text as possible.

Because of its simple design and no clutter, users are able to browse the store's clothing catalogue easily and even find out what the weather is like in their location by entering their mobile number, which is perfect for people on the

go.

And, if a user is interested in getting updates on new deals or offers on their mobile, they can also sign up under the 'My Profile' section.

4. shopritesa.mobi

Like the earlier example, Shoprite, which is SA's largest supermarket chain, uses the simple approach on its mobile site to draw users.

The first thing a consumer needs to do, after reaching Shoprite's mobile landing page, is select which province he or she is from. This gets the user through the front door and enables the system to share the most relevant promotions with the user. It also provides Shoprite with information about where the clicks are coming from.

In addition to the online catalogue of promotions, the site also encourages consumers to register for SMS updates and refer friends.

5. mobitoptv.mobi

TopTV: Although this site is not as 'simple' as the previous ones mentioned earlier, what I liked about it was how its content was condensed to suit the mobile audience, such as its TV Guide and programme content.

Furthermore, users can also sign up on the mobile site for TopTV's satellite service by simply keying in their name, mobile number and email address. Users can also download 'free' content such as ringtones and wallpapers on their mobile.

While the above mobisties target different audiences and promote different products, the three factors that remain consistent in them are:

- **Being information focused**
- **Having relevance and usability**
- **Entertainment**

Despite phones becoming 'smarter' and having more functions, we must remember that there will always be a limit to the size of the mobile phone screen in order for one to fit into a pocket.

Therefore, the above factors to having a good mobile site will always remain constant as long as mobile phones exist.

ABOUT DR KF LAI

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