

# Bringing bricks and clicks together

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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It's not known how online channels can influence the movement of products off retailers' shelves. What is known is the amount of product that moves off a retailer's shelf. What if the two could be married so that the initial source of influence was known? It would be revolutionary, and it's almost here.

"It is what we mean by "bricks & clicks", and it would allow retailers to more accurately drive the right customer in-store. For Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) it means being able to get a measureable return on investment. So we could tell Unilever not only that half a million stock was driven off the shelves, by these segments and for these periods, but we could link that transaction with its online source," explains Gil Sperling, who together with Daniel Levy and Ryan Silberman, make up Popimedia.

The company has already been testing chunks of such a system and six weeks ago presented to Facebook in San Francisco, where they were amazed, calling it a world-first.

"Ad tech for digital advertising is the new frontier and brands that leverage technology will be successful," says Sperling, who does not have an advertising background, but is a qualified engineer. Co-founder, Silberman and Levy are the same, with qualifications in engineering and law respectively.



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While the agency is the largest buyer of social media inventory on the African continent, Sperling says they are not a media company. "Our background has meant that we approach media differently. We are not here to sell media. We are here to build platforms to solve business problems and we do this using technology," he emphasises.

For them advertising is a tool, among many other tools that provide them with a solution. Their success lies in their secret formula; a combination of relevance, innovation and entrepreneurship. "If you do not innovate with relevance than you are not going to survive." The approach has clearly worked as Popimedia is Facebook's only marketing partner in Africa, and one of only 40 that exist in the world. Recently it was also recognised as one of only three Facebook Marketing Partners in the world with the ability to integrate Facebook Lead Ads into CRM.

This is ironic considering that when Sperling and Silberman founded Popimedia in 2007, they had to go to Ireland to get the attention of the social media giant. Their start was humbling says Sperling. "After I graduated from Wits I worked at a consulting company for a while. It was during the days of Farmville and Ryan asked me to build an app for Facebook that would rank your salary anonymously around your friends. We thought it was a cool thing and expected the millions to roll in, but after we launched it nothing much happened."

It was an important lesson for the two, but it did not put them off and when they were approached to build a beacon product for Facebook they took it on. The result was so good that they sold it to agencies and then proceeded to build another system.

"We are those weird kids on the block, always looking to innovate and solve problems and that is what we will continue to do."

Earlier this year Popimedia was purchased by Publicis in a deal said to be worth more than R350m.

## ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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