

Are marketers missing out on the micro-moment opportunity? (Part 1)



By [Bianca Quinn-Diavastos](#)

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Most South African marketers understand that smartphones and other mobile devices are radically reshaping their customers' behaviour by giving them access to personalised services and information wherever they are. But are we doing enough to capitalise on the real-time opportunities that mobile phones give us to interact with our customers at the exact moment and place of their need?

My feeling is that we are not. South African marketers have quite some way to go before we are able to fully capitalise on a trend that Google calls "micro-moments" - the numerous small intent-driven moments in a customer journey that shape a consumer's decision-making process.



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Micro-moments are a product of how smartphones allow us to search for information, evaluate it, and act on it, whenever and wherever we have a need. For example, if you're out shopping and see a special on a smart TV, you'll compare prices and look for product reviews there and then.

While you're at the mall, you might decide to treat the family to lunch. If you're not familiar with the restaurants, you could look up location, menus, prices and reviews before choosing one. As these examples show, our smartphones allow us to take action when and where we want - we can learn, find, or buy something from our phones without needing to go into a store or use a desktop.

Making decisions on the go

According to Google's international research this behaviour is increasingly becoming commonplace. Some 82% of smartphone users turn to their phones to influence a purchase decision while in a store. And 90% of smartphone users have used their phone to do research on products or services while they are "out and about."

As marketers, this means we have huge opportunities to speak to people in the "micro-moments" that are an integral part of their customer journey. But to succeed in doing so, we need to ensure that we meet consumers' demand for relevance, since their expectations are high and their patience is limited.

What's more, their loyalty in the micro-moment is to their immediate need, not to a brand or product. According to Google, 65% of smartphone users agree that when conducting a search on their smartphones, they look for the most relevant information regardless of the company providing the information. That means marketers must be truly customer-focused in their messaging if they are to secure the customer's interest and attention.

SA marketers missing the gap

Among South African brands, few are able to truly capture and leverage the geographic, time-based and contextual information they need to make micro-moments work for them. While many marketers are using mobile apps and remarketing techniques, they are not leveraging geographical location data effectively to capture micro-moment opportunities at the right time and place.

The biggest challenges are time, money and skills - the technology is mature and accessible. Local marketers need to start looking at why micro-moments are so important, how they work, and where the opportunities lie for return on investment. By understanding their customers' intent and their context, marketers can deliver them with services and messages that address their immediate needs.

Given the potential profitability of embracing micro-moments properly, mobile marketing needs to form a core and integrated part of any digital strategy, rather than being seen as a specialist stand-alone solution. In part two of this article, I'll look at some practical ways and tactics that local marketers can use to harness micro-moments during the customer journey.

ABOUT BIANCA QUINN-DIAVASTOS

Bianca Quinn-Diavastos is the managing director of the digital marketing agency Jetweb - "Digital on Demand". She has worked in media and publishing since 2006, and has gained a diverse range of experience spanning the marketing and strategic digital industries.

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