# Don't miss the mark with location-powered marketing

By Shaun Rosen                                              13 Jul 2017

Before real-world location data became available from smartphones, marketers could only chart consumers' online behaviour - whether on desktop or mobile - and use those limited insights to shape their strategies. But now, marketers can understand how consumers travel through the real world, too.



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South Africa's 16.1 million smartphone users represent the highest smartphone adoption rate (37%) and data usage (alongside Kenya, Egypt and Nigeria) on the African continent. The place is brimming with potential for marketers who want to capitalise on the possibilities of location data.

The ever-increasing number of South Africans that carry devices with them are continuously creating a wealth of insight, from where they like to shop to the places they pass by on their morning commute. This data helps marketers target the right audience with the right ad at the right time, by building a holistic view of their audiences' real-world behaviour.

There's a thin line between attracting vast numbers of new customers, and wasting media budget whilst delivering irrelevant ads to the masses, and it's a question of accuracy. Inaccurate data could lead a Johannesburg retailer to miss the mark by targeting consumers in Cape Town, for example. But, by implementing best practice in data accuracy, that retailer could make sure they only target shoppers in Johannesburg with timely, relevant ads.

With location-powered marketing, accuracy is everything, so I have put together these three steps that marketers can take to ensure they only use high-quality, accurate location data for successful campaigns.

## 1. Quality over quantity

More data isn't necessarily better. Brands often end up wasting valuable spend through no fault of their own if they use inaccurate data, and much of the data that is traded today is either accidentally corrupted or deliberately fraudulent. South Africa in particular has a severe ad fraud problem. However, brands can mitigate this risk by carefully choosing a tech partner that takes this inaccurate data seriously. This can be shown by the providers commitment to cleaning data, only using highly accurate data, and bringing in multiple data sources to avoid sample bias.

## 2. Multiple data sources

Location data is always anonymised, but it still reveals a lot about audiences, such as where they like to go and what they like to do. What makes it even more valuable is combining it with other data sources. If a luxury hotel in the Seychelles was looking to build an audience segment, for instance, they might consider targeting frequent travellers based in Cape Town who have previously visited 5-star accommodation in the Indian Ocean. But the use of multiple data sources can shrink that segment down even further. The brand could combine search with location data to ensure the brand only delivers ads to affluent travellers who have previously holidayed in the Indian Ocean **and** recently browsed high-end Seychelles hotels.

## 3. Third-party validation

If marketers ensure they are layering high-quality data from a range of different sources, they are well on their way to ensuring their campaigns are based exclusively on high-quality location data. But there is the option of one last layer of protection: bringing in a third-party validator to assess campaign data accuracy. The quality and availability of third-party location data validation is still in it's infancy, however, by requesting the service for every campaign and choosing tech partners that have already established working relationships with third-party validators, the industry will improve its offering to meet a growing demand.

Analysing, layering and validating location data is but preparation for every marketer's ultimate goal: highly effective, precise targeting. Accurate location data, and the real-world location information it provides, can be combined with insights from desktop and mobile to power compelling, targeted advertising. And, with its estimated 22 million smartphone users by 2021, the South African market holds a lot of promise for brands that want to build strong, personalised relationships with consumers. There are endless location-based consumer insights out there for the marketers ready to find them – and South Africa is the best place on the continent to do it.

ABOUT SHAUN ROSEN

Shaun Rosen is managing director and founder of MobiClicks.
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