

# Facebook disrupts retail

 By Leigh Andrews

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Facebook's not just for socialising with friends and family, it's also a cutting-edge way for marketers to communicate with consumers in the most personal way possible. Here's how...

Kate Sayre, global head of consumer goods strategy at Facebook, participated in the digital disruptors' panel at the Consumer Goods Forum in Cape Town this Thursday, along with Vivienne Ming, co-founder of Socos and Michael Fertik, executive founder and chairman of Reputation.com.



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With the retail industry in crisis, it's time to accept that digital is now integral to businesses moving forward. While the session centred on what you can do to ensure your business makes the most of the digital world and swims the distance, as one of the biggest disruptors out there, Sayre shared exclusive insights for the South African market.

Globally, on average people spend 50 minutes a day on Facebook, Instagram and/or Messenger. When we shift focus to mobile that correlates to one in five minutes spent on Facebook and Instagram in the United States.



Kate Sayre, global head of consumer goods strategy at Facebook.

With this as a backdrop, there's no doubt that digital is a crucial aspect of all businesses, particularly when it comes to the realm of marketing. More and more consumers getting information from the digital space and the increasing shift to mobile, particularly to source information on brands and communicate with friends and family on a personal level, as well as in deciding what to buy. This is even more striking when you consider that the biggest shift of momentum has all taken place in the past three years alone. It's a rapid shift and the retail and marketing industries need to focus on these new consumer needs.

Consumer goods are created by brands that are not sold directly – instead, they're transactions conducted through the wall of a retail intermediary. With new technological advances they can now message customers directly and personalise that messaging, as well as track consumer response like never before with almost instant feedback.

## Personal marketing, segment by segment

Sayre explains that Facebook is the perfect platform in which to do so, especially as companies start to roll-out personal marketing at scale. Most important is the need to go back to basics in terms of who you're targeting, focusing on the unique selling point and identifying specific market segments more closely, such as with geographic segmentation, which means you can now tailor your storytelling specifically to both your loyal regular users and the new consumer you'd like to attract.

This insight hints at how we can still achieve traditional marketing ideals in new ways, such as increasing consumer adoption of the brand throughout the customer's purchase journey, with closer reach as they make that purchase decision.

"Digital disruption is a good thing for business", Sayre asserts. Consumers have long embraced digital innovation, which means it may be difficult for industry to catch up and adopt new ways of interacting with them – this puts those early adopters in a good position as they can match their messaging for the mobile medium. "Think about it, the phone is the most personal device imaginable, so of course the consumer expects messaging sent to him or her on this platform to be tailored."

## **The difference between data and insights...**

If that's the expectation, best your brand hops on trends as soon as possible, or you stand to lose out on customer interaction like never before, as the shift can't be made overnight. The challenge is to understand the difference between those reams of data and what's actually actionable insight – you'll need to sift through that data to find the insights that'll make a difference.

Putting this into practice, Facebook's own consumer goods strategy then is based on the reach of the platform, and the fact that 1.6bn people are monthly active Facebookers. They aim to use their position as a win-win for all, by offering value to advertisers as they can achieve their objectives like never before due to reach if they provide a relevant message, and creating a deeper connection through that enhanced customer experience.

Little wonder that Sayre's most looking forward to learning how other global companies are managing their consumer goods strategies at the Summit, particularly as it's being held in South Africa this year, one of the world's foremost growth markets. [Click here](#) for more on the Consumer Goods Forum.

## **ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS**

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