

Engagement comes from having good content

By [Joe Otin](#)

12 Jun 2017

This year's edition of the PAMRO All Africa Media Research Conference addresses the theme 'Content is king, and he is one of us'.



Joe Otin, President of PAMRO.

The claim that “content is king” has been making the rounds ever since Bill Gates predicted the role that content would play in the developing internet, back in 1996. And of course such an entrenched idea has attracted plenty of rejoinders and counter claims for the superiority of context, promotion or viewer impressions. Nevertheless, when it comes to media measurement, content’s royal status arguably holds sway.

While in the past, we measured advertising primarily through reach and GRP, today engagement has become a key factor. In other words, media research is moving from a focus on “what” to looking at “how”. The “what” approach measured how many people a campaign reached, how many times, and how one could sustain a campaign over time. Now the focus is shifting to the qualitative, asking “how is my campaign engaging our target audience?”

This approach considers factors such as how long people spend with given content and what they do with it once they’ve seen it: do they share it or discard it? Are they spending more or less time with it? Are they becoming advocates of the brand and its content?



Source: PAMRO

Engagement generally comes out of having good content. So, to get great results from your advertising and communications projects, you have to focus on the developing memorable and shareable content.

What makes for good content? First of all, it is focused on the customer, the target audience. We need to put the target audience at the front and centre of all business and communications strategies. Once you understand who the customer is and what their needs are, you can create content that will be aligned to their aspirations, their needs at a given time, and their psychological framework.

A lot of the content that is coming to us in Africa is international. This didn’t start with the internet; television, radio and even

newspapers have always featured a great deal of material coming from other parts of the world, especially the West.

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However, it has become increasingly clear that content needs to be local – this engages audiences much more than international content, because it addresses things happening around the audience, things that are current, things that have true emotional meaning for them. Just as this holds for traditional media, so it is with digital: while the vast majority of content is international, local content is increasingly coming to the fore. The king is not somebody who comes from distant lands, but is someone who has risen to the pinnacle from our midst.

With regard to media measurement, what we're seeing coming up now is a lot more conversation around technology and passive approaches. Unlike declared measurement, where people essentially fill out questionnaires to indicate what they've been watching or what kind of content they've been consuming, passive measurement is conducted without the intervention of a respondent.

It's likely that this year's edition of PAMRO will feature a lot more conversation around passive measurement, to truly understand how people are engaging with content, what kind of content and genres are truly engaging audiences, how that content is being distributed, and what kind of platforms it's being consumed from.

We're seeing a great convergence of the needs of media houses, advertising agencies, media research companies and clients, with regard to considering things from the same perspective and understanding one another's needs.

So, talking about “content being king” means that we all understand that this is what it's all about, and begin to focus time, energy and resources on developing really good content that is going to have an impact across the different audiences throughout the continent.

**The 18th annual PAMRO conference will take place from 27-30 August 2017 at the Vineyard Hotel in Cape Town, South Africa. To register as a delegate at the conference and to book accommodation, to join PAMRO, or for more information, please visit: <http://pamro.org/upcoming-events/18th-pamro-conference-27st-august-to-30th-august-2017-vineyard-hotel-cape-town-south-africa/>.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joe Otin is President of PAMRO.

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