

Connecting the dots, connecting Africa

 By Cheryl Reddy

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Now more than ever, it is critical that communication agencies explore new ways of expanding their networks and footprints across the African continent - not only to better serve local clients, but also internationals eager to expand their operations in Africa.



In line with our agency's philosophy of 'guiding your growth', we've recognised the importance of extending our reach in select markets on the continent, to satisfy our clients' growing needs.

Growing communication channels in Africa

Technological innovations and greater digital adoption have driven companies to commit more resources to meet the demands and possibilities that come with expanding into Africa and taking Africa to the world. Business landscape assessments continue to show growth opportunities and a strong desire for diversified offerings, strategic insights and brand guidance.

For communications agencies, one can't simply expect to run communications into African markets from South Africa. There needs to be a deep understanding of cultural and contextual trends and nuances in those respective markets, there are language barriers to consider as well as relationships and media networks that on the ground presence and profile will provide.

Connect the dots, connect the world

Courtesy of growing smartphone penetration and a youthful population, online activities and social media use are projected to continue enjoying notable growth across the African continent when compared with other regions, where internet use has plateaued in recent years.

Countless surveys and research insights such as the [Ornico report](#) indicate that communicators are doubling down on online and social media, with increased focus over the next 12 months on analytic and content-driven strategies as has been the norm in previous years.



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The professionalisation of social media is well underway, which is why taking up the option of hiring agencies and communicators solely for social media is gaining popularity. The reality is that businesses are choosing to outsource digital specialisation and expertise, with the African market being no different.

The advantages are self-evident, outsourcing mitigates the potential reputational risks that come with implementing off-the-cuff social media strategies and delegating this responsibility liberates business leads from having to go through mountains of data, freeing up essential time that can be spent focusing on core operations.

Social media is enabling businesses to reach a targeted audience with minimal advertising spend and gain detailed audience insights, and unless brands' target markets are extremely niche, their audiences are likely to be on Instagram, waiting to be engaged.

Further, to optimise the platform for the benefit of B2B marketing, Instagram can be used to interact with and enlighten existing and potential customers with short-form, yet highly visual, content. Marketers would do well to embrace the mantra of quality over quantity by posting unique and authentic content.



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Joining the dots in Africa to bring Africa to the world starts with appreciating that Africa is not a country, but rather a continent made up of more than 50 sovereign states, each with its unique cultural trends and business practices.

It is through network growth and on-the-ground offices and/or partnerships that communicators and the clientele they represent will be able to build a strong base on the continent first, which then has the potential to be prosperous on a global scale. There are no shortcuts to this, and brand custodians must also be well informed, rooted in an acute understanding of the client, its brand identity, the target audience and the purpose of a campaign.

There is no doubt that we live in interesting times. The decisions we make during this transitional moment of digital adoption may unlock new opportunities beyond our wildest imagination. As Africans, this is a critical moment, a chance to engage and exchange with the world on equal footing once more. Africa is ready to meet the world, the real question is, is your business ready and equipped to do the same?

ABOUT CHERYL REDDY

Cheryl Reddy is CEO at Eclipse Communications. and is responsible for the agency's strategic direction and to continuously achieve its mandate of people, client and agency growth across the full spectrum of services and business units in the agency's four offices in South Africa.

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