

# Consumers' perception surprises in brand survey

Consumers' perceptions on what makes a brand "hot" or "cool" come from a host of sources and how they rate your brand depends on what they've heard, read or from and different interactions with the brand. "Top brands are built over time, but there is so much jostling for consumers' attention that you daren't blink or you could loose favour," states Ruth Golembo, MD of Lange Strategic Communications, who also says the current winners in the *Sunday Times*/Markinor Top Brands annual review holds some surprises.

Her group handles brand building and communications for a broad range of corporate and consumer brands, many of which were rated ahead of competitors in the current Markinor survey.

## Perception

"Interestingly the dominant brands in the annual brand survey are not always the biggest spenders in terms of marketing and advertising, but those which consumers perceive to be leading edge in terms of service and innovation.

"BP, for which Lange has handled communications through the Africa region for the past four years, was again voted tops in its sector in the annual *Sunday Times*/Markinor Brands and Branding survey.

"BP was ranked well ahead of all its competitors by consumers. Their perception of BP is due to a combination of factors and influencers including above-the-line advertising and how they feel when they transact on the forecourt.

"But overall, despite the fact that BP has a smaller national footprint to some of the other petroleum companies - its brand cues continue to find favour with the majority of South Africans."

Another brand handled by the consultancy, Levi's Jeans, moved up the ranks in the youth market ahead of major competitors like Adidas and Nike.

## Coollest brand

The brand, now 153 years old, is now the coolest brand according to 16 - 19 year old South Africans polled in the Top Brands Survey. Levi's Jeans was ranked overall as the third coolest brand among all age groups after giants Coca-Cola and Nike, showing the Levi's brand is clearly pushing the right buttons with consumers. The *Sunday Times* Top Brands supplement also recognised the Levi's brand for its contribution to community upliftment.

"Levi's has been singularly focused on its commitment to raising HIV/Aids awareness and money for those living with the diseases through it sponsorship of local music. It doesn't advertise this in traditional media, but through promotion of music

for a wide range of SA artists.

"It has also launched an entire branded initiative called Levi's Red for Life. This initiative has become deeply embedded in the local DNA of the brand."

Golembo says PR builds brands like no other marketing discipline - it has the ability to get consumers to 'believe' by showing proof points of brand values and corporate ethos whereas advertising can sometimes be seen as 'telling or selling' a brand.

Experiential marketing - where consumers physically interact with a brand - is a sure-fire way of connecting them to your brand but if the experience is not top notch it can do more bad than good.

"It's no longer about having the right product at the right place, best price and clever promotion but all about consumer perception about brands when it comes to sales and business success," she concludes.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>