

Youth marketing techniques to target the real SA youth market

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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We often have to look back at the path we've travelled in order to see the road ahead more clearly. Here's what I've learned about youth marketing over the past few months and what I predict we'll see in 2019.



Leigh Andrews, editor-in-chief of marketing and media at Bizcommunity.

The UCT Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing's Youth Report 2018 report, launched at the tail-end of 2018, offered a wealth of insights from researchers, economists and consumer behaviourists with a key focus on what life's really like for South African youth.

Unfortunately, many marketers get the snapshot wrong. That snowballs badly if their brands keep trying to appeal to a market that's either just not there, not interested or not able to afford their product.

I summarised the outtakes in five key findings at the time. #ICYMI...



#YouthReport2018: Smarter-than-you-think millennial coping strategies and life hacks

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#YouthReport2018: Being a teenager in 2018, more pressure than peer pressure

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#YouthReport2018: The SA jobseeker's catch-22, micro-privileges and the rise of 'adulting'

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#YouthReport2018: Generation jobless and the high inequality economy

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#YouthReport2018: Who are those 'SA millennials' you're marketing to?

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So in essence, the youth market is not what most of us imagine.

Where does this leave us in 2019?

We do need to go back to the drawing board in some cases, but we can also learn from 2018's learnings. Most importantly:

The real South African youth market

We need to be more clear in who it is that we're targeting than 'millennials' – this is an exceptionally broad age cohort, covering everyone now in their twenties and thirties, doing their best at adulting, with so many cultural differences in between.

If it's teenaged high school scholars and early tertiary students you're looking to target, it's time to research Gen Z, known locally as the 'Born Frees', born from 1995 to 2010, or the school-aged Gen Alphas.



Mommy's little cyborg: Meet Generation Alpha

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But cohort confusion aside, just consider the brand impact of the following, if you were simply targeting 'millennials':

“ Millennials Don't Want to Smell Like Celebs Anymore. <https://t.co/bmObl4lVHj> [pic.twitter.com/KebG6q88qD](https://t.co/KebG6q88qD)— TFL (@TheFashionLaw) [December 18, 2018](#) ”

“ Analysis: The reason millennials aren't spending as much money is they don't have any <https://t.co/zvA0asa9fa>—

The Washington Post (@washingtonpost) [December 17, 2018](#) ”

“ Millions of Millennials Won't be Able to Retire at 65 Based on Savings <https://t.co/6ZrOwfW6z>
pic.twitter.com/nWsX9oZUkx— Lisa Baker (@LovelyLisaBaker) [December 19, 2018](#) ”

Not exactly a promising picture.

Then there's the continual shift in popularity and effectiveness of marketing platforms to consider:

“ imagine being tasked to do all these while getting overworked/underpaid and getting told, "let's work harder" WHILE blaming millennials for being lazy um ok baby boomers !!! pic.twitter.com/f25dgcCN0r— Czari 💎 Dy (@CzariDy) [December 18, 2018](#) ”

It's a wonder any of us stick at it, year after year. But it's not all doom and gloom.

It's the variations in the norm that matter. Give them what they want, make it something that goes beyond the necessary and also delights and entertains, and they will come. Here's how to do so...

Keeping our focus further afield, as those global youth marketing trends set to slowly trickle onto our shores, we should note that [Zephoria](#) expects a lift in temporary pop-up stores and experiences.

It's an unexpected way to experiment with layout and interact with consumers who may have otherwise skipped entering your established store.

Aye aye, AI

They've also marked the unprecedented rise of online competitive gaming or esports and suggest that brands should strategise “now how they can use esports to their advantage, whether through sponsorships or strategic advertising.” This ties into the AI trend – what trend review would be complete without it?

Interestingly, [Zephoria](#) suggests the following:

“ One industry that is taking full advantage of technology and augmented reality in their marketing strategies is beauty brands. Using social media filters to allow users to experiment with different beauty products or using interactive product ads and features are just a couple examples of how brands are now using augmented reality to market to millennials and centennials. ”

So much new tech, so much new media, and so many new consumers. For best results, SA marketers will need to first fine-tune their understanding of who they are truly marketing to before making a brave move and trying something different in 2019.

That's the only way to succeed in youth marketing of the future.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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