

Context - the key to unlocking emerging market potential

By  Cas Dreijer

18 May 2017

South Africa tends to fall into the same style of activations - especially when looking at emerging markets.

Instead of using activations as a fishing line to get the wallets of consumers, brands need to 'get' their lives and their context and partner with them in that. We need to change the conversation.



Image supplied by Salt.

Emerging market consumers are generally far more open to engaging brands in an experiential space than more affluent consumers are, but too often, brands think that singing, dancing and giving away t-shirts gives them an invitation into the homes of consumers. Those days are over. People are not actually buying into the brands, they're just buying into the event, which means that the activations don't necessarily result in sales. We need to derive insight from understanding the context of consumers and become partners with a heart connection to them – not takers looking for a way into their wallets.

1. A better tomorrow

Given the restrictive background that emerging consumers have come from, brands stand to benefit when they understand the impact that increased economic opportunities has on building a better future for generations to come. *It is arguably their core focus and it drives the majority of their decisions.*

Dubai, the 'gem in the desert,' is built on a similar system of economic oppression that prevails in South Africa. The city is rife with examples of corporations that exploit the desperation of its migrant workforce to fulfil its ambitions. There are two brilliant case studies of work done by Coca-Cola there, which both demonstrate the brand understanding the dynamics, the sacrifice and the reality of the people in that context – that the migrant workforce is singularly motivated by the wellbeing of their families. They found simple yet creative ways to meet a need and catch the heart of the consumer in a memorable way. The brand successfully built a bridge between workers and their loved ones, showed emerging consumers that it shares their heart for the next generation, and enabled the out-working of their affections. Note that these are two separate campaigns targeting the same market, both using the insights of the context to make a very real connection.

Watch the campaign videos below:

"Hello Happiness" – connecting migrant workers to their loved ones

"Take Home Happiness" – providing more space to take luggage home to their families

2. Point of pain

I had the pleasure of working on a wonderful community upliftment campaign for Grand-Pa that demonstrated a *brand*

pushing in towards the pain to make an impact and win over consumers. Grand-Pa wanted to do something to build brand love within the community but we understood that in order to truly succeed, they needed to look at more than just beautification of the surroundings. They needed to relieve communal headaches – which happens to be perfect brand positioning.

We identified a broad range communal headaches, but decided to target unemployment and litter pollution for a campaign that sought to educate, involve and uplift communities.

First, we educated communities about the impact of their litter and pollution, then coupled this with their need to generate income by rewarding community members for collecting litter. By getting people in the community involved, they took ownership of the problem, thus creating sustainability. 3-month targets were set for communities and if reached, they would benefit through properties being regenerated, veggie gardens being planted, schools being improved, and more.

Watch the campaign video below:

When we can make a real difference in a real way that benefits both consumers and our clients, that's the sweet spot.

When we push in to the pain we change the shape of the conversation. We reposition ourselves in partnership with consumers and thereby form a new relationship. This approach will only ever work if it's genuine. *There might be the odd quick win here or there – but if you're not willing to dig in over an extended period of time, you're unlikely to see extensive benefits.*

3. Unlock passion

What happens when you understand context, use existing passion, and think very, very laterally?

What's truly amazing about this campaign to me personally is the way in which it harnessed a powerful existing force – the passion of Sport Recife fans – and channelled this to favour an essential cause which, on the surface, was completely unrelated.

The campaign had a massive impact on the medical landscape. The Institute of Integrated Medicine in Pernambuco average 7 heart transplants a year. In 2013 they completed 28 successful transplants. More than 66,000 people signed up as organ donors over the course of the campaign. It doesn't get much better than this.

In summary

Talk to consumers' hearts. Talk to their realities. Add value to their existence. Be a giver, not a taker. Build legacy with them... not for them. Let's change the conversation.

ABOUT CAS DREIJER

Heading up Be Salt - an awesome Experiential agency that is set on doing things a bit differently.
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