

The power of purpose-led campaigns - Does your brand have a backbone?

By  Danette Breitenbach

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One of three themes discussed by a panel at the first-ever Bookmarks Finalists Showcase was the power of purpose-led campaigns.



Image supplied. The Bookmarks Finalists Showcase panel with IAB South Africa CEO Razia Pillay (middle) and host, Accenture Song's Mushambi Mutuma (end right). The panelists are: (l to r): Executive creative director at Ogilvy South Africa - Alex Goldberg, EssenceMediacom SA social media director - Luzuko Tena, head of group digital communications Sasol - MJ Khan, senior manager: digital at SuperSport - Rikashni Rangasamy

Held yesterday at The Tryst in Woodlands Office Park, in Sandton, the Bookmarks Finalists Showcase hosted panel discussions led by Accenture Song's Mushambi Mutuma, an author, speaker and tech leader.

Each theme was opened with a screening of some of this year's finalists' content followed by a panel discussion and Q&A session.

The panelists included:

- EssenceMediacom SA social media director - Luzuko Tena
- Executive creative director at Ogilvy South Africa - Alex Goldberg
- Head of group digital communications, Sasol - MJ Khan
- Senior manager: digital, SuperSport - Rikashni Rangasamy.

Purpose-led with business results

The panelists all agreed that any campaign, whether purpose-led or not, needs to have business results. This was a point also made earlier by Khensani Nobanda, Bookmarks jury president and Nedbank group executive for marketing & corporate affairs, who spoke to the importance of the awards and presented on trends from Cannes.

She says, "Purpose is important but how do we link purpose to profit?"



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Authentic, not opportunistic

Purpose-led campaigns need to be sustainable and not opportunistic.

“If brands practice purpose-led campaigns then these need to be authentic. It’s not always about sales, but the campaign should have some reference back to the business,” says Khan.

A purpose narrative needs to come from the inside to the external. “For example, a gender campaign is not authentic if your board has no women on it.”

The other part of purpose is to ask yourself if it is valuable for your community (keeping in mind that communities directly engage with brands today).

Rangasamy adds to this. “Brand owners and their agencies need to have difficult conversations before the work is created so both sides understand why the brand is getting involved in the conversation. If you cannot answer the why, then you should not go any further.”

The brand's backbone

“If a brand has a backbone then that is its point of reference,” says Tena.

If a brand forces an issue, then it is just “painting” and work just for the sake of it. Brands need to take note of the context they operate in as well. He says Coca-Cola has a very well-defined backbone and the result is that its campaigns can work anywhere in the world.



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Purpose with longevity

Goldberg talks about purpose with longevity, but that a brand needs to draw a line in the sand sometimes.

Such as Nike's advertising campaign featuring the former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick.

"While some people hated Nike and said they would never buy the brand (and burnt their Nikes), others admired it. So much so that their sales went up." (The company reported a 10% jump in income to \$847m.)

"And all their campaigns permeate this. Inclusivity and diversity are its DNA," he adds.

Chapters of one story

He says that with digital a brand can create many different chapters of a story. But the same narrative must be carried through the different channels.

"It is easy to jump onto a trend, but a brand needs to do what is right for it. Ask what the different touchpoints are and let it drive your strategy."

The other two panel discussions were on Tech Smart: Emerging Technology in Real World Case Studies and The Evolving Publishing Landscape.

The Bookmark Awards ceremony takes place tonight at Vodacom Dome, Vodaworld.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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