

Assegai entries indicate greater integration of direct techniques

The 2013 Assegai Integrated Marketing Awards will be held on 21 November at Vodaworld and early indications from organisers, Direct Marketing Association of South Africa (DMA), are that there is stiff competition, with 242 entries in the finals.



"Entry numbers continue to grow year on year as interactive and direct marketing uptake is increasing rapidly," explains Warren Moss, deputy chairman of the DMA and board member responsible for the Assegai Awards. "A key reason for this is the dissolving of 'the line'.

We are seeing greater integration of direct techniques and measurable strategies being used in multiple marketing areas. We are experiencing focused efforts by brand owners to use every brand contact and intervention to build data, be this through drive to web or

mobisite, through data forms completed at activations; through driving response and participation off social media platforms to the more traditional direct channels

Direct marketing has evolved

"In terms of this year's entries, there is consistent development in the quality of the work, with many of this year's campaigns demonstrating tangible, measurable ROI coupled with outstanding creativity. In terms of entry numbers across categories, this is a significant indication of how direct marketing has evolved over the years, most notably the growth in digital channels although there is a continued partnering with the traditional direct channels to drive response and engagement. By far the most hotly contested categories are those of social media and traditional multiple channel marketing which combines at least three media channels to drive results. But, if I have to single out one overriding objective across all campaigns, it's all about gathering and leveraging data."

The South African Post Office (SAPO) is the presenting sponsor of the Assegai Awards for the seventh consecutive year. Its head of mail business, Janras Kotsi, adds, "The rules and disciplines of direct marketing work exceptionally well in direct mail, online and social media marketing in terms of targeting, engagement, loyalty and so on. Interactive, direct marketing, social media and online marketing have one key factor in common to be successful - relevance. Consumers want the right message at the right time and the rise of digital marketing has given impetus to database-driven one-on-one communication. It is one of the reasons why SAPO has invested heavily into new electronic platforms as part of its service offering."

Direct mail shows resurgence

"Globally there has been a shift in direct mail offerings towards more fully integrated marketing. SAPO is currently experiencing a resurgence of direct mail. This may be attributed to the financial meltdown that has seen marketers compelled to account for the measurable ROI they deliver, but I also believe that this has to do with the concerns around the Protection of Personal Information bill (POPI), which has significant implications for e-mail and SMS marketing.

"Direct mail accounts for 25% of SAPO's letter volumes and more than R500 million in revenue, although there has been a steady decrease in mail volumes over the past few years with the exponential growth of digital media. Traditionally, its role has been restricted to distributing mail pieces, but with technological advancements and the integration of communication, it has diversified its offerings to provide full communication services through the creation of a special division - ePostal - which is dedicated to digital channels and specialises in electronic direct marketing channels such as SMS and email."

SAPO understands the role of direct mail in this new integrated and interactive environment. As lead sponsor of the Assegai Awards this is a perfect research platform to understand what the industry needs are. "SAPO is geared to take advantage of the convergence and integration of new media into advertisers' campaigns, add new value with solutions that facilitate the use of their channel offerings, and use technology wisely and efficiently to that end," he concludes.

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