

# Future of brands in today's market multidimensional shifting trends

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The future of brands, including the creation and communication of a brand's true meaning to consumers is, according to independent marketing and branding strategist Dr. Thomas Oosthuizen, being affected by informed consumers, media proliferation making it difficult to pinpoint a given consumer, an explosion in social media, a global shift in consumption, and brand parity in most categories.

Oosthuizen, made these remarks at this week's [Brand Summit](#) hosted by CompuBrand and Microsoft Advertising, also cited increasing difficulty to establish a competitive advantage for a brand and the questioning of marketing return on investment (ROI) in this list.

"When reaching a consumer becomes a challenge in this age, where media continues to grow exponentially makes, it's even more difficult to establish a differentiation. In the past it was relatively easy, you placed an ad in a Superbowl match and it was seen by almost 15 000 people, but now things have changed," he said.

"How do you differentiate yourself in the current short-term insurance market? Will a consumer even listen to what you say?"

## Traditional media now less successful

Continuing to unpack its theory, Oosthuizen said traditional media are now less successful, and its share of exposure is in decline.

There are four reasons for this, he said, citing cost of media and sophistication of consumers, which makes breaking through the competitive clutter difficult and costly.

"The impact of traditional marketing is declining, and in some markets and product or service categories like financial services, the number of breakthrough messages is less than 10 in 100," he revealed, citing a Millward Brown study.

However, despite these volatile conditions, advertising is not dead - as some want the world to believe.

"The true fact of the matter is that people who are making money today are the ones who are innovative. Some stuff companies such as Procter & Gamble are doing in some parts of the world, like in India, are truly amazing," said Oosthuizen.

## BRICS countries might help the West

The global economic shift is good for brands, he said, adding that BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) might help the West in many aspects.

As innovation becomes the magic word in today's increasingly challenging business environment, Oosthuizen predicted that brands will create their own media, and define themselves in the 'utility' space.

Said Oosthuizen, "Emerging markets have an incredible belief in innovation, believe me. I travel a lot across Africa and Asia, and I can tell you there is a lot going on out there in terms of innovation.

"The more functional buying becomes, the more entertaining the retail environment needs to be. Brand proliferation is extreme, leading to an explosion in choice. Most industries are saturated with brands. The boundaries between product and service categories are converging.

"These factors make it difficult for any given brand to gain a significant advantage over others. In some industries, it may have become impossible to establish a competitive advantage unless a brand fundamentally changes the rules of competition.

"The result is that all brands are seen as about the same. Consumers increasingly see brands within the same product or services class the same.

"If so, why pay more for a given one?"

## ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA: @SIKITIMEDIA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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