

How SA brands are approaching social media

By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

24 Oct 2018

World Wide Worx's [Arthur Goldstuck's](#) SA social media landscape report was presented at Marketing Mix's Social Media Landscape Briefing 2019 last week.



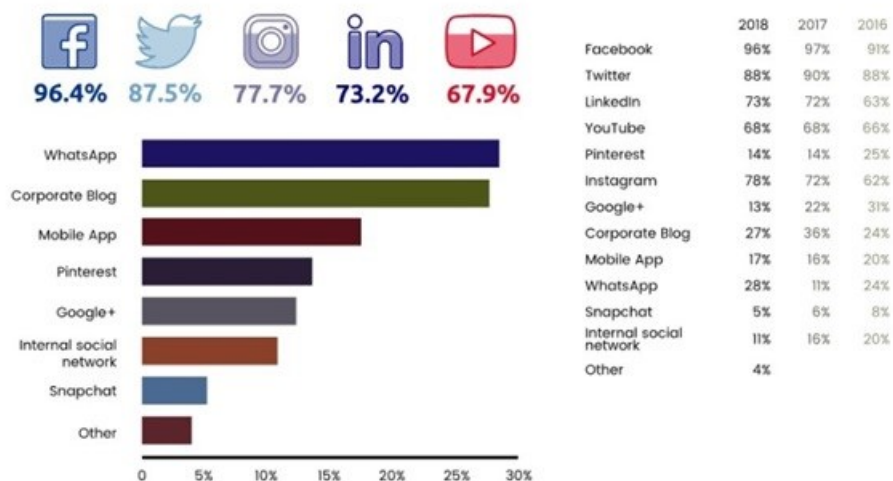
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The first part of the presentation focused on how South African brands were approaching social media and was based on a survey Ornico conducted among 100-120 major brands.

What social media platforms brands are using in SA

First, we looked at what social media brands are using in this country. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube came up tops but Goldstuck said that Youtube still lagged and mentioned that it hasn't shown growth in the last three years. It remains constant between the 66% and 68% level.

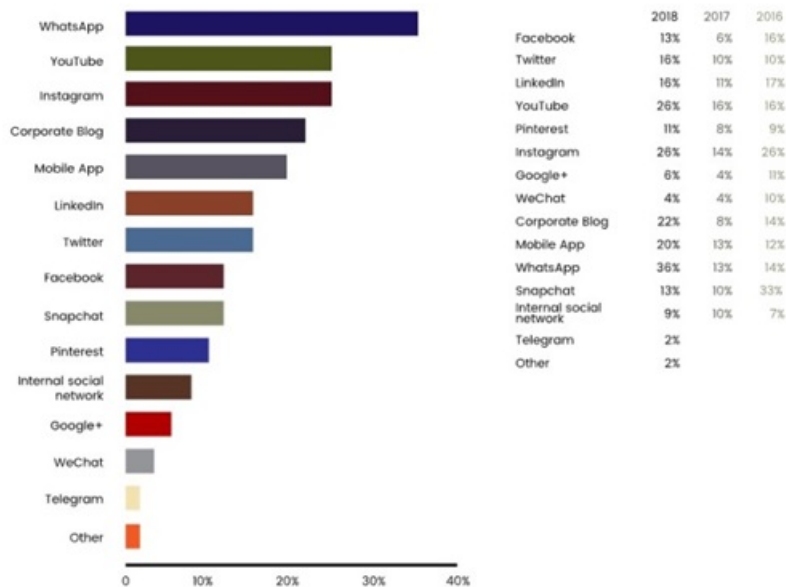
Social in the biggest brands



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Facebook is almost completely saturated, so growth is expected there and Twitter also remains fairly stable between 88% and 90%. It is Instagram that is really attracting attention. Goldstuck said the platform grew over the past few years from 62% to 72% to 78%. He said they actually expected to see much stronger growth from LinkedIn but in fact it remained exactly the same as last year.

Adding in 2019



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Which platforms are brands going to introduce or engage in this year? WhatsApp will see the biggest growth. Last year 13% said they will embrace WhatsApp in the coming year and 36% actually did, which is a threefold increase in the intention to use WhatsApp. This is based on the fact that WhatsApp is making a stronger play for advertising, and especially with Facebook pushing the revenue side of both WhatsApp and Instagram. Plus they are making tools available for marketers, for advertisers and for brands.



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He said what is important to understand is how different platforms work better for different purposes.

“ Those who want to use social media for marketing, see Facebook as their go-to platform. Those who want to use it for public relations – and this really stands out – use Instagram. Facebook actually works across all the intention – advertising, social media, marketing, but interestingly Instagram leads above Facebook for public relations. ”



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What brands are spending on social media

Primary adspend focus is Facebook by far, Goldstuck said. "Facebook is the way to reach the mass market. In fact, we are finding that as a market research vehicle, Facebook Messenger has become probably the most effective medium and platform in this country because Facebook Lite is zero-rated by some of the networks."



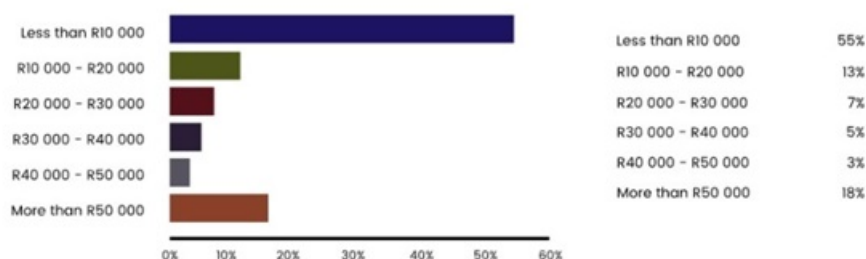
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Facebook Messenger is, therefore, free to use. He explains that this is important for a vast proportion of South Africans, who otherwise wouldn't be able to use data because they can't afford it. So the research shows that Facebook Messenger, in particular, has now penetrated even deep rural areas and Goldstuck said that they are now doing their most effective research, especially for financial institutions, using research bots on Facebook Messenger. So one can understand why so much energy is going to Facebook.

Monthly spend on social media



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Interesting though is the high proportion of brands that are only dabbling in social media when you look at their budgets. Goldstuck said more than half of brands are spending less than R10,000. In other words, they are not taking it seriously.

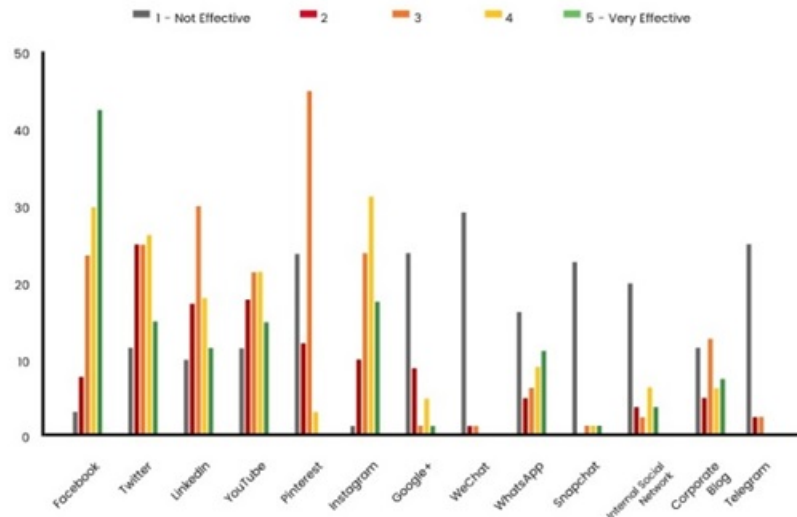
“ If your budget is less than R10,000, it means that social media is a side issue for your company. ”

Just about 1 in 5, in fact 31% is spending more than R40,000 a month on social media, taking it very seriously. This is an indicator that social media as an advertising medium in South Africa, is still in its infancy. Yet, so much spend is already going to social media, to search and likes, and away from traditional media. So you can imagine a further intake once social media and Facebook really kicks in as an advertising medium in this country – what impact it can have on traditional media and their ad revenue.

Goldstuck said they also looked at where live streaming has increased in the past year and 36% of brands said that they will increase their spend on social media live streaming. "That is far higher than the number of brands that are spending more than R30,000 a month. So it's not spending much on it. We can expect as the results come in, and we see positive results from live streaming, that budgets are likely to increase significantly."

How effective are brands in using social media

How effective are you? (If using)



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Above, you can see that the green bar (for very effective) rose significantly above the other ratings for Facebook. Goldstuck said this means that brands are good at using social media that people themselves are using as well.

So when those who are using it as part of their communication or marketing strategies themselves use it and themselves understand it, they are far more effective at it. Those that don't use it are in fact less effective. Goldstuck said prime examples are WeChat and SnapChat. "SnapChat in particular, you can see that the kids are using it but certainly not the people at the brands themselves, and the result is that they are completely ineffective in using it."

Strategic plans and programmatic advertising

In terms of strategic plans, the research indicated a slight fall in social media analytics. Most areas are fairly similar but it did show that social influencer marketing will increase slightly, almost replacing social media analytics, although the two should go hand-in-hand. But what's really interesting here is the extent which data analytics tools have fallen significantly in use from 47% to 29% of brands. Goldstuck said that what is going to rise indefinitely is this:

The one is **competitor analysis** because it's now possible to get deep insights into what your competitors are doing with regards to social media, and then highly significant is **cross-media platforms**, from only 5% to 42%. This speaks to the fact that many brands don't see social media as a cross-platform proposition, and because they are only focussed on one area, they are far less ineffectual.

The research also showed that those who are using programmatic advertising tools saw it improving their ROI. Goldstuck said this statistic shows that programmatic is a significant weapon in the social media armoury.



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What technology are brands spending money on?

40% of brands are playing with chatbots. "Not necessarily doing it very well," he said, "because those who have dealt with chatbots know that it is actually more effective to use a search engine to get to the same answer." The second biggest one is cloud applications - 38% of brands are spending money on this, which is fairly high considering that cloud is still a new proposition.



Don't talk to me, talk to my chatbot

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“ But what some brands are starting to wake up to is that they can use the tools and micro-services and applications available in the cloud to coordinate campaigns, to pull together data and analyse data in the cloud without having to get hold of their assistants. This is massive – with Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud, all rapidly increasing the extent of tools available to any kind of business. But certainly, for marketers and certainly for data analysis and for major communications campaigns, the cloud is going to be a massive differentiator. ”

Only a quarter of brands are using artificial intelligence at the moment but Goldstuck said those are the brands that appreciate the fact that for the rest of these new technologies to be effective AI has to be a component of it. Of course, AI is still very complex and the skills are in very short supply and therefore very expensive.



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He said that's why we don't see a wholesale uptake of AI yet and therefore the other tools that are made more effective by AI also therefore lag. But in the next two to three years, you are probably going to find that those brands that are using these tools are going to have a massive competitive edge over those who aren't using it.

Stay tuned for my coverage of the second part of Arthur Goldstuck's research that will focus on the social media user. His presentation formed part of the research that was shared at the Social Media Landscape Briefing 2019 in Cape Town last week.

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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