

SA Social Media Landscape 2017



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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SOCIAL MEDIA INDISPENSABLE TO SA MARKETERS IN 2017

In 2017, social media will be an indispensable tool for South African marketers and politicians, artists and activists, reporters and media personalities alike.

According to the 2017 edition of the SA Social Media Landscape, by World Wide Worx and Ornico, the next year will see the use of as many as four social media platforms becoming pervasive as marketing tools. The study included a survey of 116 major South African brands, making for a representative sample of the country's major brands.

Already, in 2016, 91% of these brands were using Facebook, 88% were active on Twitter, and 66% were on YouTube. LinkedIn slipped from 70% to 63%, as brands struggled to get to grips with its more serious nature. Meanwhile, Instagram increased sharply from 42% to 62% of brands making use of it.

When asked what additional platforms they would embrace in 2017, no less than 26% said they would use Instagram, while YouTube was set to attract a further 16%. This will see the image-sharing and video-sharing networks join the top table currently occupied by Facebook and Twitter.

The study delves extensively into the effectiveness of the various platforms for brands, and the budgetary intentions of the brands.

THE HASHTAG COMES TO THE FORE

On a consumer level, growth for most networks has slowed down, but engagement by users has intensified.

In the past year, the role of social media in the public debate has moved from the periphery to the heart of activism, symbolised by the fact that one of the most high-profile campaigns of the year, #FeesMustFall, was partly defined by its Twitter hashtag. Now, almost no campaign is mounted or cause embraced without a hashtag. This is not to trivialise the campaigns, but rather to emphasise the core role played by social media in the public life of South Africa.

In 2016, no single social network has redefined the social landscape, in the way that Instagram and YouTube did in the previous two years. Nevertheless, the fact that Instagram continued to grow at a high rate – by 32% up to 3.5-million users – and that YouTube has seen a massive increase in engagement with brands, tells us that the social media is hardly stagnating. Rather, it is maturing into a more stable and measurable environment that can be leveraged more effectively by brands.

Facebook is now used by 14-million South Africans, while YouTube has moved firmly into second place with 8.74-million users, well outpacing Twitter's slower rise to 7.7-million. LinkedIn maintains its energetic rise, now standing at 5.5-million.

These are the key findings from the South African Social Media Landscape 2017 study, based on access to consumer data from major social networks and a corporate survey conducted among more than a hundred of South Africa's leading brands.

One of the most significant sub-trends uncovered is that Facebook, with 14-million users, now has 10-million, or 85% of its users, using mobile devices. This is significantly up from or 77 per cent the year before. While a significant number of these users are also accessing Facebook on computers and tablets, it is clear that the mobile phone has become the primary form of accessing social media.

SOCIAL STAR OF 2016 BUILT CAREER ON SOCIAL

One of the most effective individual efforts in leveraging social media has earned Cassper Nyovest the accolade of South Africa's Social Star of 2016. This is an award presented annually in conjunction with the release of the South African Social Media Landscape study, based on either superlative performance or on being a significant role model in social media achievement.

In 2014 it went to Nadav Ossendrywer, founder of Latest Sightings, for having built the biggest YouTube channel in SA while still at school. In 2015 it went to Trevor Noah, who built the most powerful cross-platform social media following yet in SA before heading off to the USA to host The Daily Show.

Cassper Nyovest Nyovest's social media numbers are impressive, with 1-million Instagram followers, 639 000 Twitter followers, and almost 2-million Likes on Facebook. However, it is the manner in which he has used social media as a career-building platform that has earned him the Social Star accolade.

In an interview with Arthur Goldstuck in April 2016, he commented: "I have always been addicted to social media, starting when it was just Mxit, then Facebook, then Twitter. I've always been that guy on social media, and that's how we built our brand. Before my music started playing on radio, I already had a big following on social media and it's really empowered me."

He had already shown that he could fill a massive entertainment venue through leveraging a hashtag: on 31 October 2015, the #FillUpTheDome campaign attracted 20 000 people to the TicketPro Dome. At the time of the completion of this report, his follow-up event on 29 October 2016, #FillUpOrlandoStadium, was on track to sell as many as 40 000 tickets. He also co-branded a smartphone launched by AG Mobile, called the #Hashtag.

In combination, these activities are regarded by the researchers of this report as the most dramatic set of social media interventions in SA for the past year.



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The full report is available for purchase at a cost of R18 000 (single site license) excluding VAT from World Wide Worx. To place an order, either request an order form to be mailed electronically, or send company name and address, VAT registration number, and name and e-mail address of person ordering and person who should be billed, to World Wide Worx by e-mail on info@worldwideworx.com. Please include a purchase order number where required.

Students who wish to obtain access to the research should enquire through the libraries of acquisition departments of their universities or learning institutions.

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