

GovComms

A newsletter for government and public sector communicators

December 2014

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SA gears for digital migration



Deputy Minister of Communications Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams interacts with government communicators and media specialists during a stakeholder engagement session.

By More Matshediso (DoC)

It is anticipated that in less than a year from now South Africa will have gone from an analogue to digital broadcasting environment under the guidance of the new Department of Communications.

This "digital migration" will see South Africa switching to digital as a means of broadcasting TV and radio signals. Before the 1990s, sound and video broadcasts used analogue signals but this old technology's days are numbered.

Government communicators and media houses are being urged to assist in raising public awareness as the migration has to be implemented by June 2015.

While analogue technology had worked well

since the 1990s, it needed a lot of space on the frequency spectrum. Both television and radio are allocated spectrum in each band, with different and unique frequency allocated for each radio and TV service. Analogue therefore is not a very efficient way of using spectrum to deliver multi-channel services.

With digital broadcasting, sound, video, text and still images can be transmitted using a technology that allows for information to be compressed, thus saving radio spectrum.

The result is better quality sound and visuals on both radio and TV. Digital migration will see television capable of carrying more channels and access to TV being improved for people,



communications
Department:
Communications
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



no matter where they are in the country.

During stakeholder engagement sessions held recently, Deputy Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams reminded government communicators and media specialists that they have to remain relevant in order to survive in the communication space.

As one of the leaders in the communication space in the country she has been travelling to different provinces to meet with government communicators and the media. One of her messages is that the time has come for both media specialists and government communicators to review their roles in developing communities.

She says the digital migration policy is awaiting final approval from Parliament, and that all stakeholders affected by it should be ready and familiarise themselves with it.

"We, the people in the communication space, need to understand the advantages and importance of digital migration first, so that we will be able to explain it to the public. We must all be ready, so that when the programme is rolled out, we will be able to campaign for it and migrate the society."

Once the policy is approved, it will be rolled out via the SABC, the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa), Brand SA and the Films and Publication Board, all of which are Department of Communications entities.

The Deputy Minister said the department will have to ensure that the SABC and electronic community media stop using old analogue equipment and lead the migration to digital broadcasting.

Communicators need to take into account that they work and live in the digital era, and must be aware that everything that they do needs to be futuristic and speak to the needs of the digital world, said the Deputy Minister.

She said the reality is that not everyone would have migrated to the digital world by then, but at least the programme should be underway before the deadline.

The Deputy Minister pointed out that digital migration would help build an informed society, which is one of the department's targets.

"We want every citizen of the country to be informed, so that they will be able to advise government on how to improve the services it provides to them. That way, people can begin to see the value of their taxes," she said.

She challenged communication specialists to ensure that people who are outside of the communication space understand why communicators exist.

Speaking to members of the media gathered in Kimberley recently, she said it was also important for journalists to familiarise themselves with government programmes, policies and documents.

"We will never achieve our goal if we don't work together. We should complement each other. It cannot be correct that government thinks media is its enemy. Media is a platform that we [government] need to utilise to give information to our people," she said.

She said in reporting the media needed to instil hope in the ordinary citizens of the country rather than divide people.

"We should make it a point that we contribute positively towards moving South Africa forward," said the Deputy Minister.



Community media

She said the concept of community media was a government initiative and that community media had to make sure that its content remain relevant to readers and listeners, and that it continues to play a role in developing and informing the public.

"Do we pride ourselves [media] in allocating 70 per cent to playing music and only 30 per cent to content in our community radio stations?" she asked her audience.

She also asked members of the media to consider what they prioritised as scoops in the news, and look at how it helped in developing communities. She said the community was more interested in stories that could better their lives than in gossip and allegations.

"People want to know when their houses are going to be built; if their children are getting better education ... a girl in matric wants to know if there are any funding opportunities available for her to further her studies," she added.

Members of the media who met with the Deputy Minister were given a platform to ask questions and raise their concerns regarding the state of the media in the province, as well as challenges they experienced in working with government.

Currently, there are seven community radio stations in five district municipalities in the Northern Cape.

Members of the media told the Deputy Minister that while the Northern Cape was the largest province, it had a small, scattered population.

They said the imbalance between space and population made it difficult for them to reach certain parts of the province and to accommodate all the languages spoken there.

The South African government is on Ello

*By Sulaiman Philip

Social media is democracy in action, and government is quickly catching on to its cool factor – and its ability to build personal relationships between citizens and what has always been perceived as a monolithic, out-of-touch structure. Social media has its pitfalls, but getting up close and personal with the electorate outweighs these.

Ello is the coolest party on the internet. Hailed by fans as the anti-Facebook, the creators describe it as a “simple, beautiful, and ad-free social network created by a small group of artists and designers”.

If Facebook is the all-access, rowdy, boisterous cheap seats, Ello is the velvet-roped VIP section where the cool kids make themselves heard over the rattle of pearls of artistic wisdom. It is a safe, commercial-free space, designed by hipsters for hipsters. It is by invite only: you have to be asked to join, or you can send in a request and stand in line (at one point they were getting 50 000 requests an hour).

The South African government has an Ello page

Aslam Levy, the Director of Social Media at the Department of Communications (DoC), contends it is hardly unusual, and should not be surprising. “We track usage trends on social media. There has been a surge in the 45 - 55 demographic on Facebook; that’s a group we want to reach. The flipside, of course, is teens drop off Facebook. Youth and youth unemployment are issues we are trying to deal with so we need to know where they go. So we have a presence on Ello, on Twitter, on Instagram, and on MXit.”

Social media platforms are always organising data about their users; and access to this



Communications Deputy Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams and Aslam Levy, DoC's Director of Social Media, interacting with the public on Digital Day.

data makes it easier for governments to do what they need to do. The South African government has embraced digital media because it wants to change the way it talks to its citizens and residents. Once upon a time there was the message, and the government's need to get that message out. It chose a medium and spread government information and messages. It was a straight line without an opportunity to ask questions or seek clarity.

That this approach is changing grew out of a constant complaint from the country's electorate – elected officials and ministers appear just before the elections, only to disappear again straight afterwards. Levy explains how social media can counter this: “Ministers can't visit every town in the country, but social media allows them to have a conversation with any citizen who wants to take part”.

Recently the Deputy Minister of Communications, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, conducted a Twitter chat. There were 93 active users but her responses were seen by half a million people on Twitter.

The problems

A driver of this change has been the use of social media by members of the cabinet. They regard social media as a link to the public and their profile helps the message filter through the ranks. They understand social media as a platform to bypass traditional media. “[Sports] Minister Mbalula is a good example of that. His interactions, actually, reinforce the fact that an interaction on social media is with a real person, and not just another attempt to pass on a message,” says Levy.



The benefits

A huge benefit for the government is the cost-effectiveness of using social media to get out its message in the grand scheme of things. But there are non-financial considerations and benefits as well. These include building relationships with citizens and allowing for real-time response to concerns. Being on social media platforms also allows the government

to track and deal with frustrations.

“What social media does is make for flatter government and removing the hierarchical structure that citizens have been forced to deal with. Social media removes the layers between a citizen and a minister, creating real engagement,” Levy says.

Yet there is a downside to using social platforms of which the government is wary, he counsels. “When you are dependent on free social media platforms you don’t own your presence. You don’t own the content you create.”

The South African Government has a presence on various social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, MXit and Ello. All accounts are aimed at providing relevant information to citizens.

This heralds a new era in the government’s engagement with its citizens. From this comfort with social media has grown government’s desire to develop apps and other mobile sites to help get its message out.

“The biggest concern we have is creating a uniform presence on platforms. How do we allow differentiation without diluting the message? People looking for government information want to know the information we are putting out is credible and authoritative. This is an issue we struggle with every day.”

What makes the job easier for Levy and the government is that social media is already integrated into the fabric of South Africa’s noisy democracy.

“We may be loud, and angry and proud, but at the end of the day we embrace the joy of living in this democracy,” he points out.

***Sulaiman Philip is a content producer at Brand SA.**

Vuk’uzenzele goes digital

By: Andile Cele (DoC)

Keeping up with current digital trends, the Department of Communications (DoC) has launched the Vuk’uzenzele mobile app that allows users to access Vuk’uzenzele newspaper on a smartphone, tablet and other mobile devices.

The app was launched recently at the annual GovTech conference in Durban and allows the user to view all Vuk’uzenzele newspaper editions and download these editions onto mobile devices.

During a presentation on app, Deputy Director-General for Content Processing and Dissemination at the DoC, Harold Maloka, stressed the importance of utilising all available platforms to keep the public informed.

“We have decided to enter the space of mobile applications. The first one we have is a government newspaper called Vuk’uzenzele. We have created a mobile app for it,” he said.

Maloka noted that the mobile app would be cost effective and would have a wider reach.

“As you might be aware, the Minister of Finance said that we are running out of funds and therefore we are going to cut the communications budget. That came as a devastating element but then we had to think of other platforms that we can use to be able to reach and more and more people.

“Social media has allowed government to have cost effective, efficient two-way conversation with citizens,” he added.

A mobile app is designed to run on smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices, which means that Vuk’uzenzele will be accessible to any person who has these devices.

Vuk’uzenzele newspaper is printed in all 11 official languages and distributed to 1.7 million readers.

The user will be able to view all Vuk’uzenzele newspaper editions and if they choose to, they can download these editions onto their mobile devices.



The Vuk’uzenzele app is available on Google Play Store and Apple Store for download.

Community radio is growing

*By Allison Cooper

The outdated perception that community radio isn't effective when it comes to reaching consumers and communities on the ground will lead to many media buyers – and their clients – being left behind if they don't start understanding the value of an advertising medium that speaks directly to the consumers they are trying to reach.

"Community radio is definitely growing in South Africa, although off a very small base and with a pretty slow uptake," says Trish Guilford, Media Director at Magnetic Connection, which is a close-knit collaboration of complementary media industry skills.

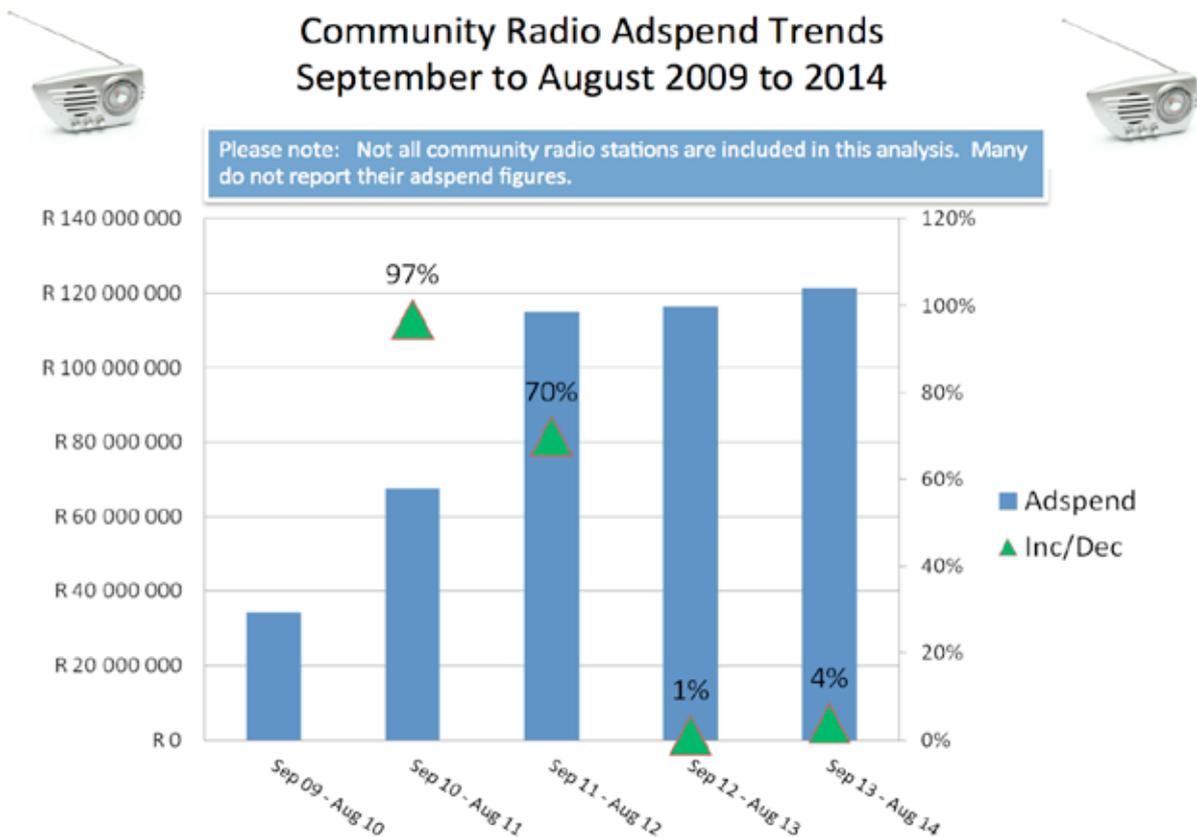
She refers to the graph (below) which shows the ad spend increase for community radio over the past five years. "Whilst the graph has its flaws as not all community radio stations submit and record their ad spend, the big

players such as The Media Connection do. It's therefore a pretty good indication that there is an increase in support," she says.

"The graph represents the period September to August, but there's always an increase in ad spend in the last few months of the year and with ad spend growing year-on-year, this year's pre-Christmas advertising will push these figures up quite a bit."

According to the South African Audience Research Foundation's August 2014 Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAMS), community radio listenership grew from 8,2 million listeners in May 2014 to 8,7 million in August. This is a significant increase from the 3,1 million community radio listeners in 2000.

According to Virginia Hollis, Director of Magnetic Connection, community radio is a viable advertising plat-



form. However, “the problem is that it is not ‘sold’, nor is there any decent research saying who the audience is. You cannot rely on RAMS data because the sample sizes are not big enough, and even with the proposed new RAMS the samples will never be big enough to give you a reasonable understanding of just how sizeable the audiences really are. One of the best tests is to see what kind of response you get from promotions and listener events.”

Guilford agrees. “These radio stations are not always well sold and the likes of the RAMS research does not put the community stations in a favourable light as very small audiences are shown. However, community radio is very specific listening. I, for example, love MixFM and the station’s initiatives and interaction with local people.”

Judy Milne is Chief Executive Officer of The Media Connection, which is one of South Africa’s community radio advertising specialists and a strategic partner to all media marketers and strategists that need to reach the ‘super’ masses and major spenders in the living standards measure (LSM) 4-7 and 8-10 income brackets. Milne agrees with Guilford.

“With 217 community radio stations, across all nine of South Africa’s provinces, advertisers have easy access to all population groups because the stations cover niche geographical areas, common interests and various languages, genders and ages. As a result, advertising campaigns can be targeted to a specific community or LSM income bracket,” she says.

Jozi FM, for example, has the sole aim of pioneering new broadcasting practices for a democratic South Africa and contributing to the growth and development of Soweto and surrounding areas. It first went on air on 1 August 1995 and currently has 466 000 loyal listeners, making it the biggest community radio station in South Africa in terms of listenership (RAMS August 2014).

The other nine top community radio stations in the country (RAMS August 2014) are:

- Radio Tygerberg - 320 000 listeners
- Unitra - 287 000 listeners
- Radio Zibonele - 279 000 listeners
- Alfred Nzo - 271 000 listeners
- Inkonjane FM - 266 000 listeners
- Voice of Tembisa - 206 000 listeners
- Izwi loMzansi - 180 000 listeners
- Sekhukhune - 178 000 listeners
- Mafikeng Community Radio - 175 000 listeners
- and Eden FM - 167 000 listeners

“Community radio stations have always had a remarkably loyal listenership. At one point it was estimated that the average community radio listener only listened to 1.1 radio stations. This is because these stations speak directly to their listeners, in their home language, about pertinent issues which directly affect their lives. Each station has a specific community built around it, whether it be music or religion that brings listeners together,” says Milne.

“In addition, many community stations are run by volunteers from the community and they become ‘mini celebs’ within their own community, ensuring audience engagement,” she adds.

Community radio’s solid listenership base, with disposable income and buying power in a specific geographical area, ensures an advertising audience that’s primed for targeted marketing. “These consumers make informed choices with regard to the products they want to purchase or the services that they want to make use of. It’s a very large target audience that’s not being tapped effectively by many marketers,” says Milne.

Community radio is a viable advertising platform

Chris Botha, group managing director of The MediaShop, says that community radio offers advertisers a unique opportunity to interact and engage with smaller microcosms of their consumers. “The medium really does represent the fabric of the society it serves. The flexibility these stations offer means a lot to marketers and advertisers alike. They have massive challenges though. Budgets are tighter than ever and the default stations with big audiences (regional and national commercial stations) will always take preference.”

Milne believes that the fairly low advertising rates offered by community radio and the fact that advertisers have very little wastage as they are specifically talking to their target market – when compared to commercial radio – make community radio a viable advertising platform.

Guilford agrees. “I have used community stations for a couple of the clients that I have worked with. It is great to push specific areas, where clients want to do activations or run special events in a specific area. Scorpion Legal Protection,



for example, uses this avenue successfully for branch openings."

The Scorpion Legal Protection brand activations are organised and run by The Brand Connection, which is The Media Connection's brand activation arm. According to Simon Milne, operations director at The Brand Connection, "the use of community radio also enables brands to interact with the community on the ground and can provide marketers with extra mileage in the community radio sphere by using branded vehicles to take on-air messages directly to the consumer's door."

For example, live music and entertainers and popular DJs can cross live to a community radio station while an on-the-ground promotion captures consumer attention at taxi ranks or shopping malls.

"This results in a powerful call-to-action that sees consumers flocking to events due to the high level of publicity that the radio station and The Brand Connection's Promobiles create. In very successful cases, stores are said to have sold out of stock before the event is even complete," says Milne.

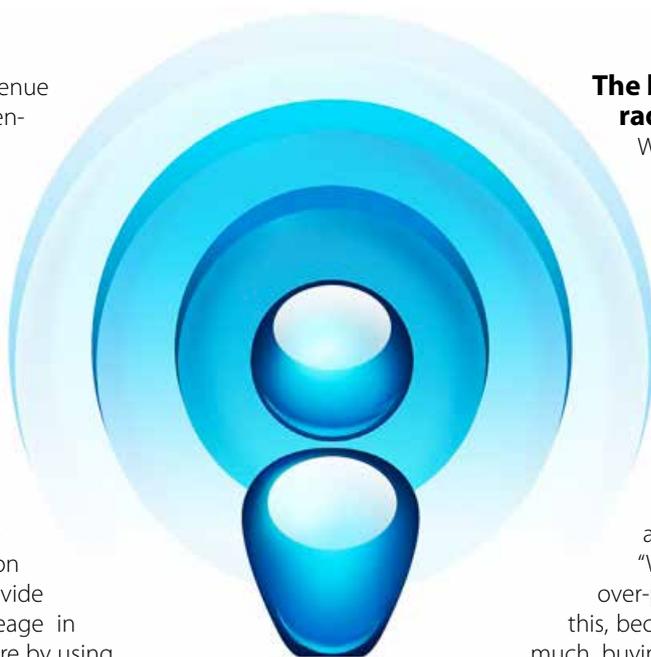
A prime example is the activations that the company has conducted for Scorpion Legal Protection to meet its client's objective of getting its agents to sign people up for its legal insurance products.

These activations include a professional, product-trained MC; professional entertainer; sound system; management of the venues and branded material; and an interview, per activation, on community radio to bring the brand to life on the airwaves and interact with community members on the ground.

"Over 23 activations have been conducted since January 2014, in different areas, with over 13 000 consumers signing up for one of Scorpion's legal policies.

Over 2 000 consumers have signed up for Scorpion's funeral cover and the company has recruited over 200 new agents, thus ensuring job creation at the same time. In essence, our media platform is all about engaging consumers so that brands are kept top-of-mind," says Simon Milne.

Guilford cites Nedbank, a client she has worked with for the past three months, as another successful community radio case study. "Nedbank was the first of the big banking groups to utilise this platform and it continues to use it as it speaks to a very viable market for them. They understand that this touch point builds brand loyalty," she says.



The benefits of community radio

When it comes to the benefits of community radio advertising, Hollis says that advertisers can talk to people in a very specific area and often people who fall into a very specific demographic segment. "It is real geo-targeting and you can be message-specific, with special offers or prices, etc. If you couple this with community newspapers and out-of-home advertising, you have a very powerful media solution for that target area," she says.

"What you have to be careful of is over-pricing when you do a combo like this, because if you collectively charge too much, buying larger regional or national commercial media will be more cost-effective," she adds.

According to Guilford, community radio is hugely cost-effective as their rates are not set on the traditional 'big scale/huge listenership' models. "Community radio stations are hungry for content and are a lot more flexible, which offers clients the perfect opportunity for testing content," she says.

"Geo-targeting is a huge factor when clients have limited budget and want to get real results. In addition, the numbers are measurable if there are mechanisms in place and there are real returns on investments."

Judy Milne cites the synergy between community radio and social media as another benefit. Community radio stations and their respective DJs are launching their own Facebook pages, Twitter feeds and even mobi sites to interact and further engage with their listeners. "It's all about calling listeners to action and giving them a reason to interact with the station and their advertising clients," she says.

"The more listeners that enter competitions with our partner community radio stations, the more profiling The Media Connection is able to do. This results in loyal consumers and touchpoints for brands," she adds.

Technology such as SMS dashboards enable DJs to run competitions, receive song requests or dedications, run polls and take comments from listeners, and has also ensured that community radio keeps up with the times. "This technology, whilst fairly new to some of the community stations, greatly increases their professionalism and performance, bringing quality and intimacy to listeners, which in turn benefits advertisers," Judy Milne confirms.

Satellite broadcasting is another innovation. The Media Connection also offers brands the opportunity to make use of its central broadcasting studio, equipped with satellite broadcasting equipment that can broadcast live to stations around the country. "Our clients are able to reach a very large number of community radio station listeners with one broadcast. This is extremely effective for competitions and national campaigns looking to educate and inform communities and offers a call-in element," says Milne.



Where to from here?

“What’s interesting is that a lot of the ‘older’ DJs, who have passed their sell-by date on commercial stations, have moved to community stations. So the adage that community stations are not professional is rubbish! Some of them are more professional than the commercial stations,” says Hollis.

However, Hollis says that to realise their potential, community radio stations have to re-evaluate how they are sold. “A central booking and information service is ideal for most advertisers and this can be done through a really good website. They need people on the ground selling them, and this is where the hassles lie. It’s too much work for one company to handle; if you have a number of companies selling them you have the problem of too many people trying to sell the same thing to the same people – who then determines the cost?”

“The Media Connection is effective when it comes to selling airtime on community radio as we are a centralised sales and administration facilitator,” says Judy Milne. The company represents 145 community stations across South Africa.

“We have daily contact with these stations and our finger is on the pulse regarding the well-being and power of this sector. We have recently included in our team at The Media Connection a ‘Radio Intelligence Centre’, which consists of three people constantly sourcing intel directly from the stations about their listeners, community projects and popular programmes. As there is no real data available from RAMS, we have come up with our own ‘research’ methods to substantiate the power we claim this sector has. We have powerful case studies of the efficacy of advertising on this media.”

Guilford says that there’s a real need for these stations to put on a united front for the advertising world. “The

advertising industry needs to support these stations and regional and national stations need to realise that they are not the only ones that offer reach to every corner of South Africa. The listeners in Kuruman, for example, don’t want to know what is for sale in Cape Town or Joburg, but they do want to be entertained and want to know what is happening around them.”

“This has been The Media Connection’s focus for the past 15 years. We don’t represent all community radio stations in South Africa, but those that we do benefit from our continued effort to highlight them as a viable advertising medium,” says Judy Milne.

Another challenge that needs to be addressed is the inconsistency of knowing if the stations are in fact on air or not. “This goes hand-in-hand with funding and often, unfortunately, a good station may be off air for a couple of days or months due to financing. There is no communication to the industry about these issues – which are real and of huge importance to us as we can’t recommend community stations if they are not part of an effective body that can quickly and effectively advise of issues such as these,” says Guilford.



***Allison Cooper**

is the Joint MD of Allycats Public Relations, which was launched in 2008.

She has over 16 years’ experience in public relations, publicity generation, journalism and freelance writing.

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Engaging employees to deliver **business results**

*By Daniel Munslow

I recently had the fortune of attending and presenting at the 2014 Human Capital Institute Employee Engagement Conference in Seattle in the United States. Senior human capital and communication practitioners gather at the annual conference to discuss topical trends in engagement.

It has been argued extensively that an engaged workforce can create a competitive advantage. To achieve this, it is imperative that leaders identify the levels of engagement in their organisations and implement behavioural strategies to drive full engagement where required.

An engaged employee is one who is committed, involved and enthusiastic about their place of work. This should not be confused with workplace happiness based on hygiene factors such as remuneration, medical aid, and other employee value propositions.

In the book, *Getting Engaged: The New Workplace Loyalty*, author Tim Rutledge explains that engaged employees are inspired by their work ("I want to do this"), committed to their work ("I am dedicated to the success of my business"), and love what they do.

Engaged employees care about the future of their company and are willing to increase discretionary effort to ensure the success of their organisation. Rutledge also notes that managers are a key factor in the retention of their top talent. There is widespread agreement that engaged employees are those who are emotionally connected to their companies.

Leaders can achieve this by implementing five key principles:

Rewards and recognition programmes

People are beginning to realise the difference between rewards and recognition.

Companies are finding creative and innovative ways to engage their staff by crafting recognition programmes that target a primary individual need ... to be recognised for doing something good. A Canadian company, ATB Financial, began a campaign called Everyday Heroes. It wasn't about the big successes

that are recognised annually, but rather what an individual can do right every day. Of course this ties in to the organisation's objectives and other strategic business priorities, as well as values.

Everyday Heroes was based on a simple philosophy linked to the service profit chain where employee success delivers customer loyalty, which drives shareholder value. The principle was to encourage employees to recognise small actions that colleagues took on a daily basis, which lived the values and helped shape the desired culture.

Business leaders can learn a great deal from this approach. Our internal communication and engagement audits have shown over and over that employees feel that below-expectation performance attracts immediate feedback but recognition for performance that exceeds expectations is delayed. Exceptional leaders give recognition for the small things, and do so frequently.

Measurement, research, and governance

While communicators in many corporates continue to struggle for a seat - or a voice - at the board, the issues concerning measurement, research and governance are becoming critical. It is imperative for communicators to ensure they conduct research annually, or even more often, to test the return on investment in relation to their communication efforts. Further, it is important for all communication strategies to be tested against King Report III (and the soon-to-be-revised King Code IV) to ensure it is aligned to best practice. While not something that is enforced, many organisations are striving to align to global standards in their communication, as stakeholder engagement is mandated as a board responsibility in King Report III.

For this to be taken seriously, communicators have to incorporate a range of business and financial skills to provide financial correlations to communication initiatives.

At the Human Capital conference, The Home Depot, a business with 300 000 employees and turnover of about R900 billion, demonstrated the direct correlation between associate commitment/engagement and key store metrics (primarily turnover). They were able to prove scientifically that the



stores with higher engagement had higher turnover. And how they did it. Their CEO was quoted as saying “if we take care of our associates, and if [they] take care of our customers, everything else will take care of itself.”

This is still cutting-edge thinking in South Africa where, sadly, many organisations don’t even measure their internal communication regularly and rigorously, let alone engagement in relation to financial business drivers.

What did the numbers say? Stores with higher engagement exceeded sales targets by more than five per cent, while stores with disengaged employees missed their targets by less than four per cent. When your company turns over R900 billion that is statistically significant! That will secure a voice at the table.



Leadership accountability

Leadership, and indeed management, must be held accountable for engagement within organisations. Increasingly, HR practitioners and communication professionals are working together to develop courses that will train, coach and develop leaders’ emotional intelligence and communication skills. This should be based on facts collected within the organisation to better understand the specific needs of the business through a skills matrix. The focus should be shifted from a two-dimensional approach to address operational skills, and move towards a three-dimensional view of skills and emotional intelligence.

Action planning should be seen as a process where leaders are required to cascade information throughout the business, complete this process accountably, and in an action-oriented fashion,

through the line. This means that businesses need to adopt multidirectional communication channels and leverage research to measure employees’ understanding of key business messages to ensure a thorough cascade has taken place.

However, in many organisations, today’s managers have never been up-skilled to be leaders. They are promoted through the ranks on the back of exceptional technical skills, but have never been equipped with the skills-set required to lead people. And it’s not as simple as people sometimes think.

Leadership coaching/Servant leadership

Consequently, there is a major trend globally for human capital and communication to partner and collaborate in the implementation of strategic leadership development programmes. The focus is on communication skills that enhance a drive towards a servant-leadership approach. These skills are often the gap that is required to bridge the ‘left brain’ and ‘right brain’ ... in other words, most leaders in organisations have a solid understanding of what is required of them from a business strategy, forecasting, budgeting, planning and information perspective. What is often not as well understood is the need to translate that to all employees in a manner that engages, enthuses, and motivates.

Internal communication research by Talk2Us in recent years has shown the relationships between employees and their managers are often fractured. As a result, hygiene factors are no longer adequate for persuading employees to perform at top levels. Employee engagement is a direct reflection of how employees feel about their relationship with their line managers; the better the relationship, the better the work done.

Interestingly, Aon Hewitt research from 2013 shows that staff turnover among employees who report to managers who are

disengaged is double compared to staff whose managers are actively engaged.

Coaching should also be extended to include communication practitioners to ensure they have the skills required of them to deliver on the ever-changing business needs of organisations. Ideally, research should be conducted to understand the skills matrix of communicators in organisations, and match practical training to equip the in-house teams to effectively deliver on the required outputs.

Engagement strategy

All of this can be achieved by developing a detailed engagement strategy that unpacks the strategic, tactical, and operational requirements of the business. This may differ from a standard communication strategy, which often sets out the tactical steps a company will take to communicate.

An engagement strategy will take cognisance of the business needs as well as communication landscape to drive an engaged workforce, using internal communication tools and techniques as key enablers.

In a signature piece of research, conducted in partnership between the Human Capital Institute and the University of North Carolina Kenan-Flagler Business School, organisations were asked about the ways in which they were accelerating the development of their leaders.

From a sample of human resources professionals, the research sought to understand the current climate of leadership development, including budgets, leadership competencies and anticipated changes for the future.

Its findings were interesting. Only 23 per cent of respondents agreed that their learning and development (L&D) budgets met current needs; balancing long-term and short-term business requirements, encouraging managers to develop their employees and budget were rated as the top three challenges for leadership development; and the majority of organisations planned to increase leadership

development activities within the next five years, with formal mentoring slated for the most growth.

On what areas will leadership development focus? Ethics and integrity, driving of results, effective communication, strategic thinking/insight, and relationship management. Two of the top five focus areas relate directly to stakeholder engagement.

The report also noted this very important highlight.

“Another major challenge is the ability to measure the effectiveness of leadership development efforts. Only 14 per cent of respondents actually calculate the return on investment of their leadership development programmes.

In addition, a mere 21 per cent of respondents report that they effectively use data and analytics for succession planning. This finding reinforces the need for companies to adopt or improve their talent analytics systems for leadership development.”

Without effective measurement of engagement, it is not possible to correlate communication and L&D efforts and financial return, which are the numbers the executives require to make decisions.

Organisations planning for the future and focusing on engaging their workforce are concentrating their efforts on three key attributes: support from senior leaders; a formal L&D structure; and accountability for leaders.

Companies that drive all three - and local research among companies who drive engagement from chief executive level are evidence of this - show a greater percentage of their growth attributed to engagement, as well as less time needed to develop their mid-level leaders. All this adds value to the bottom line and prepares organisations to tackle the next challenge.



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When traditional marketing models miss the mark

*By Grant Shippey

When putting together a media plan for your new campaign, do you use a 'spray-and-pray' approach, or spend time making educated and informed decisions? Your company may not have a big marketing budget, so you will need to be as skilled as possible in making your decisions.

A spray-and-pray approach produces advertising that aims to cover as wide an audience as possible and hopes that the wide coverage will also reach the intended target audience.

When you have a large-scale target audience, it is easy to justify spending large amounts of money on TV, radio and outdoor advertising. Media planners and buyers can help you with a broad target market. Using All Media Products Survey data and other research tools, you will be able to identify what the people in your target audience watch and listen to and where they live and work.

When it works, and when it doesn't

This approach works when you have a big announcement, such as a "Remember to vote" campaign, where your target market is people 18 years and older. But even then, there is wastage as many people who are not 18 also see and hear the message, diluting the value you gain from your advertising spend.

So, when media planning for more specific, niche audiences reverts to a spray-and-pray approach, you are even more likely to run an expensive campaign with lots of wastage and little gain in value.

How can marketers improve their planning and processes? The power of digital enables us to tailor the message and the audience. Instead of generic messages going to all segments of the population, messages can be targeted to different, more accurate audiences.

Segment, and then segment again

In a digital campaign, users can be segmented by age, gender, location, device, living standards measure, interests and retail behaviour, to name a few. Then, by using different messages, landing pages and creative content, the messages themselves can be appropriately tailored to appeal to the specific audiences.

Some marketers may argue that this will ultimately increase production costs and time, however, if you can increase the responses from a specific desired audience, the increased spend is well justified.

In addition, one of the most under-utilised strengths of a focused approach is the opportunity it provides to experiment with innovative ideas. With traditional advertising models, excuses are often levied against experimenting, including late briefs, short turnaround times and advertisers believing they know the extent of their audience's interest.

Innovate

The lower cost-to-entry of digital advertising allows you to experiment. As Eric Ries comments in his book, *The Lean Startup*, it is valuable to create an environment of validated learning to test hypotheses. Because the digital environment allows the marketer to test many experiments simultaneously, they can validate which experiment works best for their strategy. The next steps would be to measure and learn from the results.

Digital processes and opportunities could reduce the wastage of marketing campaigns and deliver data back quickly to inform optimisations and required changes. This will all help deliver planned results cost-effectively and within the desired timelines.

One of the most exciting and challenging aspects of marketing is to find innovative ways to reach audiences with your message. Digital platforms and processes have transformed the way in which this can be done, paving the way for enhanced creativity in the industry.



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With almost 20 years in the industry Grant has worked extensively in the digital financial services industry with notable projects being:

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- Strategy and implementation of both the Standard Bank online share trading and BOE online share trading platforms.
- Strategy and numerous digital implementations for Absa Capital (wholesale banking, exchange traded funds, exchange traded notes, retail structured products, online forex services).
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