

GovComms

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Highlights



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Effectively communicating entrepreneurial opportunities to the youth could help put a dent in levels of youth unemployment.

By Phemela Mmotlane and Fulufhelo Munyai (GCIS)

South Africa has to deal a blow to the 'triple challenge' of unemployment, poverty and inequality, which affect the youth (15 to 34 year olds) especially.

Unemployment and a lack of job opportunities affect young people more than any other group in South Africa.

Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) of the first quarter of 2014, found that 66% of young people between the ages of 15 and 24, and 38% between 25 and 34 were unemployed.

Although youth unemployment in South Africa is the third highest in the world, the problem tends to be global.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that close to 90 million young women and men throughout the world are unem-

ployed, accounting for 47% of the 186 million unemployed persons globally.

In South Africa, young people face a range of personal, institutional and situational hurdles that worsen their situation. Despite government efforts to address the problem, South Africa's youth experience low levels of economic participation, limited entrepreneurial skills and insufficient take-up of business opportunities.

Many young people do not have the financial resources or sufficient networks to obtain information on job opportunities and lack mobility to seek work or relocate so that they are closer to places where there are job opportunities.

Government and many role players have supported enterprise development and entrepreneurship opportunities by means of various initiatives, nevertheless the problem persists.



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It would seem that the way in which information about such programmes is packaged and relayed has to be changed.

More young entrepreneurs wanted

An effective long-term solution to youth unemployment is youth entrepreneurship, where individuals come up with new processes and establish themselves as key components in the economy. Despite government and business initiating youth employment and entrepreneurship programmes, a mere 6% of the total youth population is involved in entrepreneurial activity. Research by the Kauffman Foundation, a US research company focusing on educational achievement and entrepreneurial success, has found that the youth's low level of economic activity is accompanied by their taking little interest in starting their own businesses.

It is worth noting that the interest in entrepreneurship shown by South Africa's youth is behind that of their global counterparts. According to the European Commission's Eurobarometer, 28% of all people in the European Union (EU) indicated that self-employment would either be 'very feasible' or 'quite feasible' within the next five years.

The figure was much higher for young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years (40%), compared to those who are over 55 years (13%).

GCIS Tracker Research reveals that 1.2 million (out of a total of 37.5 million) South Africans aged 15 years and older own or run a business. Almost one in 10 South Africans (9.2% of the population aged 15 and older or 3.5 million people) intend starting their own business. The majority of youth (87%), however, neither owns nor intends to start a business.

Why no interest?

Reasons for the lack of interest in entrepreneurship include:

- support from government;
- awareness;
- funding ; and
- access to credit for their business.

The GCIS National Qualitative study, conducted in October and December 2013, confirmed this. It showed that for most South Africans the main challenges that small businesses face were registration, a lack of information and funding.

Though a fair number of low living standards measure (LSM) respondents showed an interest in starting their own businesses, they were held back by their lack of knowledge and resources.

Respondents in the high LSM groups shared these sentiments, indicating they needed financial support to start

their businesses.

International studies have found that the correlation between age, the economy and start-up businesses' lack of financial assistance and access to credit explain the lack of interest in entrepreneurship among the youth. For example, Scott Shane of *Bloomberg Business Week* associated low interest in starting a business with being young and lacking financial assistance, while the youth in the Eurobarometer blamed it on a lack of access to credit for their start-up businesses.

It is commonly believed that the younger people are, the lower their interest in entrepreneurial activities will be but that when they get older, they are more likely to want businesses of their own. Shane points out that 'since the vast majority of businesses receive no start-up capital from anyone other than the founder, potential entrepreneurs need to have enough money to cover their start-up costs, and are most often deterred from starting companies if they lack adequate capital'.

Spread the word

Communication is the key to unlocking successful entrepreneurship among young people. Youth entrepreneurship strategies have to foster an awareness and culture of entrepreneurship among the youth. This can be done with the help of media and communication.

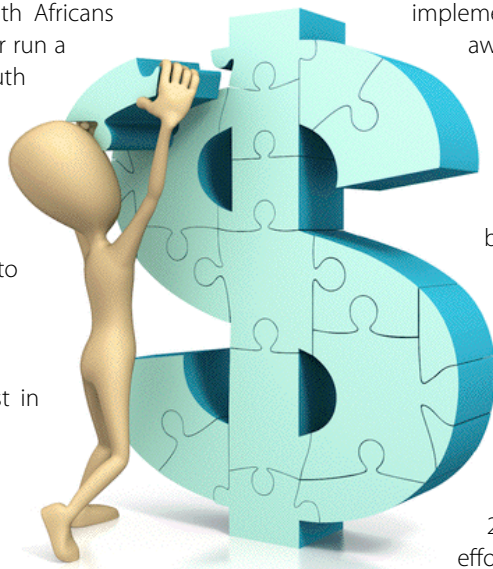
Many youth entrepreneurial programmes have been implemented but to what extent are young people aware of the existence of such initiatives? More has to be done to educate young people about the importance of having their own businesses and existence of support programmes. The problem is not a lack of support programmes for young entrepreneurs but a matter of packaging and disseminating information about them to the target audience. Communicators have to ask what strategies would adequately communicate messages about youth entrepreneurship in South Africa.

One of the key goals of the Department of Trade and Industry's (the dti) Youth Enterprise Development Strategy 2013 to 2023 is to improve awareness of government efforts to ensure that barriers do not prevent young entrepreneurs from creating businesses for themselves.

Messages aimed at building awareness and interest in entrepreneurship as a way to increase the number of young people who start businesses are important. Such key messages should be followed by keen practical support for the development of youth enterprise. The communication strategy for youth entrepreneurship also has to be in line with the communication needs of young people.

Tell us about ...

When asked about the type of information or help they





need to start or to grow their businesses, respondents in GCIS' Tracker Research said they needed information on how to find finance (33%), followed by marketing (26%), attracting new customers and markets (25%), and getting advice on business management (24%). These were followed by finding premises (12%), applying for government tenders (12%), registration (11%) and personnel management (10%). Likewise, GCIS' National Qualitative study indicated that information about marketing skills was what most young people required to start or grow their business. Most respondents who were already in business felt that their businesses would grow bigger and attain greater heights if they knew how to market them effectively. Funding was the second biggest challenge in all LSMs. The least mentioned was business management skills which would entail writing business plans and proposals and business management skills.

The medium matters

It is important for stakeholders, such as the dti and its agencies such as the Small Enterprise Development Agency, to use communication strategies that best speak to the youth.

GCIS Tracker Research shows that the mainstream media (radio and television) remains popular with the youth in South Africa.

In this era of digital and mobile technology, it comes as no surprise that the South African youth have embraced technology and are on par with their global counterparts. Popular social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp are relevant media platforms. Social network-

ing is the most used communication medium with 57% of South Africans using it daily. This is higher than the global average of 46%, especially among the under 25 year olds. The All Media Product Survey (AMPS) indicates that the majority of youth access the Internet via their cell phones with only 28% using computers to access the Internet.

Other means of communicating with young people include community meetings, presentations by experts from GCIS, television (SABC channels) and radio. It is important to note that newspapers may not be a suitable medium for reaching the youth because of poor reading skills or a lack of interest in reading. On the other hand, the best channels

for communicating with the youth in the high LSM groups are newspapers and the Internet. To reach target audiences in the lower LSMs, radio and television (SABC) should be used extensively. Successfully reaching these audiences can benefit not only the youth, but also the country's economy as a whole.

According to the ILO, 'focusing on awareness-raising programmes at education institutions and start-up programmes for youth allows governments to influence the cultural attitudes towards a positive perception of entrepreneurial activities.'

Young people who take the opportunity to empower themselves economically, sidestep unemployment and enjoy the benefits that come from operating their own business.

Countries that promote youth entrepreneurship position themselves to generate and retain wealth and grow the economy. A country's youth can contribute to the economy by exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities and taking ownership of the future, which is why communicating this to the youth is vital.



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF

MEDIA FREEDOM AND DIVERSITY



South Africa celebrated Freedom Day on 27 April 2014, marking 20 Years of Freedom since the dawn of democracy. As part of this celebration and as a country, we have a good story consisting of 20 years of media freedom and diversity in South Africa, 20 years of the licensing of Community Radio in South Africa, 20 years of independent broadcasting regulation, and 20 years of the National Association of Broadcasters (NABSA).

This year, 3 May marked the 21st anniversary of World Press Freedom Day, as per the proclamation by the United Nations (UN) at its General Assembly in 1993, in line with Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This followed the 26th session of the UNESCO General Conference in 1991 adopting the Windhoek Declaration, which is a statement of principles calling for free, independent and pluralistic media throughout the world.

The Windhoek Declaration affirms that free press is essential to the existence of democracy and a fundamental human goal. In the 2013/14 financial year, South Africa celebrated and marked 10 years of the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA).



By *Lumko Mtimde

Before 1994, media was not free as journalists were brutally harassed, arrested, tortured and had their equipment confiscated, etc. Media suffered because of repressive laws and progressive media was banned.

Addressing the MDDA celebration of World Press Freedom Day, the chairperson of Print and Digital Media of South Africa (PDMSA) and M&G CEO, Hoosain Karjeiker, said: "...Refer to the price journalists paid, being arrested and therefore SA must remember our colleagues who do not enjoy the media freedom we do in SA".

The interim Constitution Act of 1993 was put in place with clear pronouncements on freedom of expression, the media, the right to impart information and independent regulation of broadcasting.

To give meaning and effect, the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act was enacted in 1993 promoting independent broadcasting regulations.

Speaking at the International Press Institute, at the first conference held in South Africa in February 1994, former President Nelson Mandela said: "A critical, independent and investigative press is the lifeblood of any democracy. The press must be free from state interference.

"It must have the economic strength to stand up to the blandishments of government officials. It must have sufficient independence from vested interests to be bold and inquiring without fear or favour.

"It must enjoy the protection of the constitution, so that it can protect our rights as citizens". This was said shortly before South Africa's first democratic elections.

In 1996 South Africa adopted and enacted the Constitution Act No.108 of 1996, which afforded everybody the right to freedom of expression, freedom of the media, the right to impart information and independent regulation of broadcasting.

Subsequently, the democratic Parliament enacted many laws that gave meaning and ef-

fect to the Constitution Act, like the ICASA Act, the MDDA Act, the Access to Information Act, the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, the Electronic Communications Act of 2005, the Broadcasting Act of 1999, etc.

This constitutional democracy guarantees these rights and the protection thereof, which forms an important foundation for any other law enacted since 1994 to remain compliant with the Constitution Act No.108 of 1996.

It is with this strong foundation in mind that we must dismiss any impression that may suggest that media freedom in South Africa is under threat.

Our legislative framework promotes media diversity, and an open society which is free from oppression and censorship. In addition, law making in South Africa is public participatory, which means that no law will ever be made by way of a decree, without public consultation and input.

Therefore, we should not confuse public discourse debating provisions of any draft Bill as a threat to media freedom.

Citizens must make their input and ensure that the drafting of any law is in line with our national interest and objectives, and complies with our Constitution.

Similarly, when we reflect on the implementation of our policies and laws, checking whether our people enjoy the protections and rights enshrined in our laws, it must not be seen as interfering with freedom.

It is appropriate for the country to review the media and broadcasting landscape as it were, identify challenges and milestones, and develop strategies to fast track transformation of our industry and society.

In 1996, the Task Group on Government Communications (Comtask) report, led by former President Thabo Mbeki and chaired by the former ICASA chairperson Mandla Langa, referred to the monopolistic control of print media, particularly in the areas of distribution and printing, creating entry barriers for prospective media owners.

Interestingly, introspection of the print media ranging from the MDDA report: Trends of Ownership and Control of Media in South Africa (July 2009); Press Freedom Commission Report (April 2012); Parliamentary Print Media Transformation Indaba (June 2012); GCIS Media Landscape – Reflections on South Africa media environment (2012); to the PDMTT report (September 2013), confirms the same challenge. This remains the case, contrary to the objectives of the Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act of 2003 and the MDDA Act of 2002.

The recently released MDDA report, Transformation of Print Media (April 2014), done by Quest Research Services still refers to the print media monopoly.

The MDDA report further recommends that the Competition Commission prioritises a probe into the possible anti-competitive behaviour in the print media business.

The question that arises is: 'Is this a case of market failure, as print media does not have a specific legislation targeting the specific industry?' We are 20 years into our democracy,

what needs to be done?

Dr Essop Pahad, the former Minister in the Presidency, editor of *The Thinker* and founder of the MDDA, addressed the MDDA celebration of World Press Freedom Day; reflected on the history of the media in South Africa prior to 1994 and appreciated the work done post democracy by the, MDDA, GCIS and ICASA, among others.

Dr Pahad noted the challenges South Africa continues to face in respect of print media monopoly and lack of transformation in the print media.

In his address, Karjeiker welcomed the MDDA report, saying, "PDMSA ... commits to considering its recommendations together with the PDMSA report. ...20 years has been good and must ensure that the next generation must enjoy vibrant media."

In an article published in the *Business Day* (6 May 2014), Dr Pallo Jordan, the former Minister of Communications, said: "The diversification of South African media is a reality driven by a number of unknown and unseen actors harnessing the information and communications technology that has become available since 1994. Except in print, where the market is dominated by four large conglomerates.

"As a result of their vertical integration, two of these also have a significant hand in the production of paper...

"The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) is a partnership between public and private sectors whose objective is to drive the swifter diversification of our print media. The disappearance of an African language press has featured prominently on its agenda.

"Owing to the parsimony of the private sector the body has limped along, gravely underfunded. But the growth of the electronic media has been deceptive in one respect. The South African media giants own the news agencies and consequently control access to primary sources of news.

"The dependence of smaller commercial and community radio outlets on these news agencies has not necessarily resulted in a diversity of viewpoints.

"The challenge is to develop and secure a truly diverse media in an electronic age that might result in print being increasingly marginalised. We South Africans should all pride ourselves on the achievement of media freedom.

"Tension between those tasked with governing and the media, as purveyors of information and opinion, is an inevitable



feature of a democracy. The existence of this continuing tension and its explicit recognition is no justification for censorship.

"Since 1994 South African media has enjoyed a golden age of freedom. It is our collective responsibility to defend and conserve it."

The past 20 years in South Africa have seen profound transformational changes in the media and broadcasting industry, resulting in a new diverse industry that underpins nation building and democracy, and a three-tier framework (consisting of public, commercial and community media) that encourages more voices, more views, greater freedom of the airwaves and fair competition. Readership, listenership and viewership have increased.

Together, we must further the gains of the last 20 years, through increasingly ensuring that ad-spend (in particular from government and state owned entities) is fruitfully used through media serving the majority, targeted audience and media consumed by those in need of the information and messages communicated, in languages spoken by people, thus supporting efforts of promoting media diversity.

Speaking at an MDDA function earlier this year, Deputy Minister in the Presidency Obed Bapela said: "We are considering developing a Green Paper Discussion Paper on media development and diversity as part of the agency review, informed by all the body of research conducted and supported by the agency, industry research, 10 years of its experience and discuss other policy matters identified by the board.

"This process will inform the proposals including possible amendments to the MDDA Act of 2002, as we celebrate 20 years we need to review the mandate."

It is our hope that government fast tracks this review and that collective wisdom prevails on how best to change the print media landscape in South Africa, so that it reflects the demographics in every respect, from publishing, printing, distribution, advertising, audit of bureau of circulation, ownership and control, editorial perspectives to newsrooms, languages, content, gender, race, class, etc.

An opportunity exists for all South Africans to reflect on the key milestones achieved in the quest to achieve media freedom and celebrate the fundamental principles of media freedom enshrined in the Constitution Act of 1996, defend and protect media freedom, and pay tribute to media activists/journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

As part of the good story South Africa is telling, we must ensure that every citizen irrespective of their social class, (wherever located, rural or urban, poor or rich) should have access to a choice of a diverse range of media.

Access to communication and information empowers citizens, facilitates participatory democracy, and assists in defending, advancing and deepening our democracy. We must also support and create an enabling environment for media development and diversity, critical for the creation of an informed and knowledgeable society.

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Don't let your employee



engagement strategy become yesterday's news

By *Daniel Munslow

Globally the current macro-economic environment is stress-testing the employee/employer relationship with employees under financial strain and likely to take advantage of better prospects should they arise. Losing staff directly affects the finances of any business. According to a 2013 Kelly report, 47% of the global workforce surveyed changed employers in the last financial year. In the United Kingdom (UK) this number was 50%. South Africa, however, is rated among the 10 least volatile countries in terms of employee turnover, with an average of just 21% of employees changing jobs in the last year.



Many economists have said that the current economic cycle is fundamentally different to previous ones and that few companies will revert to the pre-2009 'business as usual' model. In 2014/15, employers will be challenged more than ever with the task of attracting and retaining critical talent to grow their businesses, while facing increasing pressure to drive down costs and increase profitability. This is not an easy task when employee engagement is already at an all-time low.

How do employers go about managing volatility and reducing high turnover? Even in less volatile climates, having one out of five employees changing jobs is a financial risk to any organisation. Companies need to focus on effectively investing in and managing their employee brand strategy.

In strategic brand engagement with employees – the internally focused component – message delivery mechanisms are classified primarily as: rich (face-to-face), broadcast (emails, intranet, posters, etc.) and social (formal and informal/digital and community-based).

Let's review the key tactics for each and how they can be strategically applied to enhance brand engagement:

Rich

Kelly's research in the UK shows that 56% of employees say their manager has a direct influence on their job satisfaction. Talk2Us internal communication audits in South Africa reveal that this is true for over 70% of the local market.

The same research has also found that one of the top drivers of engagement among employees is brand alignment, which is defined as employees who understand the context of their internal and external brand promises and how they are required to deliver on them.

According to Leigh Branham's "The Hidden Reasons Employees Leave", 89% of employers believe their staff members leave for more money. In reality only 12% go after better remuneration. What is even scarier is that 75% of staff leave their jobs because of their direct line manager.

It's not that companies don't believe that engagement is critical. About 90% of leaders who respond to Talk2Us research surveys say engagement will affect business success, so why do less than 25% of companies have a long-term brand engagement strategy?

Leaders, managers, line managers and supervisors play a key role and must be trained and motivated to enhance engage-

ment by sharing information and having emotionally intelligent conversations with their teams.

Talk2Us research shows that in companies with a high degree of engagement with internal communication channels, 43% of managers have a face-to-face conversation with their teams at least once every seven days. In those organisations, over 75% of the workforce know the company strategy, vision and purpose. In organisations where managers have fewer conversations with their teams, this figure drops to below 30%.

How to achieve rich communication:

- Equip line managers with communication skills. According to Dale Carnegie, 80% of employees who are dissatisfied with their direct line managers are classified as disengaged.
- Make your senior leadership visible. Not in an annual roadshow, but regularly, because 70% of employees who lack confidence in their senior leadership teams are not fully engaged.
- Inspire and enthuse your workforce, not by means of a monthly mailer and expensive posters but through ongoing, genuine messages that unite employees in a common goal.

Training is not a once-off activity that will change the business overnight, nor does it entail lengthy courses about communication.

Creating engagement is about connecting leaders and managers with employees through conversations, and ensuring consistency and authenticity in the communication cycle. It's about how to communicate as opposed to 'what is communication?'

Broadcast

Broadcast communication broadly encompasses all forms of communication that send information to people without them being able to respond, interact or otherwise close the feedback loop.

This is a key component in the communication mix, but one that all too often becomes the main mechanism for connecting with employees.

The purpose of this mechanism is to create awareness; it's not designed to generate behaviour change, substantial buy-in, or even perception changes. Broadcast mechanisms will let you be heard.

Having said that, we live in exciting times with mobile communication driving change in the way marketers and communicators think about sending messages to their target audiences.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) is a grassroots movement sweeping through all organisations. Whether you know about it or not, it's happening in your business too! This has created challenging and fun opportunities for brand engagement specialists to reach employees everywhere, even unconnected and external audiences.

Local internal communication audits reveal that not many organisations are auditing their email communication channels and ensuring that they are mobile-friendly, or monitoring how often they are accessed.

Mobile-friendly means ensuring electronic newsletter templates are easy to read across all platforms; and ensuring that the end-user consumes communication aimed to help them understand how they need to change their behaviour to deliver the desired brand objective.

Many organisations also overlook infographics. While it's often easier and quicker to communicate a message by writing an email, most employees don't get past the first paragraph. Infographics are a fun and easy way to connect with the end-user and help tell a compelling story in a visually appealing way.

Social

Delivering messages by social means does not mean just Facebook and digital technology. Employee advocates are essentially socially engaged employees who will share their views of their employer's brand in social circles and also in social media.

These advocates are created, not born. They are moulded by their beliefs in the business they work in and experience a very low level of cultural entropy. Individuals are the most trusted entity on earth, much more so than advertising, corporate promotions or CEO presentations, among other things.

A few years ago General Motors did a great job of proving these people have to be good brand ambassadors.

The math is simple. If you have 1 000 employees who say something good about your brand, and each has only 100 friends in the social networking arena, you will reach 100 000 people. If those people each have just 10 people who share your comment, those 1000 employees will reach 1 000 000 people! Many will likely be your customers.

It is also a good idea to develop (and if you have it, measure it!) your employee ambassador programme. Employee ambassadors are the people who are chosen to represent the best of your culture, values and mission. Leverage them to humanise your brand engagement activities on the ground from day to day.

It's a good idea to start with your communication teams, especially if you operate in a federated or decentralised business, as it's your quick win to secure brand ambassadors. Next, look further and cast your net to various other employees who could hold the flag high.

In addition, the rise of Enterprise Social Network (ESN) platforms (like Yammer and SnapComms tools) means an increased rate of sharing and enhanced sense of community. These are now company barometers that managers and leaders can measure and observe in real time.

ESNs are becoming a fact of corporate life in South Africa, despite change management to secure buy-in being very difficult. Through change management businesses are

slowly attracting their employees to these platforms, which must be seen as more than an internally approved imitation of Facebook.

Used strategically with a three-year strategy at minimum, they can be leveraged to enrich, enhance, and extend messages and corporate initiatives in an organisation and drive engagement, better workflow and uptake in message buy-in.

By combining and balancing rich, broadcast and social communication tools you can achieve a triad of engagement namely listening, communication and giving feedback to employees.

Each of the three mechanisms serves a strategic purpose and comes with its own challenges and opportunities. It is important to remember that like a marketing mix, a brand engagement strategy requires thorough analysis and a combination of channels to reach employees.

The bottom line

Aon Hewitt, Towers Watson, ROI Communications and other research continues to show a strong correlation between employee engagement and financial performance. The bottom line speaks for itself and this is the value that solid internal brand engagement can deliver.

Organisations with high levels of engagement (usually 65%+) outperform their competitors in the stock market with total shareholder returns of 20%+ higher than average. In contrast, organisations with low engagement (45% or less) show total shareholder returns that are around 30% lower than the average.

Whether you are a listed company, government department or consultancy, the bottom line remains the same. If you are measuring shareholder returns, productivity, or billable hours then the higher the level of engagement the higher the profitability will be in all instances, irrespective of the unit of measure.

Brand engagement is not a luxury. Without it, an organisation will lose its competitive advantage, customer service focus and, ultimately, brand equity. Employers with high levels of employee engagement typically demonstrate lower turnover, larger talent pools, and better financial performance. Are you one of them?

Top tips for better brand engagement

- Create purpose-driven communication to establish a clear line of sight between employees and the brand.
- Look at ways of employing new forms of messaging to deliver simpler, better integrated and more meaningful communication that cuts through the clutter.
- Align the organisation's culture with the brand using a measured approach.
- Harness the power of social media to foster authentic, business-focused internal communication.
- Implement innovative multidirectional communication to seek employee feedback to enhance brand engagement.
- Conduct a perceptual mapping exercise to understand the focus of brand engagement in your business.

Tactics that enhance employee engagement

- Make sure senior leaders share the vision and common purpose with all employees.
- Provide employees with two-way communication tools. Let them be heard.
- Provide training that ensures leaders and managers can foster positive relationships with employees. Don't coach them about communication but so that they know how to communicate.
- Show employees within the organisation the company's external brand equity. Take pride in good performance and corporate social investment.
- Managers must allow their direct reports to grow and show good performance. Celebrate successes.

* **Daniel Munslow** is a director at Talk2Us, a strategic internal communication consultancy with over 12 years' working experience with leading listed and multinational organisations. He is a strategist, trainer and facilitator, working with leadership in organisations to assist them in achieving brand engagement with their employees. Munslow is an IABC Africa regional board member, a judge of the IABC Africa Gold Quill Awards, has served on the Blue Ribbon Panel and is an All-Star presenter at the IABC World Conference. He is also chief judge of the South African PRISA PRISM Awards.



Telling the good story of the SoNA

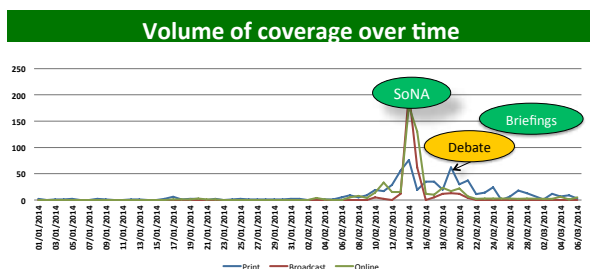
By Suzette van der Westhuizen (GCIS)

Every year, the media and commentators use the events leading to the State of the Nation Address (SoNA) to speculate on what the country should expect from the President's speech to the National Assembly. Job creation, education and the state of the economy are usually central to predictions about the President's address. Debates often provide a critical assessment of government's achievements. The focus of the past SoNA shifted the focus from the typical topics of job creation and infrastructure to this year's "good story".

Media reporting on the good story

In the build-up to the 2014 SoNA the media recognised that the speech would be delivered against the background of unprecedented public protest action. Until the week before the SoNA few media articles mentioned the speech. President Jacob Zuma was expected to address the seemingly growing unrest and dissatisfaction in the country.

As usual, a variety of commentators' expectations and comments featured prominently, with issues of job creation being at the fore. Infrastructure rollout and the National Development Plan (NDP) also enjoyed prominence. Closer to the day, other priorities such as health and education also received notable attention from the media and commentators.



Coverage of the SoNA increased gradually from the beginning of the year with interest growing as the event approached. Throughout January there were sustained mentions across various media, but coverage picked up from the beginning of February. The focus was on previous SoNAs and expectations concerning what the President could and should focus on. The main peak was after the event, consisting mainly of analysis of and comment on the speech.

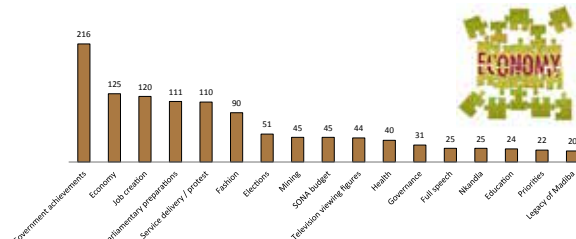
However, media by its nature is events-driven and breaking news often overshadows very important calendar events. Shortly before this year's address, the confrontation between African National Congress (ANC) and Democratic Alliance (DA) supporters during a march in central Johannesburg dominated media coverage, unfortunately relegating coverage of the SoNA to less prominent pages in the print media.

Immediate coverage of the SoNA highlighted very important aspects of the speech, dealing with achievements in the past 20 years of democracy, the contention that "we have a good story

to tell" and featuring some good feedback on the overall presentation of the address.

The President's warning that actions to harm the economy would not be tolerated, which was widely seen to be aimed at reassuring the markets and investors, found valuable expression in international media sources, but was also reported widely locally.

Main SoNA-related issues reported by the media



Over the period analysed, government's achievements (following the President's assertion that government has "a good story to tell") received by far the most coverage. Issues of the economy and job creation constantly featured in the media space ranging from speculation before the SoNA to reporting on the content of the speech and in comments afterwards.

With the Address delivered against the backdrop of protests in various communities, the media extensively covered the President's call for respect for the law, life and property.

The good story has since competed with criticism from political parties and the media itself for media attention. During the weekend following the SoNA, some negativity started emerging in the coverage of the speech.

There was a wide range of reactions to the content, with some bordering on gross generalisation and even suggesting that the current administration had achieved very little. There were exceptions though, with some media sources quoting analysts offering more sober and even positive opinions.

Various opposition parties, analysts and the media criticised the President for the content of his SoNA, mostly for delivering what some called an 'uninspiring' speech.

Most importantly, the majority of economists acknowledged the positive aspects of the speech and the fact that it took place in volatile economic conditions, but they also put forward their views on what they thought was missing from the address.

Some commentators were in support of the speech, saying that in terms of content it was a "feel good" speech which amplified the positives, while making a cursory reference to a range of problems afflicting society. The

President's assertion that the country had made notable progress also found support with clergymen agreeing that "South Africa does have a story to tell".

SoNA debate

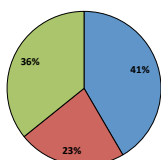
The volume of media coverage related to the SoNA increased again following the start of the debate in Parliament, as opposition members of Parliament (MPs) sought clarity on the Speech. The media noted negative comments from opposition leaders, with the DA Parliamentary leader Lindiwe Mazibuko, Bantu Holomisa of the United Democratic Movement (UDM) and Congress of the People (Cope) leader Mosiuoa Lekota quoted the most. Comments made by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) were also noted. The opposition criticised government for failures regarding job creation, fighting corruption, and, generally, for poor leadership. They argued that the President had failed to match up to his predecessors, former Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Nelson Mandela.

The media described the debate as "history-heavy" and "backward-looking" united by the discussion of the phrase that the ruling party had "a good story to tell". This made an appearance in nearly every speech, albeit sarcastically

Overall SoNA media coverage

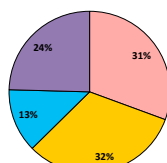
SoNA coverage by media sources

Print Broadcast Online



SoNA coverage by period

Pre Post Debate Briefings



Overall, 616 print (41%), 530 online (36%) and 335 broadcast clips (23%) were generated for a total of 1 481 instances of reporting. The SoNA 2014 was examined across four periods: Pre-SoNA, the coverage immediately after the speech, the debate and the briefings. Coverage was relatively equally split between the four periods with 32% occurring immediately following the event, followed by pre-SoNA coverage at 31%, briefings at 24% and debates at 13% of total coverage.

when it was used by anyone from the opposition.

Following President Zuma's response to opposition parties' comments on the SoNA, the media reported extensively on his replies, mainly factually.

President Zuma reiterated his message that his administration indeed had "a good story to tell" and said it would spend the next five years building on its main stated objectives of the last term – improving health and education, job creation, fighting crime, and advancing rural development and land reform.

Subsequent to extensive media reporting on President Zuma's replies to opposition parties, media coverage related to the SoNA declined considerably.

Attention was diverted to election campaigns as political

parties prepared for the upcoming general elections.

SoNA briefings

In all the briefings, the "good story" was evident in the progress made in the past 20 years. However, as the briefings were done some time after the Address, media coverage of the different briefings varied vastly.

The trend was to concentrate on the content of questions and answers on the media agenda and issues in the environment rather than on the information offered in briefing notes.

Health is one of the priorities where there has been a turnaround in negative perceptions since 2009. Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi's briefing was well covered with media preferring to concentrate on positive announcements about future initiatives, rather than on achievements. These included plans for new clinics and hospitals and for existing ones to be refurbished; for screening programmes and treatment initiatives to combat tuberculosis; for a contraceptive skin implant than can protect women from pregnancy for up to three years; and for the establishment of an institution for regulatory medicine.

With briefings such as the Governance and Administration cluster's, the highlighted achievements (the good story that was on offer) did not get much media coverage. The turnaround of the Department of Home Affairs and the spin-offs of South Africa successfully hosting rugby, cricket and soccer World Cup events were ignored in favour of reporting on questions and answers, resulting in the media covering issues of illegal immigrants, the ministerial handbook, community protests and the handling of disciplinary cases in the public sector.

It was the same with the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security cluster briefing. It noted the need to remodel the pre-1994 criminal justice system and align it with the values enshrined in the new Constitution. The past five years were spent consolidating legislation aimed at deepening democracy; enhancing access to justice; transforming the administration of justice; improving court performance; strengthening coordination through the cluster system; and strengthening the rule of law. However, this positive message was almost completely ignored, with





all the media focusing on questions regarding South Africa's relations with Rwanda.

During his briefing, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) Minister Lechesa Tsenoli noted that the implementation of the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS) had yielded a number of positive results and had pointed government directly to areas requiring further attention. The media offered limited coverage of the briefing, predictably focusing on the Minister's answer to questions on community protests.

The Minister acknowledged that there were diverse reasons for the protests including the conduct of councillors, the presence of unaddressed issues and political contestation and positioning, which used genuine existing grievances. In such protests, the destruction of public infrastructure was viewed as the only way to attract the authorities' attention.

Coverage of the Social Cluster briefing was particularly scant. The briefing highlighted government's achievements in providing comprehensive social protection services against vulnerability and poverty within the constitutional and legislative framework and had created an enabling environment for sustainable development. Government delivered integrated, sustainable and quality services, in partnership with those committed to realising a vision of building a caring society. Of the mainstream media only the *Daily Sun* carried an assurance related to the continued provision of food parcels and social grants.

Overall impressions

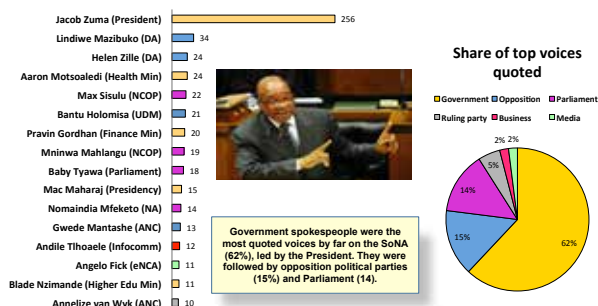
With the State of the Nation Address the President punctuated the tagline that South Africa had a "good story to tell". Though there was good support from economists, analysts and commentators, reaction to this message, as reflected in the media and in reactions by the opposition, was lukewarm to negative.

Ministers took the message further with strong supportive messages during post-SoNA departmental and cluster briefings. However, while the content was available on certain online government platforms, for the most part

the media ignored the good stories contained in the briefing notes and concentrated on the responses to their questions on issues in the environment at that particular time.

The media preferred to carry forward-looking messages, such as the announcements contained in the briefing of the Minister of Health, rather than to cover messages reporting on the achievements of the past five or 20 years.

Voices quoted 1 January – 6 March 2014



President Jacob Zuma was the most quoted voice on the SoNA before and after the event. Only during the period of the SoNA debate was his voice drowned by the opposition. During the briefings he came to the fore again with Ministers regularly quoting from his speech.

Way forward

From the briefing notes, it is clear that government has an abundant supply of detail with which to demonstrate that it does in fact have a good story to tell. Not all the mainstream media have really shown the appetite to spread the good story, and might not be the ideal channel through which to reach the general and grassroots public with this narrative. The attitude seems to be that in sustaining this story they might help government boast about its accomplishments.

Alternative unmediated ways of reaching the public might be more effective in convincing the citizenry of government's success over the past five and 20 years. Beneficiaries have always been good at sharing their stories, proving the success of the benefits that democracy has brought. If those who have been part of the tale can tell it themselves, the good story can definitely be spread far and wide.

