

Access new youth audiences through gamification, esports

By [Jessica Tennant](#)

15 Jun 2020

Arena Events has been hosting various online events catering to different issues affecting the media, marketing and advertising industries and as part of our #YouthMonth content feature, we're covering their *Sunday Times* Gen Next series...



The second episode looked at gamification and esports and how these are allowing local brands access to new youth audiences. The discussion was led by Bongani Chinkanda, CEO of HDI Youth Consultancy, and included young professionals:

- Julia 'Bish' Robson, esports personality and professional gamer,
- Thendo 'Plays' Mukhavhuli, YouTuber, digital artist and content creator, and
- Bronson Tebogo Mokabela, founder and MD of Digigage Sports and Entertainment.

They discussed the trends around the growth of gamification and esports during this time, why brands should consider these platforms in their marketing strategy and where the opportunities lie for brands to get involved.



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Starting the conversation, Chinkanda said that he remembers when lockdown was announced. "I'm not an avid Formula One fan, like I don't watch it every weekend, but what interested me was how quickly they went online with some of their professional drivers... and then we had Adidas develop a shoe that is linked to Fifa, so for me, it has become a very interesting topic that I want to explore."

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Providing a bit of context into the esports arena, Robson said it's better understood as competitive gaming. "I think esports is currently at a stage where you have virtual sports. Esports players are considered athletes and they're not the stereotype gamers that are unhealthy or unfit but in fact, have to spend a lot of time upskilling themselves and working on their game to get to that high level, so it is definitely time-consuming, very mental-based but also it will test your health and fitness in the sense that you have to stay sharp and cognizant of what you're doing. So esports is very much evolving into a state now where you have to be of a certain health, fitness, mental state to excel and get to the top ranks of it."

Mukhavhuli said live streaming is very self-explanatory. "You turn on the camera, you press the 'go live' button and you broadcast yourself to a very uncapped audience," and that one of the biggest platforms to stream gaming right now is Twitch. "The great thing about Twitch is that, like I said, it's uncapped and you can reach anyone from anywhere that is on Twitch."

Going on to explain how Fortnite has elevated streaming and gaming, he believes it brought through a new wave and a new kind of energy to gaming.

And then suggesting how brands can get involved, Mokabela said the opportunity lies in understanding what this ecosystem looks like, for both endemic and non-endemic brands. Endemic brands, he explained, are the day-to-day brands that are directly related to the industry, for example, your headphones, PC, console, controller and so on, the HPs of this world. "It's natural for people to expect them to be in this space," he said. But for the non-endemic brands, that's where the big opportunity exists, he believes, so the likes of DHL, Mastercard, Visa... Then, from a gamification perspective, it's basically putting in a sort of gamified approach to the game. "In essence, gamification is a way of engaging fans and involving them in whatever competition is taking place... and I think the opportunity is how brands can potentially look at that as an avenue to get involved in gaming. So, engagement is to me, the bigger story to be spoken about and content is part of the engagement."

To find out more of Robson, Mukhavhuli and Mokabela's insights into this, watch the YouTube video of the event below:

For more, take a look at Arena's digitised events page at [ArenaEvents.Africa](#).

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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