

Game-changing insights and trends

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The Ask Afrika Group is one of the largest independent South African market research companies and boasts fieldwork capabilities in 95% of Sub-Saharan Africa. Owing the most relevant brand and customer service data, Ask Afrika capacitates fast and reliable decision making for its clients.



In-depth consumer understanding empowers the development of unparalleled marketing and media strategies. Social capital is an important factor that drives consumer behaviour and benchmarking affords clients with strategic insight into the role that mass social consciousness trends play in shaping the expectations of consumers.

Trust is important in an era where loyalty levels are diminishing globally and consumers no-longer want to be put in boxes, treated generically or given false promises. To achieve this, a brand needs keen insight into the latest service-delivery and brand trends.

A closer look at the trends that emerged from the 2017/2018 Ask Afrika proprietary benchmarks:

2017/2018 Ask Afrika Orange Index

The Ask Afrika Orange Index[®] has provided the foundation for in-depth discussions on service trends and diagnostics in the South African corporate and consumer landscape for 16 years running. This benchmark is known for its singular breadth and covers over 33 industries and 165 companies – measuring service within and across industries including customer satisfaction, emotional satisfaction and loyalty.



2017/2018 Ask Afrika Orange Index top-line trends and insights:

- **Technology is top of the trends:** Investment in advancing technologies and systems such as self-help channels and bots allowed businesses to deliver on time and more efficiently, resulting in improved service levels. While services are improving there is also a slow shift towards declining emotional satisfaction and a loss of connectedness as a result.
- **Perfect isn't all it's cracked up to be:** The flipside of the convenience of technology is that consumers are developing an unrealistic expectation of personalised perfection that makes it difficult to deal with the inconsistencies

of human behaviour. Ironically, while consumers get the simplicity and clarity they desire from systems, they are becoming increasingly emotionally dissatisfied and lonely.

- **Comfortably numb behind our emoticons:** It might be more comfortable for consumers to deal with bots and processes but when we look at service, reputation, effort, fairness, trust, loyalty and relationships, we see that 65% of consumers collectively state that their emotional experience was one of numbness. A net promoter score (NPS) is therefore no longer an entirely effective measure as research shows that a person might say that they will promote a product or service, but only because they are being prompted.
- **A quest for meaningfulness:** The customer services industry is now about creating an experience – preferably one that stirs a positive emotion. Successful marketing messages create desirable value statements. Consumers no longer aspire to just owning a particular product, they want that item to create meaning in their lives.
- **Tech is the new drug:** Tech has allowed people a voice and a sense of power parity. Platforms like social media allow consumers to protest and people are using it to engage in narratives that increase their social capital.

The Ask Afrika Icon Brands

The Ask Afrika Icon Brands is the leading local brand benchmark used by marketers, strategists and brand custodians alike. For eight years running – it uniquely measures over 550 product categories and brands used most loyally by local consumers across age, income, race and language spectrums.



2017/2018 Ask Afrika Icon Brands top-line trends and insights:

- South Africans are open to change, particularly when it comes to trying to save money in tough economic times. They are also firmly under the sway of global energies that are reshaping society in significant ways. Neither of this bodes well for brands that are not willing to adapt their marketing efforts to challenging times and a changing global milieu.
- Brands that hope to build long-term trust should be open, transparent and honest with the public.
- South Africans are looking to brands that fit into the paradigms that help them define the “me” that they would like the world to see them as.
- As the social values and structures of South Africans change, loyalty is not as important and brands can no longer expect absolute consumer loyalty, but need to create attainable experiences for their consumers that fit into polarised world views.
- Consumers have varying expectations and the values they apply to themselves are not necessarily those they apply to governments and corporates. Brands need to apply a holistic approach in trying to reach consumers; a linear approach will no longer yield success.
- The digital age means consumers are spending more time online comparing offers and looking for good deals.
- Access to assets is becoming more important than owning them and monthly affordability is an important consideration.

2017/2018 Ask Afrika Kasi Star Brands

The Ask Afrika Kasi Star Brands benchmark is the product of a nationwide survey conducted by Ask Afrika on brands and products that Township consumers use most loyally. With a 2017 sample that is representative of the township population comparing brand usage across 144 product categories and ranking 2 996 brands - the Ask Afrika Kasi Star Brands benchmark is a powerful tool for brand owners to measure return on investment (ROI) in their township strategy.



2017/2018 Kasi Star Brands top-line trends and insights:

- The Kasi market largely remains a price sensitive market. Kasi consumers are excellent with budgets and they are receptive to special offers.
- Kasi consumers spend money more carefully than before and say that it is worth spending more money for quality goods and usually have a brand repertoire within their loyalty spectrum which they will compare in terms of price points and special offers.

- Tradition and community – where people take care of one other is key to Kasi consumers. They care for themselves and the people in their household by giving them the best their money can buy.
- Kasi consumers are proudly South African and expect quality goods, they opt to buy goods that are locally produced as South African products are perceived to be of high quality.
- Kasi consumers agree that it is important that brands act ethically and refuse to buy products from a company that they disapprove of.
- Kasi consumers support brands that empower previously disadvantaged South Africans. Brands that share what they achieve in empowering and uplifting disadvantaged communities through their CSI initiatives will garner loyalty from the Kasi consumer.

2017 Ask Afrika Youth Brands

Today's South African youth market consists of 29 million consumers and has 55% (over R100 billion per annum) spending power. Approximately 20% of the youth between 25-34 years are heading households and make household purchasing decisions.

"Business has never had a more talked about or researched generation than Millennials, yet brand owners still don't get them." The biggest mistake is to either oversimplify or get too complex. Marketers often tend to focus so much on the difference between generations that they miss the commonality." The youth spans 25 years and a range of demographic and psychographic anomalies, each life phase within the youth will be different," said Ask Afrika MD, Sarina de Beer.

The Ask Afrika Youth Brands survey – which includes part of Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z, explores South Africa's future and loyal brand usage amongst youngsters aged 15-34 (inclusive of sub-sets of this range), irrespective of background or living standard. Individuals within the broader youth segment find themselves in different life-stages, such as school, university, marriage, parenthood and so on. To fully understand the youth and how their age impacts their behaviour, emphasis must be placed on the different life-stages that consumers find themselves in, coupled with the life values and brand loyalty drivers behind choice.

The main loyalty drivers in the youth market are:

- Increased emphasis on individuality.
- Constant engagement and interaction.
- Digital platforms that create opportunity for increased self-expression.
- Emphasis on a strong and authentic brand personality.
- Looking for innovation and change.

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