

Changing consumer behaviour

 By Yegs Ramiah

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"Brands need to be less about themselves."

Brands need to help consumers make better choices by focussing on the real issues consumers face, ahead of the bottom line and marketing plans.

Q: Your most significant industry trends for 2015?

A: Self-awareness. Getting people to connect with who they really are, to understand their needs and their means and to enable them to make better choices by creating awareness and incentivising people to change their behaviour. Self-awareness will result in true insights of what it takes to lead a happy and fulfilled life and what real wealth is. Brands need to be less about themselves and more about the real issues that consumers face and in this way create affinity with consumers.

Q: What do you hope to see less of going into a New Year?

A: Fewer people spending money that they don't have. People need to be savvier with their money, they shouldn't spend beyond their means and they should aim to save more.

Q: What do you hope to see more of in 2015?

A: More brands that are focused on making a real difference in the lives of consumers with the aim to create lasting value. From a financial services perspective, there should be a responsibility to connect consumers with their money which will lead to more responsible and considered financial behaviour.

Q: Your 'game changer' trend in 2014?

A: Sanlam's new payoff line, 'Wealthsmiths,' which is a simple description of what we do and what we believe in. Described in a word that did not exist, it is a word that has a sense of familiarity and one that we will give meaning to over time. It represents our roll-up-your-sleeves, pragmatic approach to doing things, our ethos, and our appreciation for the raw materials with which we work - our clients' money.

Q: What advice do you have for your employees/peers for the next year?

A: If we want to make a difference in the world and in our country we all need to follow the simple advice of Colby Loucks, Deputy Director of the Wildlife Conservation Programme: "What we can, and must do, boils down to three words: Make. Better. Choices."

Q: What would you like to tell your clients?

A: To spend smarter. South Africans need to understand that their opportunity for a better life in the future is completely dependent on their current relationship with money. People need to save first and spend later, rather than save what is left after spending, because the latter approach will always see them saving the minimum amount, if any at all.

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ABOUT YEGS RAMIAH

Yegs Ramiah joined the Sanlam team at the end of 2012 as chief executive of SanlamBrand. Ramiah is responsible for Group Brand, corporate affairs, marketing and communications at Sanlam. Prior to her appointment at Sanlam, Ramiah spent 12 years of her career at Merrill Lynch.

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