

Beautiful News South Africa - A Year in Review

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The evolution of consumer to creators and disseminators of information means that creating connections and forming perceptions requires personal interaction. Rather than imposing communication on them, they expect brands to facilitate authentic connections and real experiences.

BeautifulNews

In addition, people are socially aware and will not support brands that contradict their personal values and beliefs – attributes such as integrity, truthfulness and trust are held in high regard. It is important to achieve a more authentic role in these consumers' lives using technology and social platforms as well as understanding that consumers will make their 'voices' heard.

The power of connection – driving brand and peer engagement simultaneously extends beyond digital mediums and the ability to share with peers and others around them, it also creates a sense of belongingness and relationships within the community.

For this reason, the creators of [Beautiful News](#) South Africa, Ginkgo Agency (Ginkgo) and the project sponsor, Mercedes-Benz Cars South Africa (MBSA), created approximately 300 short-films in 12 months at 4.14pm daily, reflecting the untold stories, spirit and community of the South African people in an authentic way.

Its aim: to provide a source of positive and authentic news stories with the messaging – *'Together we are better'*. The platform, dedicated to unearthing the inspiring and uplifting stories of lesser-known individuals throughout the country, is capturing the diverse set of voices and uniqueness of South Africa – a reflection of our people's remarkable and enduring spirit.

Statistics supplied by BMI indicate that *Beautiful News* has reached an audience of over 500-million across all platforms in just over nine months, and is reaching 69% of the South African population via online platforms monthly. In addition, 70% of the sample audience felt hopeful about the future of South Africa after viewing *Beautiful News*, and a further 47% agreed, following the pre-exposure that was generated on the news hub.

The content spread across social media, in video format, and through partnerships with print and broadcast platforms, is breaking the clutter of daily headlines about disaster and corruption depressing a nation. Rather, *Beautiful News* brings a daily respite to the noise to remind South Africans that good prevails and focuses on some of the country's great unsung heroes and role models.

Beautiful News South Africa's Adrian Steirn comments, "*Beautiful News* is a purpose-driven, distribution editorial platform. It provides a bridge from brand to audience that creates a reciprocal relationship – one which is difficult to achieve. Through our platform the aim is to tell stories in a way that truly represents the personal tastes, interests, lifestyle, and values of our people in different segments thereby creating a strong connection with the public to engage with the brand in different ways.

By delivering daily authentic and meaningful content that is 'beautifully' crafted, we have cut through an always-on environment and engaged with a growing and loyal audience. *Beautiful News* was made possible by our partnership with Mercedes-Benz Cars South Africa, whose savvy understanding of connecting with audiences through content has delivered significant returns in terms of brand reach and engagement."

The social media efforts have been met with an overwhelmingly positive response, resonating with people beyond our borders, and being celebrated across 67 countries.

It is a marketing imperative for businesses to understand the audience's position and engage them in the process. Campaigns, such as *Beautiful News*, should reflect the ideals and move away from talking "at", or to talking "to" and instead move towards engaging "with" them.

Over and above its triumph in traditional media, *Beautiful News* extended its reach by offering short videos to local and international passengers with films broadcast on Airport TV, Mango Airlines and African People Mover. It also showcased the short-films to shoppers as well as tourists at The V&A Waterfront with its in-store screenings, thereby further extending its footprint.

For Steirn, the experience of creating the 21 Icons project made it clear that South Africa has an abundance of people whose untold stories are worthy of celebration. Inspired by Nelson Mandela, the project profiled the iconic individuals who led the nation's journey to democracy and helped to unite its communities. The *Beautiful News* timeslot (4.14pm) recognises the moment Nelson Mandela was released from prison.

Beautiful News was born of a desire to share the nation's stories, thereby generating positive conversations about people who show generosity and kindness towards their neighbours, symbolise triumph over adversity or provide inspiration within their communities.

Due to Mercedes-Benz Cars South Africa's commitment to continually showcase the best that South Africa has to offer, Ginkgo has been able once again to make this project a reality and share the greater good of the South African people with the public.

The luxury car brand also partnered with Steirn on 21 Icons, demonstrating their continued commitment to, and celebration of the people of South Africa.

Selvin Govender, marketing director at Mercedes-Benz Cars concludes, "We have a long-standing contribution towards nation building. *Beautiful News* embodies the spirit of 'Ubuntu' and to us, partnering with *Beautiful News* allows us, as a company with a social conscience to continue its legacy of supporting South Africa at its best. We are proud to partner with *Beautiful News* which has afforded us an opportunity to create meaningful conversations and engage with our audience beyond product."

In South Africa, approximately half of the population is under the age of 25. The segment is of great significance to brands planning to stimulate new demand and reach and engage with a highly diversified collective of young subcultures.

In the future, *Beautiful News* will continue releasing one short film at 4.14pm daily.

For more information visit www.beautifulnews.co.za and connect on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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