

The king of innovation

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Technology has changed the world. Social media is not a nice to have or an add on - it's a component of what we do - and our business, Out of Home (OOH) is now focused in the digital media space. You have to understand that and be in touch with that space. But the basic principles of business still apply, says [Ken Varejes](#).



Ken Varejes

Known as an innovator and entrepreneur, over the years, Varejes has taken ideas and grown them into highly successful businesses. So it should have been no surprise when a little earlier this year he launched Nfinity, an innovation hub of media businesses and entrepreneurs.

“Years ago when I started in business the internet did not exist and I was promoting a product that people thought I was crazy to push. My experience is that while the service or product might change, the beauty of business is that a lot of the principles stay the same.”

Like the principle of great people, which still applies. “People have always been very important to me and a key element in a successful business is having the right people. For me, business has always been about people and that still rings true today,” he says. This is linked to this is another very important element: relationships. “You have to get out of your office and get out there and build relationships - strong ones.”

Passion and hard work

You also have to work hard. “People say work smart; I say work hard – put in the effort and the passion. And if you don’t have passion then don’t bother going to work. Passion is what drives you.”

These are some of the key elements of business that built his successes in the past and he will be using them again to build Nfinity. “The focus of Nfinity is to bring in and grow new ideas and businesses. To date we have six businesses in the mix and we plan to get these established and then look at what other businesses we can acquire and build up, and we want to do this over time.”

This is the perfect time to do this, he says. “The decreasing cost of technology has changed the game because you can place digital everywhere. For example, it allows you to present different offerings at different times of the day that are relevant to that time of day and that audience.”

He adds that digital will cut out the clutter we currently have, especially on the roads, because now you can discard the sites that are not great, keep the great ones, but every brand can have the opportunity to be on that great site because of digital.”

DOOH TV and social

These are the opportunities Nfinity will look at unlocking. For example, through its DOOH TV, for the first time, it offers local businesses access to digital media platforms. “This platform is available in all Ster-Kinekor theatres countrywide on digital screens in partnership with major Primall Media malls and with access to the D6 School communicator.”

Gamification and digital are also a great mix. “Through an app we can allow you to interact with a brand using the principles of gamification. For example, we ran a campaign for a beer brand with Col'Cacchio pizzeria where you could play a game and win a pizza and a drink.”

Another of the businesses with Nfinity is theSalt. Headed up by Pieter Groenewald, it is the Brandyourcar.com business, but expanded from just the branding of vehicles. The trigger is the vehicle but the true influencer is the driver who can, through their social media channels, act as an ambassador for the brand. This is where the value lies Varejes says. “We know everything about the drivers so we can match the brand to them as individuals. They can be trained as brand influencers, so it's not their vehicle that is branded.”

The other businesses in the hub include Golf Unlimited, Brand a Tuk Tuk, Digital Out of Home TV and Whisky Live.

While he takes the business very seriously, he adds they also want to have fun.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

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