

# The year of the African storyteller

By [Garreth van Vuuren](#)

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As we take our first tentative steps into 2022, there's a light at the end of the pandemic tunnel we, as citizens of Planet Earth, have been trudging for nearly 24 months. While there can be no certainty of what (or when) will be at the end of this particular tunnel, it certainly will include elements of our 'last normal' mixed with parts of our 'next normal'.



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As marketers and communicators, we at Rapt Creative are confident that South Africans will be more adamant about demanding uniquely South African stories. And that they will want to see brands making more meaningful differences in, or contributions to, their lives.

Informing our belief are three megatrends.

## **Megatrend 1: Youth empowerment will become a core creative conversation**

2021 saw youth unemployment reach crisis levels – 42.9% of 25-34-year-olds spent the year without meaningful employment. Some brands took notice, developing innovative solutions to address the problem.

Those leading the charge included the likes of Nedbank through its YouthX platform which gave employers and potential employees access to resources in various industries. This included virtual events, a web-based app for content, an awards component for budding young entrepreneurs and a festival.

Vodacom refocused its communication towards its younger audiences making its NXT LVL offering more solutions-orientated, including connecting users to zee-rated e-learning services and learnership programmes through the ConnectU platform.

These platforms acknowledged that the youth of today will be the customers of the future, and investing in them through purposeful solutions will result in stronger growth and affinity with the brand. As younger audiences continue to grow in relevance, creating meaningful differences in their lives will be a paramount communication focus.

## **Megatrend 2: Podcasting will find marketing maturity**

This long-form, more interview- and topic-led medium is being adopted by more and more local influencers to expand their reach by touching on culture in real-time, giving listeners content they can't find elsewhere.

Marketers are starting to see value in creating this high-quality content, and 2021 saw more brands capitalising on the medium. Old Mutual, for example, found great success through its partnership with AMPD Studios producing quality content with the likes of Nasty C. Even in the alcohol space, Scottish Leader explored this territory through an interview-led podcast hosted by Moonchild Sanelly.

What was once considered a niche medium has now become an increasingly attractive tool for the modern marketer. Here, the right guests and topics combine to create valuable content that builds brands. And, in 2022 this shows no sign of slowing down.

## **Megatrend 3: South Africa tech companies expand their storytelling - and challenge more established brands**

2021 was a turning point for start-ups and some of the more established tech firms in South Africa as well as other countries on the continent. Reports from the likes of Gartner are forecasting Africa to become the 'next great startup hub' rivalling other regions in interest from venture capital firms.

Kenya's thriving startup ecosystem has been dubbed as the 'Silicon Savannah'. In South Africa, the Western Cape is solidifying itself as the place to be for local startups to grow and prosper.

Start-ups like Yoco are challenging more established financial brands on their innovation credentials through tailored payments solutions for small businesses and clear communication for this audience. After receiving \$83 million in their Series C funding, as well as launching a new portable card machine Khumo, the brand is on an upward trajectory.

This has propelled their storytelling to new and more emotive heights, with the 2021 campaign 'Be The Underdog' highlighting the authentic journeys and challenges that entrepreneurs face on a daily basis.

As venture capital continues to flow into these spaces, and these start-ups scale their solutions to consumers, marketers will be challenged to ensure these brands have innovation in both communication and customer experience.

While there will certainly still be challenges in 2022, there will also be opportunities to triumph as marketers. South Africans will be looking at brands that can speak to them with deep contextual understanding through communication that resonates, which means solving uniquely South African problems in a uniquely South African way.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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