

# Stay woke and grow your business

By  Maroefah Smith

20 Mar 2019

You don't have to shy away from using your social awareness or '['wokeness'](#) to grow your business. In fact, it might do better if you do.



Tarryn Abrahams, founder, Boudoir Box.

This is according to Tarryn Abrahams, founder of lingerie subscription service [Boudoir Box](#), who presented a seminar at the recent Seamless Southern Africa conference in Cape Town.

"When I started my business I didn't just want to be wildly successful, I also wanted to be a voice for the unheard and a champion for social cohesion," she says.

## Just do it

She advises brands to take a cue from British-American author Simon Sinek, who in a 2009 Ted Talk, said: "People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it."

Abrahams uses the Pepsi-Kendall Jenner debacle in comparison to Nike's effective use of Colin Kaepernick, and its subsequent sales spike and social media growth, as an example of how to get it right.



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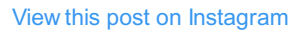


By using her social awareness to aid her own business in 2017, Boudoir Box more than doubled its sales when they paired up with [Femme \(Freedom of Education Motivates Empowerment\) Projects](#).

The collaboration involves the sale (with all of the proceeds going to Femme) of an exclusive t-shirt, designed by visual artist Lady Skollie that celebrates the vulva, to advance sexual health education in communities.

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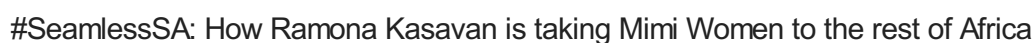




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“Generation Z is fast becoming the dictating voice. This means that quality over quantity is the deciding factor when making purchases. Despite being the poorest generation, Gen Z is reshaping the way brands operate and, in the process, give rise to high value and high returns,” she says.

She adds that Gen Z isn't asking for much. "It doesn't have to be as fancy as an over-the-top ad campaign or product, it can be as simple as the number of women of colour and non-binary people employed by your brand, equal and fair pay or how you handle instances of sexual harassment."



While it may be risky to weave your social awareness into your business, Abrahams says the benefits outweigh the risks. And in the process, you are able to impact and shape society. “We have the potential to become agents of change and change the way people think for the betterment of society,” she says.

Abrahams returns to Sinek's Ted Talk and says "You sell to people who believe what you believe. What you do merely serves as proof of what you believe."

But she warns that it has to be sincere: "Trust me, we can tell when it's forced."

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