

Digital content creation trends for smart brands to ride in 2020 and beyond

 By [Mongezi Mati](#)

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Year-on-year social media platforms tighten the squeeze on how their algorithms prioritise content on timelines in favour of user experience, which in turn means companies and brands pay more for that space and the smart ones are changing their strategies. Content creation, customer interaction and brand communication online are turning more towards claiming a niche in various communities and evolving messaging from there, unlike sending multiple messages across the web in the hopes that some of it are recalled.



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Brands are seeing more value in focused and targeted strategies that lead to increased community engagement. The advent of 5G and the growth in video consumption will lead to the creation of more visual content that customers can utilise and easily share. There will be more investment in collaborating with content creators whose messaging can be easily linked with certain brands without a major change in narrative.

Short-form brand video ads

New entrant to the banking industry, and challenger brand (in its own right), TymeBank, had one of the most focused social media advertising strategies in 2019; where the brand displayed its card in short-form video format. These GIFs flooded timelines, mine and my immediate circle, resulting in improved brand recognition among social media users in a crowded marketplace. Their smart tactics from artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning to the intelligent use of big data saw them surpassing the 600k customer mark in less than a year.



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This short-form, snackable, video content strategy will continue to grow as more brands see value in breaking down their messaging to take advantage of increasingly fast-paced timelines in a hyper-competitive attention economy. Video is also one of the most competitive spaces among social media platforms with each trying to out-manoeuvre the other, which creates a gap for brands who understand their customers' consumption patterns and interests.

Increase in branded video content and collaboration

Researchers predict that [internet advertising](#) will account for 22.7% of the total ad market with a value of over \$700m by 2022. The growth of 5G, increased use of Stories across social media and the spread of video content will lead to more brands creating original video content and collaborating with video content creators.



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Unlike written content, video is more engaging and ensures that people interact with content longer than other mediums across digital platforms. As more brands realise the need to create current, shareable and continually useful content, we will see more quality videos. Some of these will be on the brand's platforms which – for brands themselves – reduces some of the relative noise they compete with across social media.

With some content creators already working on quality video content, it will be easier for brands to plug into that rather than starting from scratch. Specialist content creators, from video to podcasts, will find it easier to collaborate instead of creating content for a brand outside of their existing portfolio and niche.

Black Twitter and other niche communities

South African brands have begun asking questions about niche communities and some have been successful in engaging with Black Twitter, which is largely characterised by political content. With the maturity of social media in South Africa, especially on Twitter, there is also growth among niche communities that develop around multiple interests.

Smart brands, armed with digital data, will craft their messaging around specific communities with the aim of better targeting.



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Year of the micro-influencer (again)

Zara's #DearSouthAfrica campaign was one of 2019's most-followed trends that had micro-influencers at the centre of it, which talks to how brands are now beginning to adopt a different strategy compared to the celebrity-influencer format. Micro-influencers whose content is focused around specific interests will be included in more campaigns, as brands and

their industry peers realise the increased value in this ever-growing space.



Zara's #DearSouthAfrica micro-influencer campaign floods social media

19 Sep 2019



Some micro-influencers create content around things they are passionate about, instead of messaging that a brand is interested in pushing. This is how micro-influencers remain unique and the reason why brands in 2020 will include them in their strategies instead of bigger names.

There is a growing trend towards enabling content creators and communities to build on their existing efforts in collaboration with brands, instead of the brand taking over completely. Smart communicators who will win over audiences across digital in 2020 are the ones that will be seen as enablers, as catalysts for the people they collaborate with and as brands that understand the communities they engage with.

Finding and creating opportunities to collaborate easier with community insiders will enable brands and their communicators to build on their messaging. There are already content creators whose niche communities find them credible and as long as brand messaging matches the platform, this will be an easier choice. Collaboration, not just finding platforms to advertise, will enable better human connections with those that will lead their industry peers.

ABOUT MONGEZI MTATI

Mongezi Mati founded WordStart to help companies generate buzz around their products and services among South African influencers. He is passionate about helping brands to connect the dots from social media, digital data and human interactions outside the web. Mtati is also digital analyst, a speaker and a contributor on some of South Africa's leading platforms.

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