

Sunday Times Top Brands Conference, Top Brands Awards announced

The second annual Top Brands Conference, hosted by Times Media Events, in association with the Sunday Times was held in Sandton earlier this week. This was followed by the Sunday Times Top Brands Awards...



Conference

The conference theme was 'Investing in brands and sense' with a blend of topics and speakers who explored and shed insight into the many facets of brands. To add to that, well over 30 students from the Vega School of Brand Leadership (Randburg campus) displayed

some of their work.

"Striving for excellence and inspiring excellence is something we at Times Media are all about. The Sunday Times' Top Brands survey and subsequently the conference is one of our key trade marketing initiatives and we are glad to contribute back to the industry through these platforms," says Trevor Ormerod, GM: Group Sales and Marketing at Times Media Limited.

Speakers

Taking an intrinsic look into the challenges of building brand affiliation when faced with a desire vs grudge purchase Nthabiseng Makgatho - Corporate Brand Manager, Santam and Jade Kinkel - Marketing Manager, Sorbet stressed the importance of reinforcing the brand and the value delivered through the product and/or service.

Nishan Singh, Partner at Adams & Adams highlighted some of the key differences between the trademark and copyright concepts, revealing a few surprises with some of the examples he used to outline the distinction between the two, what it means and why it is important in the branding world.

"Put life before the category and before the brand in order to deploy the emotion that is needed to connect with your audience," says Chairman of Yellowwood and advertising commentator, Andy Rice. He doled out his insights from Cannes award-winning advertising and campaigns to elaborate on the advertising phenomenon of H2H - Humour to Heart strings and how emotions drive brands.

Lisa Mallett - Marketing Communications Director SA and sub-Saharan Africa, LandRover; Dr Doug Mattheus - Executive Head: Marketing, Cell C and Odile Hufkie - Brand Marketing Manager, Cape Union Mart and K-Way discussed the risks and rewards of aligning your brand to an ambassador. All agreed that credibility and authenticity are crucial in the selection of a brand ambassador and to tie ambassadors into campaigns instead of building campaigns around brand ambassadors.

Dr Carla Enslin from Vega School of Brand Leadership spoke about 'Borderless brands'. Central to her message was how major cities such as New York used a brand framework with a very strong public-private partnership with various degrees of alignment between the city, region and country to manifest a vision and culture that is the envy of many less iconic destinations.

In their conversation about what creates a successful brand Dr Sean McCoy, CEO of HKLM and Doug de Villiers, Group CEO of Interbrand Sampson de Villiers described a brand as 'a promise made and a promise kept' and spoke about the power of marketing solutions and creativity to enable a brand to have an intrinsic business value and drive the value of a business.

The host MC was comedian Nik Rabinowitz with MSG Afrika's CIO Andile Kumalo and Ivan Moroke, Chairman of Brand Council SA chairing the panel discussions.

Top Brands Awards

The Top Brands Awards are held in honour of brands rated by users and non-users in the Business and Consumer sector. The research and fieldwork is conducted by TNS.



"The economic climate has been tough and I'm sure marketers have been under pressure to get both products as services to their clients and ensure business continuity. The Top Brands survey has become a coveted tool for marketers and we take pride in being able to provide this useful research to the industry," says Ormerod.

Winners

- Koo reclaimed the Overall Favourite Brand Award since its previous win in 2012, making this its third win in the category in the past five years.
- Telecommunications provider Vodacom was the biggest winners of the day, taking first prize in both the Business and Consumer categories for telecoms and the first to win the Grand Prix for Overall Favourite Brand in the Business category, walking away with three awards.
- Eskom walked away with the 'Green' Grand Prix Award for preserving the environment and harnessing the country's natural resources, based on spontaneous awareness among consumers.
- Pick n Pay's Smart Shopper loyalty programme took top honours.
- Old Mutual recorded an uninterrupted 12 wins in the Consumer Long Term Insurance category.
- Avis has maintained its premium position since 2004 in the Business Car Hire category.
- Engen in the Petrol Station category maintains its fifth consecutive year victory among consumers.
- Standard Bank is now in its third year in first position in the Retail Banks Consumer category.
- Maintaining the lead from last year were the following favourite brands Avon, Johnnie Walker, Nokia, Nike, Tastic, Ricoffy, Spur, Shoprite, Samsung, Mercedes Benz, Clover and Discovery Health.
- The Robyn Putter Agency of the Year Award went to FCB South Africa for the second year in a row.

A complete list of winners will be published in the Top Brands supplement in the 30 August 2015 edition of the *Sunday Times*.