

Creating Content For the Right Audience
For Solafunmi Sosanya - Senior Channels Manager ViacomCBS Networks Africa

Result-oriented steps to consider in creating content for the right audience - Senior Channels Manager ViacomCBS Networks Africa

When we hear the word 'content' from a non-business perspective, it brings to mind the feeling of satisfaction and peace, being content with oneself. Then, switching lens and looking at it from a brand or business perspective, the word 'content' encapsulates the creation and generation of ideas presented in written or visual formats, with the end goal of appealing to your buyer persona, encouraging them to take the desired action. The confluence of both definitions points to a known fact - good content brings success, a sense of peace and achieves a marketing objective. Content is an indispensable part of our everyday lives; it is impossible to avoid. That quick google search to find the meaning of a new word, the results that show are all content created by someone else. The pictures, videos, memes and GIFs on your Instagram feed are content. Tutorial videos for that new course you just signed up for are also content. We are daily consumers of content. It answers our questions, entertains us, educates us, keeps us informed and guides our decisions.

As a business owner or brand, content helps you attract and engage your potential customers, ultimately generating revenue for your business. Therefore, content as a marketing strategy is a growth-critical tool for businesses. In this digital age, where most brands relate directly with their audience online, good content is especially effective for growing audience engagement, answering their questions, building trust, improving conversions, generating leads and developing a strong brand presence.

The key, however, to achieving success with your content is creating for the right audience. Imagine searching Google for a tutorial on how to set up a podcast studio, and you find results on how to lose weight. While the content on how to lose weight is accurate and great, you are not the right target audience; you don't need the information at that time. The same applies to businesses; creating great content not tailored to the right audience is a mismatch. Creating good content is one; identifying and targeting it to the right audience is another. They both go hand in hand, and should not exist without the other. It is only when both are smartly married that they are enabled to rake in great results. Creating good content for the right audience can be likened to the process of building a new house. You dare not start without a blueprint. In that same vein, there should be no content creation without a plan. Therefore, before any marketing efforts are made, it is imperative to define the target audience - these are the specific group of people expected to purchase a product or service. Defining the right

audience differs slightly from the target market. The target market houses anyone that may be interested in a product or service, while the audience is the specific group of people brand marketing efforts are focused on. This may be through a digital marketing campaign, social media campaign or a social network. Identifying the right audience gives room for a complete understanding of their purchase path and pain points, this guides in creating effective content for them.

A proven guide in narrowing down the right target audience is through market research. The benefits that accrue from research cannot be overemphasised. It provides valuable data on what already exists in the market, room for growth and an opportunity to learn from the experience of predecessors. Useful data can be collated through a SWOT analysis - a business's strengths and weaknesses, along with opportunities and threats. This market research also encompasses location, demographics (gender, age, income level), psychographics (lifestyle, values, hobbies, behaviour), industry, market trends, economic shifts, motivations, buying habits, persona (pain points) and competition. Insight on all these factors contributes immensely in helping to identify the right target audience.

Let's consider the newly launched series by ViacomCBS Networks Africa, Nickmusic, a local first for African kids on their Nickelodeon sub-brand channel, Nicktoons. This locally produced show is a fun-filled family-friendly show playing fan favourites and up and coming tunes that both parents and children can enjoy together after school. The show features music from African and international artists from all over the world and is hosted by the young talented social changemaker Lerai Rakoditsoe, who has made history as the first African face for the channel.

Over time, there have been noticeable changes in listening habits, identified by research. Africans want representation and inclusivity, especially in the media; they want their stories to be told authentically. We identified this need early through research and solidified our commitment to grow local relevance and content through the various TV shows. Leaning on this data from market research, we are now solidifying our commitment by tapping into music as a passion point for our local viewers with the introduction of a family-friendly local music show and Lerai Rakoditsoe as a symbol of representation and inclusivity for African youths all over the continent. This has been so far embraced by great success as Africans not only feel represented and included but also serves as a motivation that anything is possible. The best part is the showcase of African talents to the world. Seeing how African stars such as Burna Boy and Wizkid are dazzling globally, Nickmusic is creating room for the growth and birth of more original talents embedded in the continent.

Additionally, the also newly launched reality TV series Inside Life with Erica on MTV Base, which details the private life of actress and former Big Brother Naija housemate Erica Nlewedim, has so far been a viewer favourite as reality TV lovers love the new series. Through research, we were able to explore the changing nature of audience participation and active viewership when it comes to Reality TV. Following results from our study, we then created Inside Life with Erica, a show that is pushing the boundaries of this participatory culture. This smartly marries our drive to provide our viewers with premium entertainment and storytelling with original scripted and non-scripted shows. By doing this, we created the right content for the right audience and achieved success.

It is, therefore, imperative that brands pay more attention not just to creating content but creating for the right audience. This will have ripple effects in positioning for brand sustainability and will get the desired results from the audience.