

The power of social media and influence in today's 4th Industrial Revolution

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It is a well-known fact that social media has now gained traction and has taken over basic interaction with people communicating using Facebook, twitter, messenger, Instagram, Whatsapp and various other social media platforms available.



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Data is increasingly becoming more valuable than airtime, simply because we want to keep up with the rest of the world. That being said, data costs remain considerably high in certain countries like South Africa, unlike in other countries that offer unlimited free Wi-Fi connectivity in central locations. Competition exists from the various network providers on who can offer a relatively lower or attractive package to consumers.



SA mobile data costs among world's most expensive

5 Oct 2016



The Fourth Industrial Revolution

With the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, marketing communication tools and practices need to be re-examined to aggressively create power and influence of products, services, and brands through social media and digital marketing.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is characterised by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital and biological spheres, collectively referred to as cyber-physical systems. According to the World Economic Forum Global Risks Report 2017, "the Fourth Industrial Revolution has the potential to raise income levels and improve the quality of life for all people.

Traditional integrated marketing communication tools include advertising, sales promotions, public relations direct marketing and personal selling. Currently, digital marketing has consumed the space and is where brands and companies need to invest more time, energy and resources. In simple term - digital marketing is when products or services are marketed using digital technologies like the Internet, mobile phones, display advertising in shopping centres, and any other digital medium.

Social media

Just about everything is now digitised, and as individuals, it presents an opportunity to be technologically savvy. As individuals, we are brands walking and believe it not, some are even ambassadors of a brand that they indirectly represent. Indirectly, we are marketers and influencers because of the social media presence and following we have.

Social media applications are simple to download, simple to create a profile, and finding friends and chatting away even simpler. Social media gives us the relevant power to showcase our unique characters, lifestyles, families, the good and bad times we go through. Social media gives us the necessary platform to promote and market our brands, products, and services at basically no cost.

We all use these platforms for different reasons – to inform, to educate, to expose, to market, to promote, etc. Certain brands and companies nowadays utilise social media influencers to market and promote their products and services – a simple example being the Kim Kardashian West or Kylie Jenner. With the huge following that these individuals have on Instagram, brands can simply pay them to promote and market their products or services thus influencing the purchase decision by the consumer.

With great power comes responsibility

Who wouldn't want to be connected? But with power comes responsibility. The responsibility of being cautious about what we post and what we share with the world. Policies are in place in most workplaces and some individuals have seen themselves being dismissed or being taken to court over content that they have uploaded.

It also includes the responsibility of protecting yourself, your loved ones, your possessions, and your ideas – revealing your location might be detrimental in some cases or plotting your work can be at risk of being stolen and used by someone else.

Thieves are on social media, robbers are on social media, paedophiles are on social media, stalkers are on social media, content and idea copyrighters are on social media. Responsibility should be exercised when using Social media and Digital Marketing in today's 4th Industrial Revolution because we have seen the worldwide reach, power and influence that it possesses.

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