

Cost per attention - A new currency for advertisers



By [Audrey Naidoo](#)

27 Jul 2016

"Marketing is a contest for people's attention," Seth Godin.

We are living in an attention deficit economy where attention is now seen as a currency for advertisers. According to Forbes, the 2014 FIFA Soccer World Cup attracted 3.2 billion people worldwide and resulted in 770 billion minutes of attention for advertisers. This means that advertisers would pay premium rates to gain the attention of the audience. Astounding numbers but a reality in an age where everyone is competing for attention.



With the explosion of information sources, consumers are viewing between 2000 and 5000 messages a day with an average human attention span of eight seconds. As digital evolves, so does the human brain. Our brains have the capability to adjust to changing times and how information is processed and digested.

There are a few reasons why this is happening:

- Explosion of social media platforms
- Technology adoption rate – mobile is now first screen
- Multi-screen usage and behaviours
- New media formats – images, video, short-form text
- Traditional content moving into digital formats eg. Magazines, print, radio

This becomes a challenge for marketers to gain and keep the attention of consumers in an environment which is in constant change. The question is how can marketers grab the attention of the consumer in eight seconds?

- **Relevance** – don't shout out what you want to say. Instead shout out what the customer wants to hear
- **Snackable content** – Visuals, videos, micro messages all work well for social media. Present your brand narratives in storytelling, in art, in music – in cultural language. Consumers want fresh, entertaining content.
- **NEWISM** – consumers want to see the new. They want to be captivated and excited. They want to be the first to be part of what's happening. As we celebrate innovation, consumers expect to see Newism in different forms, shapes and sizes. There is no defined road to NEWISM but you know it when you see it. Someone ignites it and it catches

like wildfire for a given period of time until something else comes along. Brands like Apple have continuously found ways to keep the excitement in their new product launches. People expect it!

- **Call to actions** – use #hashtags to continue the conversations, link call-to-actions back to your objectives, and create natural synergies between screens that can elicit a response.
- **Be in the NOW** – follow and leverage appropriately on the trends. By trends I mean technology trends, media trends, current events and content trends. It enables brands to be more agile in their marketing approach. Long-form campaigns are becoming redundant as consumers are always on. Brands are intermittently on, thus widening the gap between themselves and the consumer.
- **Personalisation** – personalisation becomes a powerful attention grabber when we speak to the right audience. Insights driven marketing is the key to success.
- **Authenticity** – remember that you are speaking to a human. There is no need to over-dress your brand and communicate formally in a manner that creates barriers between you and the consumer. Be yourself and allow your brand personality and character to come through in the content you deliver. Dress down and show your human side. A good example of brands that have got this right is Dove – Real Beauty Campaign and Coke – Naming Campaign.

Brands need to create engaging experiences for consumers across moments that matter. We cannot buy consumers attention anymore, **we need to earn it**.

ABOUT AUDREY NAIDOO

I am a professional marketer working with full experience in both traditional and digital marketing. In my current role within Absa, I am responsible for all things digital including influencing and managing the group digital media investment. Focus areas include optimisation of all campaigns, insights driven marketing, innovation and thought leadership. I am a publisher and really passionate about marketing in the future and enabling marketers to upskill and understand the environment we operate in. I freelance on a part-time basis.

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