

Siba Mtongana's recipe for successful brand building

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26 Oct 2021

On the third day of [Loeries Creative Week](#), Siba and Brian Mtongana hosted a masterclass speaking to building an authentic and impactful brand.



We have heard a lot recently about building brands with authenticity in mind in order to make a meaningful impact. But how is that possible, how do we do it, and what do these words really mean in the context of branding?

These are the kinds of questions Siba tackled, during a masterclass at Loeries Creative Week 2021, using her brand as a case study for how she found success through telling her personal story. For Siba, understanding your history and where you come from is essential to building an authentic brand.

What is an authentic brand?

According to Marty Neumeier, American author and speaker, a brand is not what you say it is, it's what they say it is. It is the gut feeling a person gets when they think about your brand and what you have to say. The 'they' in this case that he is referring to are your audience - your customers, the people who will decide whether or not to invest in what you have to offer.

Personal branding exists with the intention of influencing the public perception of an individual. Essentially, personal branding is used to differentiate yourself from the competition.

How does this idea coincide with impact?

According to the Mtonganas, impact is drawing the line between influencing people to buy something and influencing change in the industry, and the people who are part of that industry. Impact is what starts to touch people's lives and truly build a connection with your audience and consumers. This falls neatly into the idea of using authenticity to make an impact. As authenticity is simply something that is genuine, it has an undisputed origin.

How does Siba do it?

Siba Mtongana, a celebrity chef who hails from the Eastern Cape, has taken to heart the idea of building a brand from the base of authenticity and storytelling.

With family at the core of her brand, Siba incorporates this messaging into every aspect of her business. As a mother of four and a wife (alongside her successful brand building), she finds that connecting with her audience on this basis grants her a personal point of perspective she wouldn't otherwise have. Her husband, Brian, is also part of her brand story.

The second part of Siba's brand, which comes to the forefront, is how proud she is of her heritage. Her story started in the Eastern Cape and has been taken around the globe. She always takes her brand and her cooking back to where she came from, allowing her audience to partake in the stunning culinary arts of South Africa, because she always ensures her dishes are friendly for the home cook to make.

Beyond keeping her family and heritage close, Siba always ensures that she makes decisions that align with her brand. For Siba, the decisions she makes need to always be in accordance with her values and the values she has established for her brand, even if those decisions are difficult to make at the time. It's always about what the message will be in the long run, and not what she can get in the immediate sense.

Building a brand for the future

The phenomenon that is Siba Mtongana takes work that sticks to the bona fide branding we look for. Through her social media, the recipes she makes and the decisions she makes for the future of her business, everything falls into the messaging that Siba chooses to take to her audience, with no exception.

Even during Covid-19, when she was not able to film due to travel restrictions, she started filming from home to still connect with her fans and viewers. Even though the filming was not as clean as it would be with FoodNetwork, it presented itself as an opportunity to further the messaging she has built for so many years.

And that is exactly it. Through hard work and a clear message, Siba has found roaring success by using her story to connect with people. As a celebrity chef who has had the privilege of cooking for President Cyril Rhamaposa, has written books and had a Harvard study conducted on her method of brand building, she is unequivocally a prime example of what authentic brand building is and what it could mean for the success of your future.

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