

How brands should interact with young people during lockdown

 By Jessica Tennant

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Arena Events has been hosting various online events catering to different issues affecting the media, marketing and advertising industries and as part of our #YouthMonth content feature, we're covering their *Sunday Times* Gen Next series.



The first episode looked at how brands should interact with young people during the Covid-19 lockdown. The discussion was led by Bongani Chinkanda, CEO of HDI Youth Consultancy, and included young professionals:

- Pat Mahlangu, founder and MD of Paton Brands, an online media platform and boutique digital marketing agency,
- Robynne de Waal, a graphic designer at Iconic Collective, and
- Pamela Mtanga, a self-employed social media manager and influencer marketing campaign manager.

They shared their perspectives on how brands should interact with young people during the lockdown and their sentiment on how companies should keep building their brands and honouring their values through youth engagement strategies during this time.



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Starting the conversation, Chinkanda said that he remembers, about 10 years ago, when Unilever started talking about sustainability, saying that they led the conversation around purpose-led marketing, and that it has since grown exponentially over the years, and that one of the things that millennials and GenZ look for in brands are brands that have purpose. “And we’ve seen it globally. I mean we saw the great work by Nike in supporting Serena [Williams]. We’ve seen brands locally like Nedbank – they speak of themselves as a bank that does good, and so on and so forth, and I always find it interesting that people talk about purpose when there’s really no crisis. You know, you can support malaria and fight hunger but what Covid-19 has actually brought is a proper crisis to the world, as we understand it. When you think about it: SAA is about to go under; there are no commercial flights globally; who would have thought that Louis Vuitton would be making face masks

and that Isuzu would be helping out in the Eastern Cape...”



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Mahlangu said that now more than ever brands ought to act on a more human level and focus on their actions and actually show up for their consumers. De Waal has identified a sense of panic amongst brands not knowing where the right market is, and so not knowing how to market their brands or how to approach their consumers. While Mtanga thinks a number of brands are getting it right in terms of purpose-driven marketing and tailoring their social media strategies and content to their new consumers.

To find out more of Mahlangu, De Waal and Mtanga's perspectives on this, watch the YouTube video of the event below:

For more, take a look at Arena's digitised events page at [ArenaEvents.Africa](#).

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