

# The Hansel and Gretel of advertising



By [Audrey Naidoo](#)

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Once upon a time there was a Brand and a Consumer. The Brand continually spent money on advertising to Consumers all over the place - above-the-line, below-the-line, online and even through the line. Media owners made loads of money and the world of business was a happy place.

Brands left a trail of “breadcrumbs” for Consumers to follow hoping and wishing the customer takes the path that will lead them to the brand but alas very few did.

And then came along cookies and the Consumer loved eating delicious cookies. The cookies would follow the Consumer around to understand who they were, what they purchased and how they behaved. All the Brands bought cookies too as they knew this was one way to get their Consumers to visit them and maybe stay a bit longer.



For those of us who remember the story of Hansel and Gretel would know that when the kids left a trail of “pebbles” they found their way home. However the trail of “breadcrumbs” got them lost. Many brands are still and will continue to leave “breadcrumbs” for consumers to follow.

As marketers operate within a complex ecosystem across traditional and digital environments, it becomes more difficult to navigate and steer the customer towards the brand. A Brand Experience Framework is needed to cohesively look at the

consumer journey and then match touchpoints to reach, engage and convert consumers within the marketing funnel.

In the past, touchpoints were minimal and it was easy for brands to communicate a single message with a big creative idea. As digital and technology platforms grow and mature, consumers are able to choose their own pathways and “pull” the information they require to make a purchase decision. Consumer marketing is growing and gaining traction as consumers become more confident in the online space and more empowered to independently make purchasing decisions.

It also means that brands can craft a path to reach consumers at the moments that matter with the right message at the right time.

We can only arrive at this place when we as brands start to shift our thinking and strategically craft our marketing efforts to optimize on the different consumer touchpoints to reach our desired objectives.

The question you may be asking is how does one go about crafting a Brand Experience Framework?

**Step one:** Understand who your audience is and where will you find them. Insights driven marketing can assist in shaping the selection of your touchpoint, your media mix as well as your budgets. The customer’s journey to your brand is not linear.

Identify all touchpoints that your customer interacts with your brand eg. Online, social platforms, store, TV, company website, App, etc. Remember we are operating in a cross-media world and understanding that each media type plays a unique role.

**Step two:** Assess the role of each platform and how much effort should be placed on each. Take into consideration the marketing funnel and level of interaction required to close the sale. You have an opportunity to reach a total population to create awareness; your audience will then filter into consideration or the need to get more information about your product and/or service. Use effective targeting methods to reach your target audiences.

**Step three:** Define your message structures across your media touchpoints. Again align your messages with the marketing funnel in mind instead of adopting a generic creative message. Consider messages that can be built for personas or communities. Personalise your messages where relevant.

**Step four:** Deliver strong brand experiences across touchpoints. Use social media platforms to create dialogues and essentially trilogues where the community shares the message with their circle of influence. Use micro moments to create an emotional connection with consumers to steer them towards the brand.

In order to reach your end goal of intelligently approaching your advertising efforts, brands need to overhaul their existing approach. We can only win share of heart when we find meaningful connections with our customers. The days of traditional advertising are numbered and it’s now time to re-define our path. Do we leave “breadcrumbs” or “pebbles” in the customer’s journey to the brand?

## 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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