

# WFA reveals groundbreaking research into Africa's marketing challenges

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## Global brands need to work harder to understand African consumers



New research into the state of marketing expertise and opportunity amongst client-side marketers across Africa has been released by the World Federation of Advertisers.

Organised in co-operation with Millward Brown and national advertiser associations in Cameroon (CMA), Kenya (MSK), Morocco (GAM), Nigeria (ADVAN), South Africa (MASA) and Zimbabwe (MAZ), the results are based on 82 responses from marketers working for well-known local and global brands at a country or regional level.

The results highlight the key challenges that all brands face in Africa, notably the lack of reliable data, including media consumption and retail performance, as well as the progress that marketers in the region are making in delivering more effective marketing.

They also reveal the gap in consumer understanding that local and regional marketers say exists at a global level. 55% respondents agreed with the statement "global colleagues do not understand consumers in our local markets" and only 20% disagreed.

The local versus global debate also applied to local agency partners, with 58% of respondents agreeing that local agencies have a superior understanding of local business issues than international agency brands.

Nevertheless there was also a lot of common ground with marketers in other regions with key priorities cited as brand positioning, integration, consumer insights and marketing analytics. This reflects many of the core concerns that WFA members globally have identified in our most-recent survey of marketer priorities, where integrated activity planning and digital marketing are the top priorities.

The results have been released today as part of the WFA's first-ever annual gathering in Africa, with WFA's Global Marketer Week taking place in Morocco from March 16-20. They will be presented alongside co-host and Moroccan advertiser association (GAM) at a one-off African Accelerator event on March 19th designed to inform global marketers about one of the world's fastest-growing regions.

Key results include:

- A lack of basic market level data is hindering attempts to generate insights, with 62% of respondents agreeing with this statement. Separately 45% of respondents also agreed that a lack of infrastructure is the key barrier to effective market research. One respondent cited the need for "African solutions" to these challenges as likely to be more effective than importing Western approaches.
- This lack of basic data is also holding back investment in advertising with 55% of respondents citing this as a barrier to investment and 50% claiming it was stopping them accurately measuring return on marketing investment in their market or region. Nevertheless, some marketers did say they were making strong progress in effectively understanding return on media and marketing investment. Thirty-nine percent of respondents said their home market was "a fair way along the road" while 35% said they had "just begun [their] journey" at a regional level.

- Tools used to measure return on investment are still evolving, with 72% using brand tracking, 60% media tracking and 52% applying direct response analysis. Econometric research/media mix modelling is being used by 25% of respondents with attribution modeling applied by 17% of respondents.
- Marketers are generally bullish about the resources they have to deliver effective marketing solutions with 34% saying they were a fair way along the road at a regional level and 30% claiming similar progress in their home markets. Twenty-three per cent described themselves as fairly advanced in their home markets and 16% claimed to be making similar progress at a regional level. However 22% said they had not started to make progress yet at regional level.
- There is still much to be done to generate actionable consumer insights with 45% of respondents saying they had just begun this journey at a regional level and 33% saying they were at the same stage at a local level. It is not all work in progress for all African marketers with 20% of respondents saying they were a fair way down the road at a regional level and 25% giving this answer for their home market. Sixteen per cent of respondents also claimed to be fairly advanced in their home markets. One reason why some companies may struggle in this regard is a lack of resource with 43% of all respondents saying consumer insight is not sufficiently funded.
- Marketing is seen as an attractive career choice according to 61% of respondents but 41% also said there were not enough young talented people coming into the industry. A further 35% said the best talent was being poached by other countries/regions.
- There is exciting entrepreneurialism in Africa with 62% of respondents agreeing that "there are plenty of very exciting new agency start-ups emerging".

*"Africa offers huge and untapped potential for the brands that can not only manage their budgets efficiently but also connect with its populations via powerful insights. We should not underestimate both the amazing work that's already taking place in Africa but also the opportunity for it to grow even faster," said Stephan Loerke, WFA Managing Director.*

*"Africa's main challenges lie in its enormous size and diversity; it's imperative that companies wanting to succeed and grow here recognise that the continent isn't one economy or homogenous population block. Africa is a conglomerate of 54 countries that, more often than not, don't share policies and attitudes, and have evolved differently through their social and economic pasts.*

*The WFA Study highlights that, for marketers, success requires a thorough understanding of local cultures, beliefs, customs, economics, and practices. Companies and practitioners that have followed globalised assumptions and methods have often failed to make an impact, and we've seen that a key factor for success is having marketing operations headed by locals who understand and connect with what consumers need," said Charles Foster, Managing Director, Millward Brown Africa & Middle East.*

## About the WFA

The World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) is the voice of marketers worldwide, representing 90% of global marketing communications spend - roughly US\$700 billion per annum - through a unique, global network of the [world's biggest markets](#) and [biggest marketers](#). WFA's champions responsible and effective marketing communications worldwide. More information at [www.wfanet.org](http://www.wfanet.org)

## About Millward Brown

Millward Brown is a leading global research agency specialising in advertising effectiveness, strategic communication, media and brand equity research. Millward Brown helps clients grow great brands through comprehensive research-based qualitative and quantitative solutions. Specialist global practices include Millward Brown Digital (a leader in digital effectiveness and intelligence), Firefly Millward Brown (our global qualitative network), a Neuroscience Practice (using neuroscience to optimize the value of traditional research techniques), and Millward Brown Vermeer (a strategy

consultancy helping companies maximise financial returns on brand and marketing investments). Millward Brown operates in more than 55 countries and is part of Kantar, WPP's data investment management division. Learn more at [www.millwardbrown.com](http://www.millwardbrown.com).

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