

# Challenging to achieve Ask Afrika Icon Brands status in the FMCG industry

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In the complex South African FMCG landscape, achieving Ask Afrika Icon Brands™ status is no small feat. These brands have a tough battle to attract and retain consumers' attention, conquer places in hearts and wallets, and build a loyal consumer community.



Ask Afrika Icon Brands™ provides a unique platform where South Africa's most beloved and trusted brands are recognised and honoured. The initial data analysis included thousands of brands in 204 product categories, and only 52 brands across all categories ultimately achieved Ask Afrika Icon Brands™ status.



“TGI is the consumer study from which Ask Afrika Icon Brands™ results are obtained, and FMCG is the largest category we measure. 92% of the brands that achieve Icon Brands status fall into this category, so the award is not only an accolade but also proof of a brand's enduring commitment to excellence!” says Maria Petousis, executive: TGI and benchmarks at Ask Afrika.

To understand the value of the Ask Afrika Icon Brands™ study, one must understand what it measures. Brands achieving Icon Brands status are not only popular; they are deeply ingrained in the essence of South African society, and enjoy unwavering consumer loyalty

and trust.

The South African FMCG industry is known as a diverse and dynamic sector, and is forced to constantly innovate and develop to keep up with changing consumer preferences. Brands must navigate several challenges to achieve and maintain coveted Icon Brands status.

## Market saturation and intense competition

FMCG in South Africa is extremely competitive, with both local and international players competing for market share. Successful brands have been known to differentiate themselves through innovation, quality products, and effective marketing strategies. But to sustainably stand out in this space, brands must also forge emotional bonds with the consumer.

Petousis explains that “...on the one hand, the FMCG sector is performing particularly well. The first 10 places in the Ask Afrika Icon Brands™ study are all FMCG brands. On the other hand, we are seeing a significant decrease in FMCG brands achieving Icon Brand status. In 2021, 55 brands achieved Icon Brand status, in 2023 only 48. In 2021, 55 brands achieved platinum status, compared to 42 in 2023. It is therefore becoming increasingly challenging for a brand to become

an icon.”

## Changing consumer behaviour

Consumers across the socio-economic spectrum struggle with tighter budgets. This inevitably leads to a change in consumer behavior and preferences. According to Petousis, the research clearly shows that although many brands will have awareness among consumers, and even positive regard for the brand, but this does not automatically mean consumers will reach for their wallets and purchase the product.

## From awareness to sales



Sarina de Beer, director: international products at Ask Afrika, explains that "Lucky Star, which holds the overall top spot this year, has been able to successfully convert brand awareness into repeated sales occasions. Consumers are not only aware of the brand but are also willing to put their hands in their pockets to purchase the products repeatedly and loyally. This is not only critical for brand success, but business success!"

## Ethical and sustainable practices

A growing trend in the FMCG sector is ethical sourcing, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility. Petousis agrees and says that the newest consumer segments in the TGI study all value issues such as social and environmental justice, environmentally friendly products, and recyclable product packaging. Brands prioritising these aspects gain favour with consumers and will improve their brand reputation.

## Holistic approach

"Achieving Ask Afrika Icon Brands™ status requires a holistic approach. Aspects such as a commitment to quality, consumer involvement, constant innovation and adaptability, and integration between marketing and sales are all part of the success recipe. There is no quick way for a business to gain Icon Brand status. This is very clear from the brands that achieve Ask Afrika Icon Brands™ status year after year", de Beer explains.

TGI is a powerful and valuable resource for the Icon Brands study due to the study's size. Brands can conduct deep analyses and profile consumers at every stage of the marketing and sales process. The fact that TGI releases data every six months also makes the process of decision-making and implementation faster and more effective. The survey also provides extensive media consumption data which is collected along with the brand data that can assist brands in determining whether their channel strategies are performing as desired.

Companies wishing to purchase customised Ask Afrika Icon Brands™ or TGI reports, or learn more about the new consumer segments, can contact Maria Petousis at [maria.petousis@askafrika.co.za](mailto:maria.petousis@askafrika.co.za).

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