

# Africa's development potential is about reputation

 By [Joanna Oosthuizen](#)

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As the bitter cold January winds swept through the alpine town of Davos this year, delegates at the 2015 World Economic Forum portrayed a warm picture of economic growth in Africa, despite agreement that various challenges still needed to be overcome.

What was clear is that investment and expansion into the African continent is only going to increase. What is clearer is that for PR professionals, this represents unparalleled opportunities.

We have heard it before. Reputation and trust are undeniably important for businesses seeking to deliver operational success. For organisations wanting to operate in Africa successfully, a clear and deliberate effort at managing the right conversations with the right stakeholders is what clients are demanding.

Without a doubt, PR and social media programmes that deliver at the right levels are key to unlocking meaningful environments that serve business value. Simply put, it's time for PR and social to step up and drive reputation as a foundation for brands seeking to unlock a continent with over one billion untapped consumers.



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Our own experience in managing the growth agenda of brands on the continent has showed that a balance between global strategic excellence and world-class local on-the-ground execution is key. We have grown and geared our own network to deliver on these commitments.

With offices in 31 countries and affiliate relationships in an additional 19 African markets, we are able to balance high level business ambitions with the local nuances needed to make our clients' brands credible parts of the right conversations across separate markets and in the region as a whole. We need to build sustainable reputations by making brands part of locally relevant conversations using a balance of social and traditional media to leverage this.

As traditions vary from country to country, markets change and media differs, the art of good PR in Africa is the art of partnering with the best local agencies. But why stop there? African expansion is seldom confined to just one country - neither should your PR agency. Key to this is the right agency partner, who understands how to channel business ambitions with relevance and credibility.

With clients like Sasol Ltd, PPC Ltd and GIBB already making moves into the continent, we see the benefits daily of leveraging our network to support meaningful impact for our clients.

*Ogilvy Johannesburg and Ogilvy Cape Town won six Prism Awards in 2014 (three gold and three silver) as well as a Special Mention.*

## ABOUT JOANNA OOSTHUIZEN

Joanna is MD of Ogilvy Public Relations South Africa (<http://ogilvy.co.za/about-us/ogilvy-pr/>). She started her career at Microsoft SA before going on to London, where she worked at Schroders Investment Management. In 2005 Joanna returned and joined Ogilvy PR SA as an account director in the agency's consumer team, later becoming consumer business director. Contact Joanna on tel +27 (0)11 709 9630, email [joanna.oosthuizen@ogilvypr.co.za](mailto:joanna.oosthuizen@ogilvypr.co.za) and follow @joopr24 on Twitter.

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