

In the business of doing good

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

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More and more big companies are engaging in corporate social initiatives as part of their business strategy. But how do they solve the conundrum of connecting with an audience that is growing increasingly savvy to traditional advertising ploys, adding to their bottom line and doing something socially meaningful at the same time?



DJs for Bread

Enter cause-based marketing. At face value it seems like fundraising with a twist and it probably is, but it also makes for a successful corporate social investment (CSI) business model for one marketing enterprise, [Bigger than Me](#).

Building a better South Africa

On his return after a sojourn abroad, seasoned marketer Greg Viljoen wanted to find a way to marry his passion for his job with building a better South Africa. So he came up with Bigger than Me - a conceptual think tank which combines all three of the elements brands are looking for and wraps them in a package of sports or entertainment events.

Bigger than Me is the CSI events division of Black Mango, a music management and booking company representing artists mainly from townships.

"We create an experiential concept around a CSI project for our clients. It usually involves an online campaign which creates talkability in the media and reaches the brand's target market. But, more importantly, it highlights the brand's ethos in terms of social responsibility," Viljoen says.

The concept is usually reward-based, which brings brands, their target market and communities together to solve a particular social issue. The brand gets a return on their investment through the content, PR and marketing created, while at the same time engaging with their audience, who are rewarded for volunteering by entry to the event. The community also benefits from the contribution of the volunteers.

DJs for Bread

Built around the social issue of food security and with the support of local and international DJs, Bigger Than Me organised an electronic music event in November last year, entitled DJs for Bread.

Volunteers had to give three hours of their time to a community project in Phillipi run by [Foodpods](#), a non-profit organisation that teaches people to grow organic vegetables to feed themselves and to sell on to the community.

In return, the volunteers received a free ticket to an event at Fiction night club in Cape Town featuring top DJs such as Grimehouse, Mix n Blend, Haezer and George Daniel.

The brands involved ticked all the boxes in terms of public relations and corporate social responsibility through the publicity generated by the event. Win, win all around.

Comedians for Smiles

More recently, Bigger than Me teamed up with the [Cipla Foundation](#), the CSI arm of the pharmaceutical company by the same name, to hold a Comedians for Smiles - Flower Power evening at Villiera Wine Estate in Stellenbosch. The 70s-themed event, under the auspices of Cipla's Miles of Smiles initiative, raised funds for Operation Smile which repairs cleft lips and palates in children who would not have access to corrective surgery.

"It provided a branding exercise for Cipla and an evening's entertainment for the audience, who were also exposed to the company's CSI philosophy," says Viljoen.

Social responsibility comes in many guises, but throw in a healthy dose of entertainment that reaches a brand's target audience and helps a cause and you have a winning recipe.

To find out more on any of these initiatives, go to [biggerthanme.co.za](#), [foodpods.co.za](#) or [ciplafoundation.co.za](#).

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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