

Marketing to the youth of 2017

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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Catherine Bothma, MD of HDI Youth Marketeers (HDI), presented attendees at the Sunday Times Generation Next Youth Marketing Conference on Thursday, 11 May, with the key findings from this year's study.



[Catherine Bothma](#)

These findings cover youth culture, behaviour and lifestyle from the perspective of kids, teens and young adults for the purpose of understanding them better and tailoring youth marketing strategies accordingly.

Here's a snapshot of each age category comprising this year's youth...

Kids

If kids could get anything for their birthday, they would want an iPhone, PlayStation 4 or a Samsung Galaxy. "But it's ok if you can't afford those because the one thing they cannot live without are their family and friends, so definitely use that trump card if you're not winning the battle of the iPhone vs PlayStation 4," says Bothma.

Things they can't live without include religion and education, and they would save for this if they could, as well as for a car and international travel.

Kids are happier than any other age group, 75% of the time, although they're a bit worried about their future.

Teens

"At this stage, if you haven't started saving for that car that you're going to buy them when they turn 18 years old, then you better start now," warned Bothma. Next on the list is money, followed by an iPhone. Don't worry, she says, you can use the trump card again as they also can't live without family and friends, religion and education. In addition to being prepared to save for an education and international travel, it's also about looking good, so they would save for clothing as well.

Young adults

Show 'em the money. Young adults generally prefer birthday money to tangible gifts. They're also looking at cars – but they're prepared to work for their car – and going on holiday.

At 62%, they're not as happy as the kids and teens, and outside of that they're seriously worried about their future.

Looking at the global landscape, the African continent is particularly young, especially South Africa and Uganda with 50% and 70% of youth comprising the total population in each respective country. What's interesting is that these youth have direct spending money, and in SA they're spending R137.3bn of their own money annually, across the specified age groups.

"This is where you need to start worrying, because 66% of them on average will be able to persuade you to buy what they want as well, so they will influence your spending power." Kids are particularly good at this – they'll make sure you still get them 1) the cereal they want, 2) the fast food they want, and 3) the energy drinks they want. Yes, kids say they want energy drinks as a top three in pester power. Bothma explains that they feel that "they need more hours in a day because of all the stuff they actually do".

Based on the fact that religion was a common theme amongst the above-mentioned age categories, HDI compiled 10 commandments of marketing the way the youth see it.

Here's the 'holy grail of youth marketing'...

10 commandments of marketing to youth

1. Thou shalt not invade our personal space.
2. Thou shalt always be true to thyself.
3. Thou shalt not be dishonest.
4. Thou shalt be within our reach.
5. Thou shalt bless us with glorious freebies.
6. Thou shalt get face-to-face.
7. Thou shalt consult our opinion.
8. Thou shalt understand before seeking to be understood.
9. Thou shalt not treat us like we're 'just kids'.
10. Thou shalt not try too hard.

Takeaways from these 10 commandments are: don't get in their space; be true; don't lie; be affordable and available; sample, sample, sample; meet them; do your research; listen to them; treat them as equals; don't force it. Basically, invest

in their lives and they'll invest in your brand.

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