

2020 Hindsight for a clearer focus in 2022

Issued by [Kantar](#)

17 Jan 2022

Or should we say 2021 hindsight? Some say our first full pandemic year flew by in the blink of a jaded eye, others say it felt like five years rolled into one. Whatever your thoughts on the year that was, here are Kantar's top learnings to guide you as we enter the unknown of 2022.



Bill Gates himself says there are [reasons for optimism after a difficult year](#). He predicts the acute phase of the pandemic will come to an end in 2022, acknowledging “there were entire days [in 2021] when the only human interaction [many of us] had was through a screen. We’re ready to get back to real life and doing more offscreen in the hopes of restacking the cards for work-life balance.”



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Rearview reflections to clarify your 2021 windscreen view

Kantar 15 Dec 2020



Gates’ optimism tracks with our research from the end of 2020, when [Kantar’s Global Business Compass](#) survey asked 4,500 business leaders across the world – over 900 of them C-suite, in 60+ markets and 40 global businesses for their views. More than half believed the economic drag of the pandemic would last a year or more after the delivery of a vaccine, with more than a quarter expecting their business to take at least two years to fully recover from the crisis.

So, here we go! The outlook for 2022 is promising and it certainly looks set to be the year brands finally get to step into the next normal, especially those that focused on purpose, sustainability, and digital transformation.

Zooming in on media consumption: The true brand challenge of 2022

Because when wave nine of the [Kantar C-19 Barometer study](#)¹ revisited consumer habits, attitudes and expectations in April 2021, it showed that not only do consumers have an active voice in marketing, they also have quite a bit to say about the media. Claimed media consumption was up 25% globally and even higher in Mzansi at 31%, with 27% of local respondents spending more time on social media apps for entertainment than they did pre-pandemic, as well as a 17% increase in connecting virtually, and a 19% increase in working from home.

Our mid-year dipstick revealed the importance of factoring in the ever-changing context, to hit the mark for both short-term growth and long-term brand equity. Take for example one of the winning brands of the pandemic: Zoom, responsible for the oft-unexpected appearance of “[children, pets, vacuum cleaners and even hadedas](#)” in many a remote meeting that could have been an email. Digital platform it may well be, and the fifth-most used social media app in SA, but Zoom’s usually not what comes to mind when we think of media consumption as it’s a ‘work thing’.

Explore the consumer’s perspective on advertising with Media Reactions and Best Liked Ads

Instead, marketers want to know where the online audience spends its downtime – particularly which platforms see consumers most receptive to receiving advertising, to maximise their media ROI. To answer this, Kantar’s [Media Reactions](#) database tapped into the claimed media consumption habits from 14,500 consumers, covering 290 brands in 23 markets, as well as 900 senior marketers around the world. The results showed that we need to rethink our views of media overall, to include but not necessarily replace the old-school proven top performers of TV and radio. Instead, we need to broaden the broadcast category to include today’s streaming winners in audio and video.

As to the creative content, South Africans still want to be entertained and distracted with humour, but they also want to see themselves on screen, better represented in the brand stories of today. Because our annual Best Liked Ads review, which celebrates South Africa’s favourite TV commercials and chosen by the consumers themselves, shows [progressive advertising](#) based on the true diversity of our people is what resonated most with that often-distracted audience.

Rethink retail with ecommerce trends to meet the needs of the next-gen consumers

All that cocooning and home-based functional digital consumer behaviour also made [e-commerce](#) the activity that showed the biggest jump compared to pre-pandemic times, with a 19% increase in online shopping across income levels. But it’s a case of both quality and quantity, as 75% still prefer to shop instore. The increased consumer expectation of a great online shopping experience means brands have had to think fast to overcome South African logistics and delivery infrastructure issues to get things ordered on screen into homes efficiently.

This new digital behaviour looks set to stick in 2022 as South Africans remain cautious in making our way back into the real world, making their circle smaller (sorry, [JR and HHP](#)), as 79% opt to make their purchases close to home, saying that shopping at local stores is important for the community, and 52% paying attention to the provenance of those products that goes beyond general country pride to feeling safer and protected, wherever you are. Because as concerns and priorities in Africa have shifted, so too has the role of business, with the pandemic’s success in both accelerating consumers’ expectations of brands and broadening the definition of brand purpose.

Redefine business success in a pandemic world: All aboard the brand purpose express

Some businesses panicked as the track widened, others thrived in going beyond bland vision statements to create new mission statements that matter, steaming ahead in actively trying to [solve the value-action gap](#).



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Doing good is good for business: How brand purpose can steer your sustainability journey in Africa

Adeola Tejumola, Kantar 4 May 2021



[Kantar BrandZ](#) further tells us which brands are getting this right at a time where the market value equation has been turned on its head: people now want more quality and quantity for less. So much so that the four fundamental areas of brand image – experience, exposure, functionality, and convenience – now account for around 70% of what powers, deepens and shapes consumers’ perceptions, all of which lead to [strong brand equity](#).

Recalibrate your business focus: you will want to have invested in Africa in the future

But what would a spot of future proofing be without the broader context of changing themes on the continent? After all, Africa's population is set to double in the next few decades, coming to represent a quarter of all humanity, so this is where the opportunities lie.

The [third edition of our Africa Life study](#) revealed the evolution of lifestyles, consumer behaviours and next trajectories in the new pandemic context, and brought into firm focus the need for sustainable transformation against the opportunities of the context of the booming informal sector – to the tune of the culture, social commerce and tech backbeat; powered by unconventional ideas; and led by digital education, entrepreneurial hustle, and human capital.



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Ndeye Diagne, Kantar 14 Jan 2022



Quite the mouthful, but crucial to grasp. Because with 90% of consumers in Africa saying it's important to buy products from brands that support causes they care about, brands need to understand the new definition of business success: it's no longer about just profit, but profit with purpose. So, beware the potential trade-off between sustainability, price, and effort. Two-thirds of respondents say despite their best intentions, it's difficult to be more environmentally friendly as these products tend to be more expensive and often less convenient ([paper straws](#), anyone?)



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#BizTrends2022: Consumer shifts in Africa; new intersections and brand opportunities

Ndeye Diagne, Kantar 12 Jan 2022



So, take a shot of Gates' optimism and get a head start on unboxing 2022 by rethinking your brand's value proposition. Look back on the silver linings of the past few months and absorb best practice from the rest of the world. This will ensure your business innovation offers South African solutions to real-world challenges and the new needs of today, with a digital spin that delights our big dreamers in the long-term. That's the Mzansi way.

Want more? Kantar's [Media Trends and Predictions 2022](#) report reveals why marketers need to take direct control of their data in a cookie-less world, with ambitious data strategies that go beyond reach and frequency, as concerns over digital effectiveness see a rebalancing of online and offline ad spend in 2022.

Join the conversation on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) to keep up to date with our comms. Wishing you and yours a safe and successful 2022.

¹ In each wave of our 9-wave C-19 [Barometer study](#), we spoke to a sample of 500 South Africans with internet access, to help brands better understand people's mindset and changing behaviours as the pandemic unfolded.

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