



IAB SA / Kantar's Insights in Action, Session 10

What Women Want: From insights to action for the evolving Afrofeminine in the new era of progressive marketing

Karin Du Chenne, Chief Growth Officer at Kantar Middle East, says strong role models certainly serve as inspiration, but we need to realise all that lights us serves as inspiration to the next person climbing the career ladder. With women carrying a lot of the burden behind the scenes, it's time for brands to better understand those challenges and celebrate the wins along the way to progressive marketing.

With 6.5m people supporting the #challengeaccepted trend that goes beyond the surface-level selfie to promote tolerance and inclusion, it's clear that supporting each other is everything. It's a true win for brands, as [Forbes reports](#) that up to \$12trn could be added to the global GDP by 2025 if we all work to advance equality. Because the hard facts show communication and branding isn't quite there yet globally – this despite the fact that truly representative brands do better than those that focus on just one, often stereotyped target market.

The progressive marketing movement factors in the true state of advertising globally, with many marketers continuing to target according to category stereotypes – women for baby products and laundry, with vehicle and alcohol largely male-skewed. We constantly work to change that unconscious bias.

But many have seen the light and have done the introspection necessary to become more inclusive, with Mattel's Barbie holding its own in the toy market since acknowledging their original aspirational model wasn't necessarily reflective of society. They're also shining a light on empowering role models past and present to inspire more girls as part of their ongoing Dream Gap Project global initiative, because: "Imagining she can be anything is just the beginning. Actually seeing that she can makes all the difference."

But how is this playing out in SA? We see the rising Afrofeminine movement powered by the rise of the matriarch, where women want to be recognised both on their individual merits and through the achievements of their collective power. There's a developing sense of sisterhood, with the likes of She Leads Africa working to break gender boundaries.

They also see themselves as an untaggable force, so don't try to box them in. They don't want to be defined solely on their gender as they challenge expectations with the unexpected. Brands need to showcase the nuanced experiences of different African women and ensure their products are relevant to resonate with this market.

WOMEN DON'T WANT TO BE DEFINED SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF THEIR GENDER—

DEFYING STEREOTYPES AND CHALLENGING EXPECTATIONS



As a lawyer, actress, model, activist and award-winner, Thando Hopa defies all categories, labels, and expectations.



Always #Likeagirl challenges the stereotypes and restrictions often placed on girls and women.



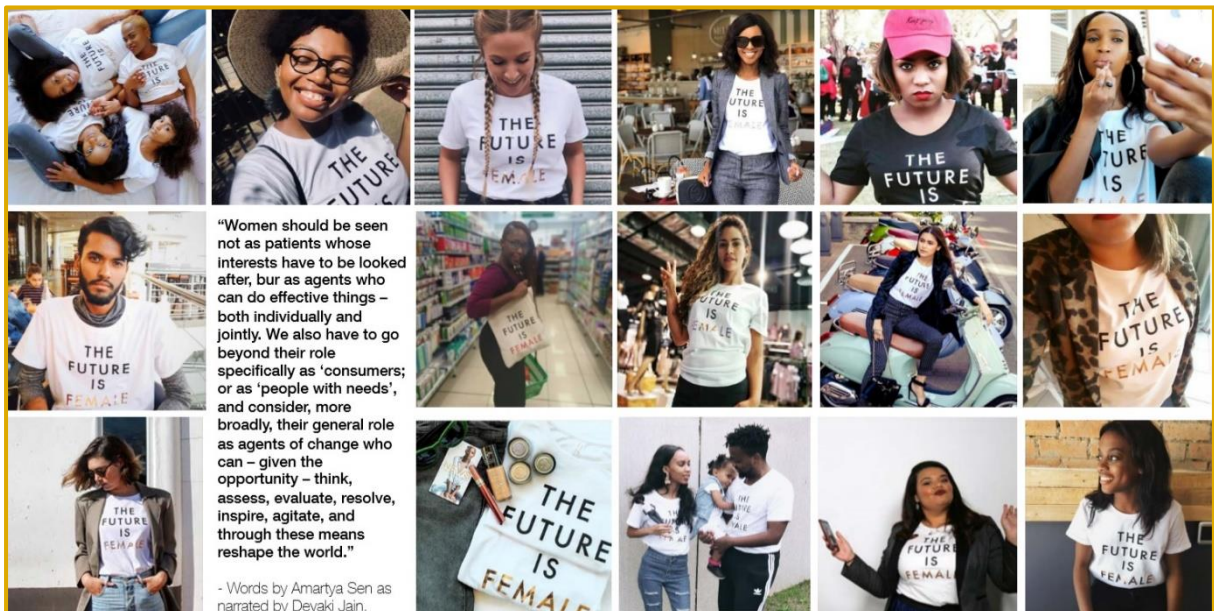
Caster Semenya is a South African athlete who's breaking records whilst challenging the idea of femininity.

They're effectively redefining the concept of Afrofeminism with the understanding that it's not about redefining females' place in the world without displacing men or taking on masculine features. It's about equal opportunities and recognising that there's place for all of us to be 'in the kraal' together.

The Foschini Group (TFG) on building a womxn economy together

Matjie Pride Maunatlala, head of marketing for the Foschini division at TFG, explained how the group's flagship female-centric brands can work together to build a womxn economy – more than a step away from patriarchy, this term includes any human who identifies as female, regardless of assigned sex at birth, actively unlocking barriers to most women's progression challenges. So, with the 'old lady of fashion' turning 95 this year, Foschini has been refreshed with a growth story that's inspired by women and told by t-shirts.

The first t-shirt, stating 'the future is female', launched three years ago on the brand proposition that they're proudly about women. It was initially met by a fair deal of resistance – from male consumers who felt excluded; from female consumers who didn't understand how to build their own way in an inclusive, equal-opportunity future; and internally, from staffers who didn't understand their role. The idea was explained and those who purchased it said they felt empowered to wear emblazoned on their chests what they didn't yet feel empowered to say every day. So, these were being mass-bought for sisters, mothers and friends and men started wearing the shirt as part of the journey.



Foschini also placed large mirrors in malls printed with affirmations like #iamperfect and watched as many steered away from taking selfies. They realised that we are all at different stages of our personal feminism journey, so all brands need to better address intersectionality in discrimination, more effectively interrupting bias in today's progressive world.

Next came the #SebenzaGirl t-shirt. This was less about the vernacular and more about what it stood for – celebrating career achievements, as we all want progress. It's about growth, about brands partnering with women and building more room for knowledge sharing as we market to those personal spaces, not just one day a year but every day. As economies are connected and continuous, you need to be there for the long haul. Finally, with the Womandla t-shirt the group celebrates female power and staying true to yourself.

- BUILDING THE WOMXN ECONOMY -



1.
STAY TRUE TO THE ROLE OF YOUR BRAND.
It's the most important ingredient.



2.
COLLABORATION OVER COMPETITION.
Connecting all the dots = growth!



3.
NORMALIZE COURSE CORRECTION
WHEN NEW LEARNING HAPPENS.
Equality is a journey of learning.

Similarly, brands need to ensure diversity of thinking in the team behind the scenes, to check for any equality blockers that may not have been as clear in the past. Regularly review how your brand interacts with consumers as they've love for brands to better understand them. To get this right we need to collaborate rather than compete in joining the dots, as this is not a space for ownership. Instead, brands need to bravely invest in 'firsts' for their future potential.

If your brand is now in the space to have these conversations internally and you'd like to get buy in from management at the top, don't try tackle everyone at the same time. Slowly build the conversation one-on-one beyond the corporate environment and realise that you'll need to keep pushing boundaries, as what's right for right now may not be right for later.

It's a whole new way of thinking and will evolve as time progresses. As everybody is at a different part of the journey, brands have the opportunity to empower them by personalising moments beyond #WomensMonth, further strengthening the economy while staying true to their core business.

[Click here](#) and [here](#) for further Kantar insights into What Women Want. [Register here](#) to download all decks shared in the #InsightsinAction series!