

# The Feature.za

APRIL 2023

MAGAZINE

*Featuring.*  
BOITUMELO  
KEETSE

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— THE —  
*Modern-day  
Makoti*

**DIGITAL  
MARKETING  
TRENDS:**  
A BUSINESS'S  
STRONGEST  
LEVERAGE

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IMPORTANCE OF  
*Self-Acceptance*

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*Thando Hophe*

MASTERING THE ART OF CONTENT CREATION

## Meet The Creatives



**Miriam Dube**  
Editor in Chief



**Stills by Tom**  
Photographer



**"Transformer"  
Senyeki Makola**  
Art Direction and  
Copy Designer

## Contributors



**Olwethu  
Mokonyane**  
Writer



**Sibongile Nhleko-  
Skhosana**  
Succeeding in  
Business Relationships



**Kgopotso  
Boshomane**  
Food o'clock



**Tshepang Langa**  
"Digital Marketing  
Trends" article

### CONTACT US:

For general enquires, drop us an email at  
[Info@thefeature.co.za](mailto:Info@thefeature.co.za)

For collaborations and Advertising, drop our Editor  
an email at:  
[Editor@thefeature.co.za](mailto:Editor@thefeature.co.za)

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# The Feature.za

NON-PROFIT DIGITAL MAGAZINE



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# EDITOR'S NOTE


M I R I A M D U B E

Welcome to another segment of The Feature Magazine. With the world slowly easing into the chill of winter and deep contemplation, many wonder what they can do to elevate themselves to a better life, or even something as simple as being happier within themselves. This month, we chat with content creator and influencer, Thando Hlophe. She paints the tale that it is only through ourselves that we can make the changes necessary for life to feel better. We also discuss what it takes for one to get to the point of elevation, and that we need to look deep within and weed out our own difficulties, while we need to have gentleness and compassion towards ourselves. Living in the modern world has hardened many with self-critique and doubt. It is only through self-given kindness and a great deal of love we will be able to take all that we feel is wrong with us, transform it into light, and use it at full to take a stake in the world which we rightfully deserve. Happy reading!


A portrait of Thando Hlophe, a woman with long, dark, curly hair, smiling and looking to the right. She is wearing a dark, patterned top. The background is a dark, solid color.

## Thando Hlophe

The world of content creation received a massive boom during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic due to an abundance of free time, as well as the spark of the human spirit. Although many thought the likes of TikTok were a passing fad, there wasn't proper recognition that the presence of content creation existed since the first Youtube video was posted by Jarred Karim titled "Me at the Zoo" on April 23, 2005. Following this, the internet experienced a surge in content from the likes of a podcast to the main social media that dominates people's free time, TikTok. It was an unfortunate event that during the pandemic many lost their livelihoods. However, these difficult economic times only lead to a greater opportunity for creatives to produce art that not only speaks true to who they are, but also engages with the audience in a manner that resonates on a deeper level. We had a chat Thando Hlophe who is no exception.



So my background is in news. I went to varsity because I was interested in story telling. But then I found myself in a newsroom. For a long time, I just felt like news was more rigid and didn't allow me the space to be creative as I wanted to be and I started out on YouTube. Just as an outlet for me to be creative and keep a pulse on the creative world



Thando Hlophe is one of the social media influencers to be reckoned with. Her YouTube channel is known by many as Azania Realness, which began on 23 May 2013 and seeks to give light to the experiences of the queer community with a good influx of social commentary thrown in the mix. Through her hard work and unique content, Azania Realness managed to garner 1,422,203 views. On any social media platform, having views and followers is a difficult process, however South Africa can be thought of as a difficult field to break into due to the former preference for international content over home-grown art. However, Thando handled it with both grace and an adept hand at curating content that makes a difference to the lives of her subscribers.

In the beginning, Thando's life was not simply smooth sailing. Hailing from Pietermaritzburg, Kwa-Zulu Natal, she grew up in an abusive household where her parents ended up divorcing prior to her obtaining matric certificate. Yet she used this pain as a means to further her desire to study a National Diploma in Video Technology from Durban University of Technology at the time. Following her graduation, she was offered a position as an intern at ENCA. Through her work ethic, she managed to gain a permanent position as a junior camera operator and later landed a senior position where she went on to work for nine and a half years. Following her success at ENCA, she made the choice to move to Kyk-Net in 2019. Sadly, she was retrenched in that year.

Yet, in tune with her strong spirit, she chose to not let this break her. Instead, with all her experience as a multimedia journalist, she decided to start her own company, Uthando Media. Uthando Media chooses to take the media landscape by storm by focusing on video shooting and editing, as well as script writing, presenting, and voice-over work. Currently, Thando also works with a webnews platform known as Feel Sa while also working as a Sub-Saharan Africa Visuals Producer for Reuters.

"It (the journey) has been life in general. I don't think it's been anything out of the ordinary. It's ups and downs," she adds.

However, despite her successes she is still a human being subject to the pressures of the world.



I think when I was 27 and probably around a year ago, I went through a hectic existential crisis. I think it's still there. I don't know if it ever goes away. But I'm trying to fight through it," she states. She found her zeal for life again through content creation through digital and terrestrial means, such as television.





As she keeps her work schedule busy, she also finds time to produce content on her TikTok platform, @thandohlope1 and her YouTube channel. Her content has a very specific niche she seeks to target.



When I started out on Youtube, I was enjoying a ton of content that was geared towards the LGBTQIA+ community and I learnt a ton of stuff. But all the stuff I was learning was mainly from American YouTubers. And then I figured 'there aren't a lot of South African stories at the time because it was a while back from people like me in the country.," she remembers.



Through her own experience as a lesbian and the experiences that she heard from many members of the LGBTQIA+ community, she chose to showcase the trials and triumphs of the contemporary South African queer person.



Being a lesbian woman really was at the core of a bunch of things that I did. Be it friendships, my life at church, people around me and my social life, revolved around other queer people," she says.



Her videos educated various people on the queer experience in a time where South Africa didn't look favorable on sexualities that veered away from heteronormativity. Her viewers come for the education, but feel refreshed from her personality and energy in her own words. However, in her content, there exist a strong social justice element seeking to fight against the injustices perpetrated against the LGBTQIA+ community. In Thando Hlophe's mind, content creation is a facet of society that should be taken into account as both a legitimate means of income and the future of content on a global scale.

"Cause (content creation) is a way for more voices to be heard from places we wouldn't even be able to get to. There's a guy on TikTok that does these really cool vlogs who lives in a shack in a very disadvantaged community, but he has a love for storytelling and he has a love for video editing and shooting, and stuff like that. Before social media, that guy would have to go to school and then have lots of contacts and then fight against his counterparts," she states.

The ease of access and change in media ownership, in Thando's eyes, allows for a more authentic storytelling process and greater exposure for greater depth. However, Thando Hlophe possesses a word of caution. Although ease of access is a powerful thing, there should be some slight regulation due to myth and disinformation.

Her goals for her content enterprises are quite simple: she wants to creatively produce and allow her thoughts to be seen. She uses her content as a form of catharsis, while choosing behind the scenes work to be the focus on her career trajectory. For the people reading this article she wants to share a word of encouragement that says; "The one thing you can excel at that nobody can do is being you. So I think that a lot of people need to focus on being authentic and honest".

# WHAT'S YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY?

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+27 72 901 1542

# Digital Marketing Trends: How Businesses Can Leverage Them for Success and Growth

TSHEPANG LANGA

Digital marketing has become an integral part of modern businesses, and the landscape of the industry is constantly changing. In recent years, several trends have emerged, providing businesses with new opportunities to reach their target audience and achieve growth. In this article, we will discuss some of the latest trends in digital marketing and how businesses can leverage them to succeed.

## Personalization

Personalization has become a significant trend in digital marketing. With the abundance of data available, businesses can personalize their marketing efforts to target specific customers with relevant content. By tailoring their marketing messages to the individual, businesses can create a more engaging and meaningful experience for their customers. Personalization can be achieved through email marketing, social media, and website content. The more personalized the content, the higher the chances of converting leads into customers.

## Video Marketing

Video marketing has become a popular trend in recent years. With the rise of social media and the ease of creating videos, businesses can now easily create engaging and compelling videos to promote their products and services. Video marketing can take many forms, from product demos to behind-the-scenes footage, and can be shared on social media platforms or on a business's website. Video marketing can be an effective way to showcase a business's personality and values while also promoting its products or services.

## Voice Search Optimization

As voice assistants like Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant, and Apple's Siri become increasingly popular, businesses must optimize their online content for voice searches. This means creating content that is conversational and includes natural language that people use when speaking. Businesses can also optimize their website for voice search by adding an FAQ page, using schema markup, and providing clear and concise answers to frequently asked questions. By optimizing for voice search, businesses can increase their chances of being found in search results and reach more potential customers.

## Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a trend that has been growing in popularity in recent years. Influencers are people with large followings on social media who can promote a business's products or services to their followers. Businesses can work with influencers to create sponsored content that showcases their products or services to a wider audience. Influencer marketing can be an effective way to reach a new audience and increase brand awareness.

## Chatbots

Chatbots have become a popular trend in digital marketing as they can provide businesses with an efficient way to communicate with their customers. Chatbots can be programmed to answer frequently asked questions, provide product recommendations, and even process orders. By using chatbots, businesses can provide their customers with quick and efficient support, improving the customer experience.

In conclusion, digital marketing is constantly evolving, and businesses must keep up with the latest trends to stay ahead of the competition. By leveraging personalization, video marketing, voice search optimization, influencer marketing, and chatbots, businesses can reach their target audience and achieve growth. By staying up to date with the latest trends and technologies, businesses can create more engaging and meaningful experiences for their customers while also achieving their marketing goals.





Chairman Consultancy

47 Sable Mansions, Mooikloof  
Ridge, Pretoria, 0059  
082 804 4770



# *Self-Acceptance:*

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT  
FOR A BETTER LIFE

Human beings often wonder what the purpose behind their existence is or how they can live a better life than they had initially planned. In the minds of others, the human experience is a process of learning lessons and reaching a state that speaks of contentment. However, it is sad that the human experience intertwines with the negative experience of living. Negativity, both from internal and external sources, tends to make lives difficult due to the mind's tendency to only see negativity. However, there's a fine line between negativity and positivity as far as the human experience is concerned. This can lead to mind tainting even the beautiful moments with some negativity and causes a person to view themselves in a solely negative light, omitting every positive attribute. There is a solution that can both create a better life and cause someone to view themselves in a different light. However, the benefits will require a lot of work and dedication.

## *What is Self-Acceptance?*

Self-acceptance is a state where people can readily accept parts of themselves composed of the good and bad. This state can only be accessed by understanding that the composite parts, while in existence, can be changed with the person's will. For example, some people struggle with their self-image based on their weight and attempt to do anything to lose weight, sometimes to the detriment of their health. If the said person were looking at their self-image with self-acceptance, there would be an understanding that weight is a simple part of the person that can change at any point but doesn't determine the person's worth. This example is a simple representation of a complex topic.

Self-acceptance is a journey leading to accepting all parts of oneself. However, this journey can take years of work and growth to achieve even a fraction of it. This is due to people needing to work on self-awareness before gaining self-acceptance. With self-awareness, a person looks at their world from an outside perspective to examine it as a contentious observer. This learned skill takes years to develop because the human ego needs elimination.

## *How to Gain Self-Acceptance*

The first way a person could gain self-acceptance has to do with the conversations they have with themselves. As human beings develop, they nurture the ability to correct themselves. Yet in a person with low self-esteem, a symptom of low self-acceptance, the conversations they have with themselves veer towards negativity. By working on a person's conversations with themselves, the seed of self-acceptance sits in mind—however, the practice of mindfulness waters that seed. Mindfulness has been doing the rounds in self-improvement conversations. From being mindful of breathing to being mindful about body sensations, mindfulness possesses significant power for the brain.



When mindfulness extends to thoughts, people will recognise their negative thoughts much faster and readily take charge of the direction of the thoughts. This mindfulness also allows people to understand the duality of their nature, the negative and positive attributes. For true self-acceptance, recognition of faults and assets needs emphasis. By understanding faults and taking ownership of them, the assets possessed shine brighter. An excellent manner of coming to understand faults and assets is known as shadow work.

Although this name might sound alarming, shadow work is as simple as answering a prompt. Based on the work of Carl Jung, Shadow work seeks to look at and integrate the shadow side, which are the aspects of the person that become suppressed in the subconscious due to the need to protect oneself. The shadow side is not only composed of negative attributes, such as pettiness. Sometimes, positive attributes are pushed into the shadow side due to an adverse reaction to a positive aspect. For example, if a child were to be extremely curious and authority figures would react adversely, said inquisitiveness integrates into the shadow self. A dedicated shadow work practice recognises negative aspects and causes integration for a better outlook on life.

The final manner that a person can go about self-acceptance is by exercising a more significant amount of self-accountability. Self-accountability breeds the ability to look at behaviour and motivations so that a person can see themselves in a true light while also allowing the said person to rectify misaligned behaviour. However, with self-accountability, there should be self-compassion. The process of growing self-acceptance needs gentleness as the emotions caused by the process will be difficult, and there might be the need for perfection, which is an unachievable state. Self-compassion will allow people to grow themselves gently without any pressure. Through these measures, self-acceptance will propel lives forward as growth builds up. This will lead to a person having better feelings about themselves and responding to the world differently than before, as people can regulate their emotions more easily than before.

Self-acceptance as a daily practice will allow the person to have a life that causes happiness and joy, all through the exercise of acceptance, patience, and kindness.

SIBONGILE NHLEKO-SKHOSANA

# The Modern Day Makoti

The title might be the same, but women have come a long way in manner which they have now settled into the occupancy of the "makoti" role. The African culture often dictates on how women ought to act and behave from a young age well into their grace years and beyond. Even greater pressure was prescribed to women who are coming of age as they are being "prepared for marriage".

We were taught that a bride must be demure, avoid eye contact and smiling unnecessarily on her wedding day. Sleeveless wedding gowns and overtly dancing was frowned upon and was often regarded as sign of disrespect to the husband and his family. The grace exhibited by the bride on the day would make for the belief of "how well" she was raised and therefore will make for a modern makoti.

It is safe to say there has been a greater shift in how a bride/wife conducts herself in comparison to one in the olden days. The modern day makoti exemplifies a woman who lives in a world filled with contradictory messages of what a woman is supposed to be, but journeys through life knocking down stereotypes is true testament to who a woman is: a confident wo(man) who does not seek confirmation and validation from others. The modern-day woman has stripped off the patriarchy centric connotations that came with the name, "makoti".

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The modern makoti "wifes" differently and mothers differently to their earlier female generation, the difference stems from the confidence women were not afforded but new-age women chose as their narrative. The confidence to choose how you want your wedding day to look like and how you aim to celebrate it. She understands that going into marriage means both parties come with their own experiences and cultural differences, but together will make for their own cultural practices, mutually beneficial in their marital home and life.

The modern woman understands and exercise their freedom of choice. The freedom to choose who to love and how to celebrate that love. Gone are the days when multi-cultural weddings were taboo, especially in the black community. People have evolved along with their culture and cultural expectations. Marriage in the black communities have moved away from the notion that a daughter leaves her family to entirely belong to the husband's family. Marriage in the black family is now seen for what it is and what it should have always been; the joining of two families, and as such both families still play a pivotal role in the formation of the new family.

The makoti is no longer viewed as a "helper" to the husband's mom but as another child joining the family and will be treated as such. The pressure has been relieved off the new makoti to work tirelessly around the clock to prove herself worthy of being dubbed the perfect makoti. This could be attributed to the fact that the modern woman is independent and does not view her husband as a provider but an equal life partner. The modern makoti has evolved sense of being, she is true to herself and walks in love and with love knowing she needs not prove herself worthy to anyone.



## *April Interview Segment*

BOITUMELO  
KEETSE

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Boitumelo Keetse is an entrepreneur and philanthropist based in Johannesburg. She is the founder and owner of Botlhale Interiors, a company that specializes in interior design and decoration services for commercial and residential properties. With a passion for creativity and design, Boitumelo has grown Botlhale Interiors into a well-respected brand that has earned a reputation for delivering exceptional quality and service to its clients.

In addition to her work with Botlhale Interiors, Boitumelo is also a dedicated philanthropist. She is the founder of Bohlale Ba Rena Foundation, a non-profit organization that focuses on supporting individuals and families affected by autism. Through her foundation, Boitumelo is committed to raising awareness about autism and providing resources and support to those who need it most. Boitumelo's passion for philanthropy and her commitment to her community have earned her recognition and respect from her peers and colleagues. She is known for her dedication to excellence, her creativity, and her unwavering commitment to making a positive impact in the world around her.

Overall, Boitumelo Keetse is a talented and accomplished individual who has made a significant impact in both the business and philanthropic worlds. Her work with Botlhale Interiors and Bohlale Ba Rena Foundation serve as a testament to her passion for creativity, design, and giving back to her community.

**FOOD O'CLOCK:**  
THE HOTTEST CROSS  
BUNS

*Kgopotso Boshomane*



## Ingredients

- 4 cups of cake flour
- 1pkt of yeast
- 1/2 cup of sugar
- 1 large egg
- pinch of salt
- .1 & 1/2 cup of warm milk
- .50g of melted butter
- .2 tsp of ground cinnamon
- .1 cup of raisins
- .pinch of salt
- .3 tbsp of apricot jam

- White lines/cross
- 1/2 cup of flour
- 5 tbsp of water

## Method

- mix all the fry ingredients together in a bowl
- add warm milk, mix until it forms a dough
- add egg and butter and knead for about 8min
- place the dough in a bowl, cover with a kitchen cloth and let it sit in a warm place for 45 min
- after 45 min, the size would have doubled.
- shape the dough into equal buns
- place them in a baking tray, cover with a cloth and let it sit in a warm place for 15min
  
- mix cake flour with water until it forms a paste
- place the paste in a piping bag, pipe the white lines with it
- bake for 30-40 min at 180 degrees in a preheated oven
- remove from the oven and brush with apricot jam

