

# LAUNCH

EXPERT ADVICE, YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS, INSPIRATIONAL PROFILES AND IDEAS CENTRE

MARKETING

# BUILD YOUR BRAND

Entrepreneur, speaker and marketing expert Daniella Shapiro recently launched a proudly South African skincare, beauty and lifestyle eCommerce platform called the Oolala Collection Club. Here's her advice for successfully marketing your start-up. **AS TOLD TO GG VAN ROOYEN**

**T**HE DIGITAL SPACE offers a lot of opportunities when it comes to starting a business, but making your start-up stand out isn't easy. There is a lot of competition and a lot of noise online, so success requires smart and very strategic marketing. Here's advice from entrepreneur and marketing expert Daniella Shapiro on marketing your business effectively. Daniella's advice is gleaned from creating her online beauty and lifestyle start-up, the Oolala Collection Club.

**Authenticity is everything.** Hyper-connected, information-savvy and socially-conscious

consumers are extremely cautious and apprehensive of being sold to. Times have changed. Perfection and image are no longer everything. Now the term 'image' has a big question mark: Photo-shopped and filtered. Brand messages are carefully constructed, and consumers aren't sold. They are seeking. Millennials are ruthless and obsessive in their pursuit for authenticity. They do not want to feel 'manipulated'. Brands need to get real. Transparency 3.0 is about making almost all touch points of the purchase and experience transparent: Pricing, reviews, popularity, and even personal relevance. In short, consumers want the real story.

## VITAL STATS

**PLAYER:** Daniella Shapiro  
**COMPANY:** Oolala Collection Club  
**FOUNDED:** 2016  
**VISIT:** [www.oolalacollection.com](http://www.oolalacollection.com)  
**ABOUT:** The Oolala Collection Club ships proudly South African high-quality skincare, beauty products and essential lifestyle brands direct to your doorstep.

Smart brands are giving it to them.

**Mistakes are inevitable, but the important thing is how you deal with them.** Being human means making mistakes. If you do mess up or end up with a social media crisis, the first step you should take is to own it. Admit to faults and take immediate action to resolve the situation. This transparency lets your fans and customers know what happened and what you're doing to fix it. As a result, customers' trust in your company should remain intact. You work so hard to acquire this trust, so you need to do whatever you can to keep it.

PHOTO: MIKE TURNER

**“Companies should view mistakes as powerful opportunities to increase advocacy.”**

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**Ask yourself: What does my brand stand for?**

Consumers appreciate brands that stand for more than the bottom line. A great way to build your brand is to make it stand for something by creating a social story that links to a meaningful social cause on a personal level. For example, The Oolala Collection Club is all about affordable luxury and cruelty-free beauty. These causes help position the brand strategically by communicating a clear message that the consumer can resonate with. This will automatically encourage and drives positive change.

seamless, simple and as efficient as possible, from the moment you log on to the site to the moment you check out. Chatbots and real-time messaging are one of the most interactive ways your audience can learn about products, giving immediate answers to consumers. A Chatbot should be able to provide a personalised shopping experience. It can help users search for the appropriate product, provide comparisons and hand-hold a user through their buyer journey as well as offer sales support. Shopping cart abandonment is also reduced by answering questions immediately.

**Know your audience.**

Considering the current state of the economy,

**“Consumers appreciate brands that stand for more than the bottom line.”**

**Craft a compelling user experience for eCommerce.**

eCommerce in South Africa is growing in leaps and bounds. South Africans are spending more time online searching for more affordable prices and seeking product recommendations on social media. Convenience and shopping from the comfort of your own home has become more important as our lives become busier. Subscription services allow the customer to do as little as possible, saving time and money, especially with companies offering same day or next day shipping. The whole eCommerce user experience must be

having a well-defined target market is crucial. No one can afford to target everyone. A small business can effectively compete with a large one by targeting a niche market. This allows you to focus your marketing budget and brand message on a specific market that is more likely to purchase from you and resonate with your brand message and products. Building your brand and social media following takes time and needs to grow organically. Engagement is key. Build your followers by having a unique voice and consistent brand message that is interactive, relatable and focused. **EM**