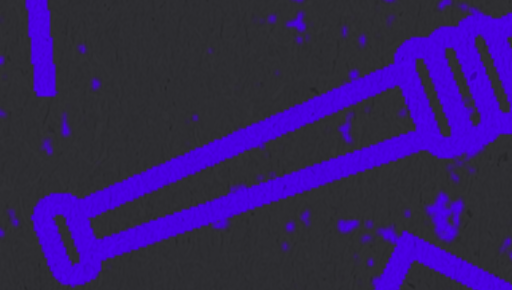
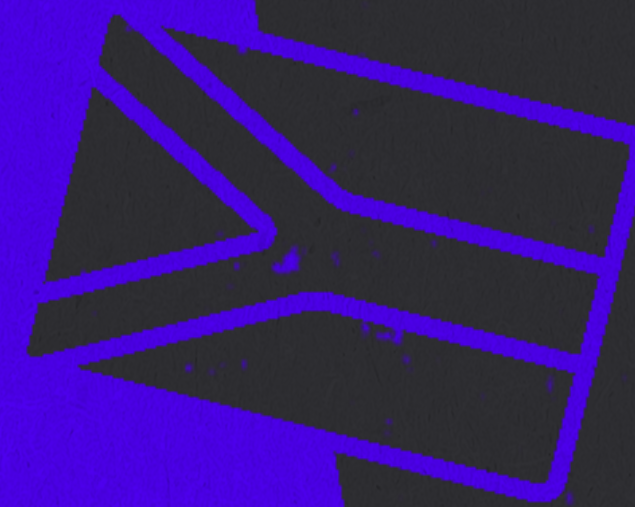
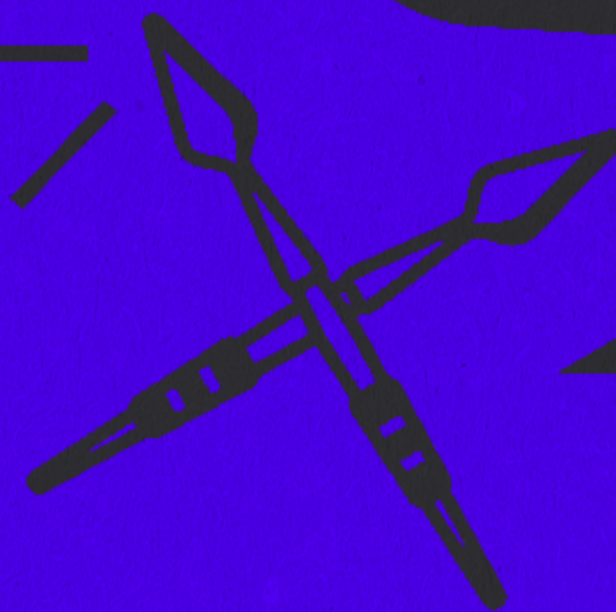
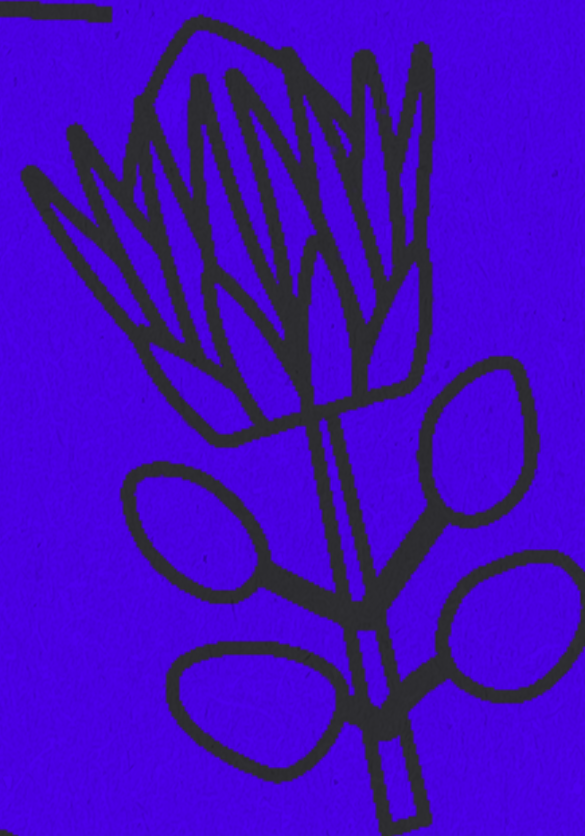


FLUME DIGITAL DIARY

SEPTEMBER

2025




HOWZIT CHOMMIES,

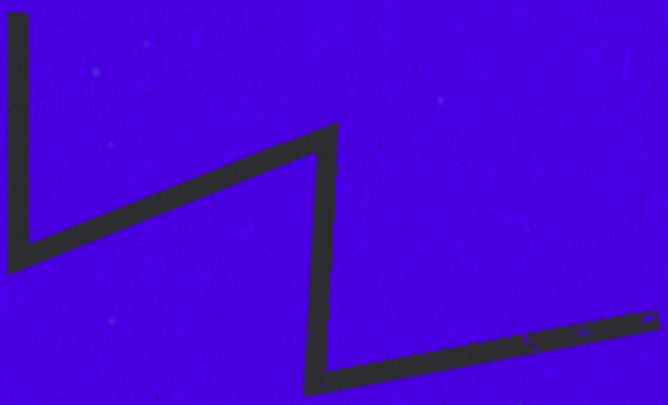


Spring's in the air, the braais are getting fired up, and Mzansi's digital streets are vibing with flavour. This month, we're not chasing overseas trends. We're keeping it 100% local, lekker, and proudly South Ahh.

In this Heritage Month edition of the Digital Diary, we're tuning into what really matters: authenticity that speaks your truth, representation that hits different, and local brands that aren't just trending...they're leading.



From kasi-born creators repping their hoods with pride, to brands mixing vernac, visuals, and vibes that feel like home, this month's insights are a jol through the algorithm with a distinctly South African accent. No fakeness, no filters, just the real ones doing the most.



So whether you're rocking your doek, your Dickies, or your data bundle, one thing's clear: Mzansi's got main character energy, and the algorithm better catch up.

Let's get into it. After you, my bru.

#LOCAL LEGENDS

Let's be honest, when it comes to digital game in SA, some brands **just get it**. Those with flavour are not out here trying to appeal internationally or chase global trends. Nope. These are the ones that speak like us, laugh like us, and flex culture without faking it.

From fast food joints to fashion-forward beers, these brands have figured out the secret sauce:

Authenticity + humour + local pride = brand love that slaps.

They don't just show up on the feed, they show up for the culture.

So, in the spirit of representation, digital innovation, and vibes, we're giving flowers to the Mzansi brands that are leading with heart, wit, and some serious online presence.



CHECKERS: CHAMPIONING MZANSI

When it comes to repping South Africa online, few brands are doing it quite like Checkers. They've gone from being your mom's grocery run to being one of the coolest digital players in the game, and they did it by keeping things local, lekker, and laser-focused on what Mzansi actually cares about.

WHAT THEY'RE DOING RIGHT

Sixty60 stardom

SA's fastest grocery delivery app has become a brand all on its own with memeable ad drops, cheeky UX copy, and slick user design.

Relatable content

They drop weekly deals with voice overs that sound like your cousin sending a voice note from a taxi rank... real, local, and funny. Mos.

Social storytelling

Whether it's proudly showing off local produce or turning a "chicken special" into a content moment, they know how to create engagement out of the everyday.

STANDOUT MOMENTS

"Skoonma specials" and "Uncle in the Braai Section" content

Turning everyday shopping experiences into LOL-worthy, deeply South African digital moments.

Heritage Month campaign drops

Spot-on vernac copywriting, township slang, and proudly Mzansi food pairings have made their social campaigns feel like home.

Sixty60 Delivery Banter

Pushing fun features like in-app voiceover packs, humorous order alerts, and viral ad spots that blend tech with township charm.

NANDO'S

THE OG OF SPICY RELEVANCE

Nando's isn't just a brand, it's a digital disruptor in its own right. For over a decade, they've been delivering socially sharp, satirical, and proudly South African content that connects with everyone from Bra Sipho on the stoep to Twitter's hottest blue ticks.

They don't try to be everything to everyone, they're unapologetically bold, political when it counts, and local through and through.

DIGITAL WINS

Real-time commentary

Whether it's a political scandal or a viral Twitter trend, Nando's always has the first and funniest word usually served hot with extra peri-peri.

Campaigns with teeth

From the iconic #YouPeople TV ad to punchy tweets with perfect vernac timing, they blend humour and social critique without losing the sauce.

Cross-platform game

Whether it's proudly showing off local produce or turning a "chicken special" into a content moment, they know how to create engagement out of the everyday.

STANDOUT MOMENTS

Their response to the loadshedding crisis with "Powered by peri-peri"

Satirical commentary on everything from elections to Eskom, delivered in sharp, digestible content drops.

CASTLE LITE: KEEPING IT COLD AND CURRENT

WHY IT WORKS

Castle Lite has mastered the balance between cool factor and cultural connection. It's not just a beer; it's a lifestyle brand that gets how South Africans party, listen to music, and flex online.

They consistently tap into the pulse of urban youth culture, especially where music and digital intersect, from hip-hop to Amapiano.

DIGITAL WINS

Culture-first storytelling

They've made music the centrepiece and not just through sponsorships, but through content that celebrates SA talent and creativity.

Immersive campaigns

From virtual concerts to augmented reality experiences, Castle Lite

pushes boundaries without feeling gimmicky.

Smart use of influencer collabs

Partnering with creators and artists that reflect their audience's aspirations, stylish, ambitious, and always cool.

STANDOUT MOMENTS

The #CastleLiteUnlocks series

massive digital campaigns featuring global and local artists, with massive engagement.

Amapiano integrations and digital-only ad drops that mirror the beats and aesthetics of township cool.

CHICKEN LICKEN: SURREAL, HILARIOUS

WHY IT WORKS

Chicken Licken isn't afraid to get weird in the best, most proudly South African way. Their storytelling blends traditional values, township humour, and Afro-futurism, creating a brand that feels both ancient and ahead of its time.

Every ad is a mini-movie. Every campaign is steeped in sly wit, cultural nuance, and deep social relevance, even when it's wrapped in absurd comedy.

DIGITAL WINS

Narrative depth

Their content feels cinematic – ads that people actually search for and rewatch on YouTube.

Proudly black storytelling

Whether it's ancestral dreams or Sbu's self-improvement journey (Sbu 2.0), they showcase characters and

themes that reflect the SA experience in ways that are both hilarious and meaningful.

Viral-with-a-purpose

Their humour isn't random – it's loaded with commentary on growth, pride, and identity.

STANDOUT MOMENTS

Sbu 2.0 campaign

A township guy levelling up via an "inner chicken" self-help plan. Wildly absurd but totally relatable.

Big John ad

A spiritual-epic-meets-fast-food origin story. Because... why not?

FASHION ~ GOES ~ MZANSI CORE ~

Taking the celebration of local lekkerness even further, South Africa's fashion scene is becoming a space where culture is embedded into its brands' DNA. Labels like Urban Zulu, Rich Mnisi, and Artelier

mark a pivotal shift from being "inspired by Africa" to being created from within Africa, reclaiming authorship over narratives, aesthetics, and creative identity.

WHY DOES THIS WORK?

These brands aren't simply dressing people or emulating global standards. They're reframing the narrative, inspiring cultural pride, and redefining what authenticity truly means, showing that being grounded in heritage is not a limitation, but a strategic and creative advantage.

While not every brand needs to or can launch a fashion line, unless you're planning a surprise category shift, there's still a keynote to be made here: don't just borrow culture like a costume, wear it with meaning.

SO, ~ WHAT'S THE LESSON? ~

If there's one thing these brands are teaching us, it's this: local isn't just lekker, it's powerful. People want to see themselves reflected in the brands they engage with. They want content that sounds like their WhatsApp groups, looks like their neighbourhood, and gets their inside jokes.

Authenticity isn't a trend, it's a trust builder. And in a world where feeds move fast and AI is everywhere, the brands that stay real will always stand out.

So, whether you're slinging hot wings, dropshipping sneakers, or running a fintech startup remember:

"The most South African thing your brand can be is... itself."

Let's keep it real, keep it local, and keep the content cooking.

AI IN MZANSI: FROM KASI TO THE CLOUD

Local Languages, Global Tech

Big ups to developers and researchers for pushing indigenous languages! Zulu, Xhosa, and Sotho are starting to show up in voice assistants and text tools.

Creators Using AI to Level Up

SA creators are using AI to zhuzh up content without losing their flavour. Think custom beats, auto-captions in vernac, and visuals that slap. It's not about replacing the real, it's about amplifying the local with digital muscle.

AI with Local Flavour

We're seeing more use of AI for brand content that feels homegrown, from isiZulu voiceovers to campaign scripts that sound like your aunty on a voice note.

HOW YOUR BUSINESS CAN MAKE THE MOST OF THESE UPDATES

Speak like your audience.

Use AI tools that let you localise tone, language, and slang.

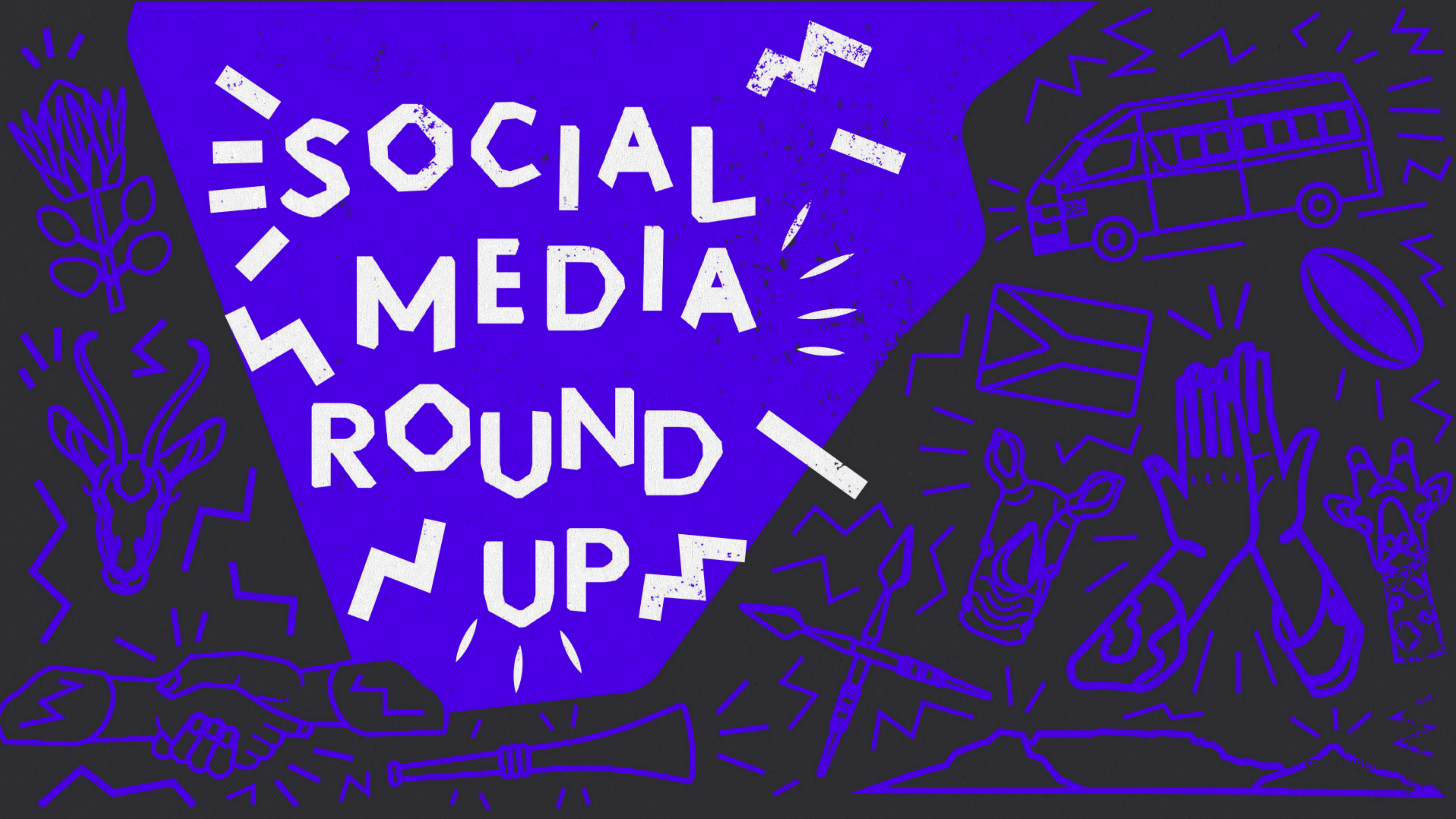
Empower your creators.

Give your team access to AI tools that enhance their ideas, not override them.

Lead with local.

Whether it's voices, faces or stories, AI should support representation, not erase it.

SOCIAL MEDIA ROUND UP



Meta asks brands and creators to get more creative with their latest algorithmic update – scrutinising repurposed content without an extra touch.

TikTok's taking things off the screen and onto the streets with its new "Out of Phone" ad platform bringing creators to billboards, taxis, and malls. Now everyone can get billboard famous

LinkedIn's switching up the vibe. Long-form content just got a glow-up with video headers that autoplay in-feed and show up in your inbox, finally giving newsletters and thought pieces the main character energy they deserve.



POSTS WITH PURPOSE (& VIBE)

CLOSE FRIENDS ARE THE NEW MAIN FEED

IG is pushing “Close Friends” content hard, creators are using it to drop exclusive posts, behind-the-scenes moments, and lowkey dumps that feel more real-real than polished perfection. It’s basically the IG version of “only telling the WhatsApp group”

VISUAL SEARCH IS HERE

Users can now search using images, not just keywords, which means content that’s visually iconic (even subtle brand cues) might get more discovery traction.

IG REELS = DISCOVERY ENGINE

The Reel algorithm has gone into full explorer mode, showing users content from creators they don’t follow but will probably vibe with. Local, relatable content with SA slang, humour, or visuals is travelling way beyond follower counts, the platform wants original energy, not perfect edits.

HOW YOUR BUSINESS CAN MAKE THE MOST OF THESE UPDATES:

Play with “Close Friends”

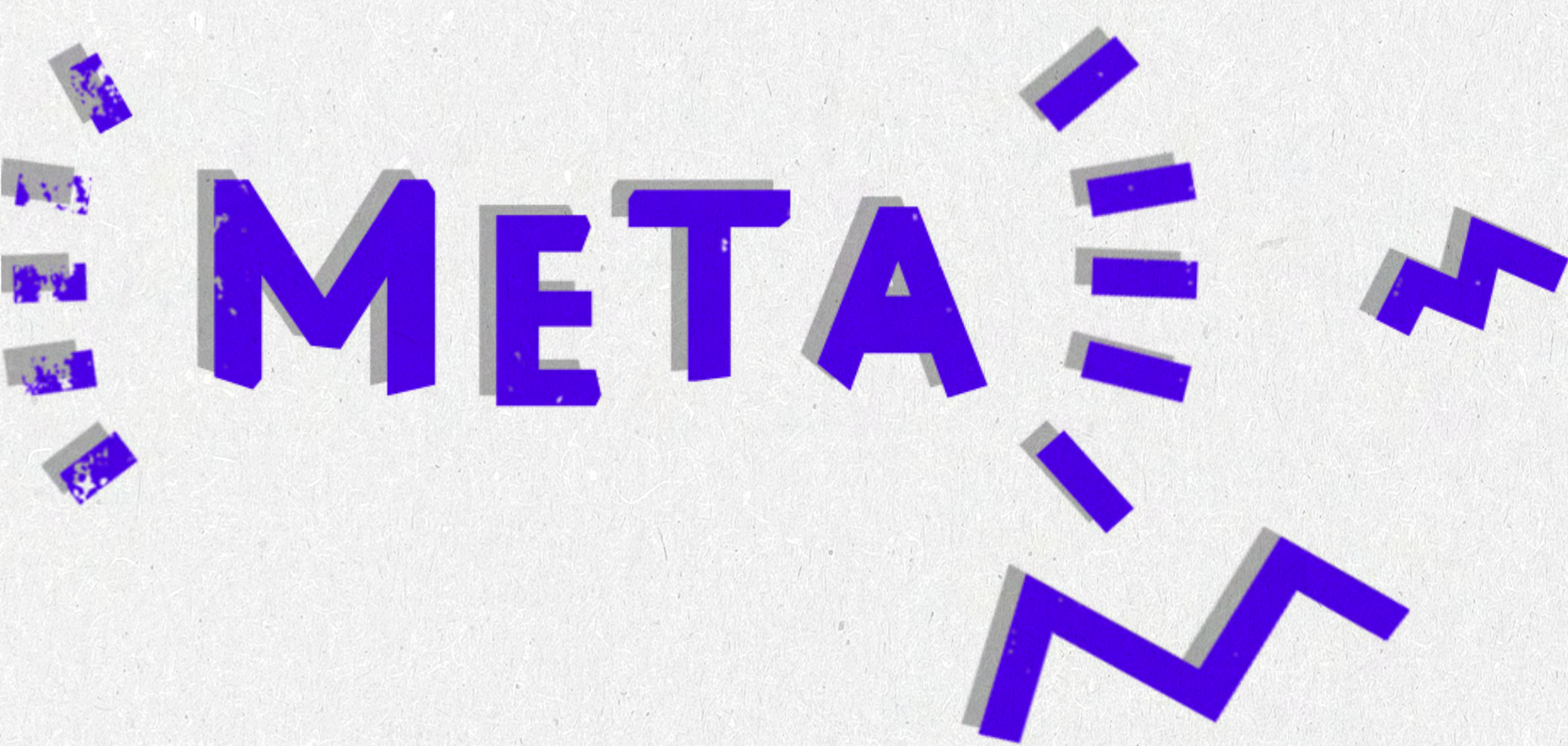
Try exclusive drops or sneak peeks just for insiders, it builds community over clout.

Think searchable visuals

Use high-quality, recognisable local imagery (food, fashion, language, places) to stand out in the new visual search wave.

Reels with local flavour = reach

Ditch the generic. If it sounds like Mzansi, looks like Mzansi, and laughs like us – it’s more likely to pop off.



REWARDING ORIGINALITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Facebook (Meta) just sent copycats to the naughty corner as it starts prioritising creator-first content. Its latest algorithm update is clamping down hard on unoriginal content, penalising reposts that lack credit or creative spark. The same goes for brands that rely heavily on reposts or memes and AI generated content.

HOW CAN YOUR BUSINESS TAP INTO THIS UPDATE

SEE CONTENT AS CRAFT

Memes might catch a scroll, but they won't help you win in the long term. Rethink and invest in original content. And with Facebook now spotlighting original creators, this provides with plenty opportunity for local collaborations.

PLUG INTO CREATOR COLLABORATION

South Africa has a plethora of creators that not only speak the language of the South African socials but understand it. Brands need to find and plug in to those voices – it's becoming all about co-creation.



THE ALGORITHM JUST WENT BIG SCREEN

TikTok is pushing your content beyond the palm into the public square, with its “Out-Of-Phone” off-platform advertising plan.

As if billboards weren’t enough, they’re now expanding into shopping malls, taxis, and even water refill stations. Now everyone can get their 15 seconds of fame.

While TikTok’s Out-of-Phone feature isn’t yet available in South Africa, its eventual rollout opens up a potentially alternative means for brands and creators to show up, one where creator content can leap from the feed to the physical world.

HOW YOUR BUSINESS CAN
TAP INTO THIS

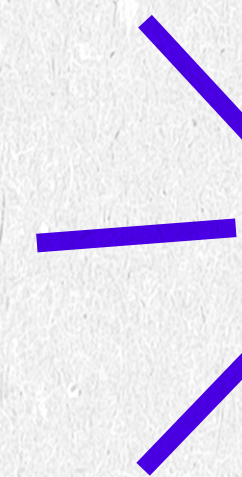
DEEPEN CROSS-PLATFORM STORYTELLING

Rather than simply repurposing content across channels, brands now have the chance to craft stories that are natively expressive on each platform, yet still cohesive when scaled to real-world touchpoints like DOOH or in-store screens.



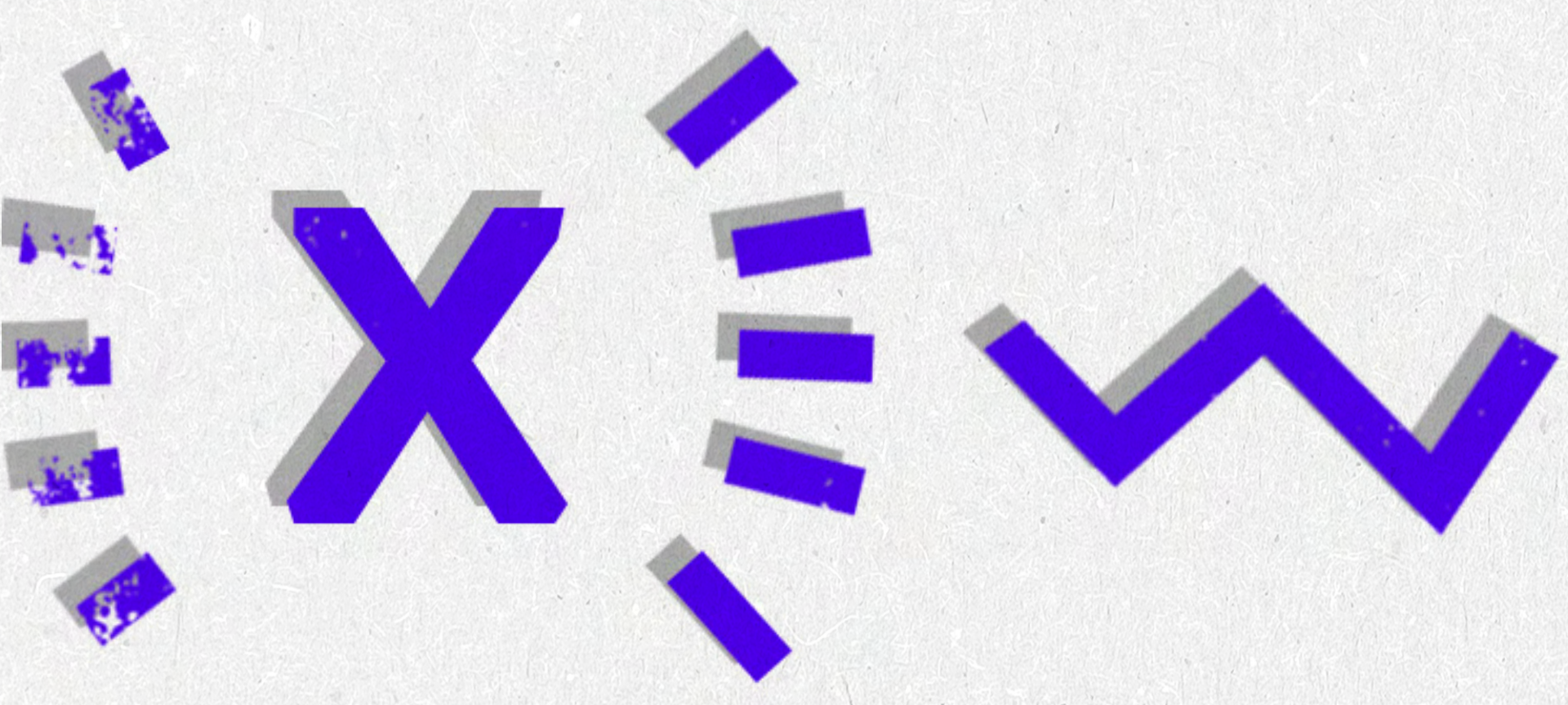
VIDEO SURGES ON

As LinkedIn doubles down on video, it's rolling out video headers for articles and newsletters – short clips that auto play in-feed and appear as thumbnails in email notifications. Currently available on desktop, this feature gives more visibility and impact to your content.

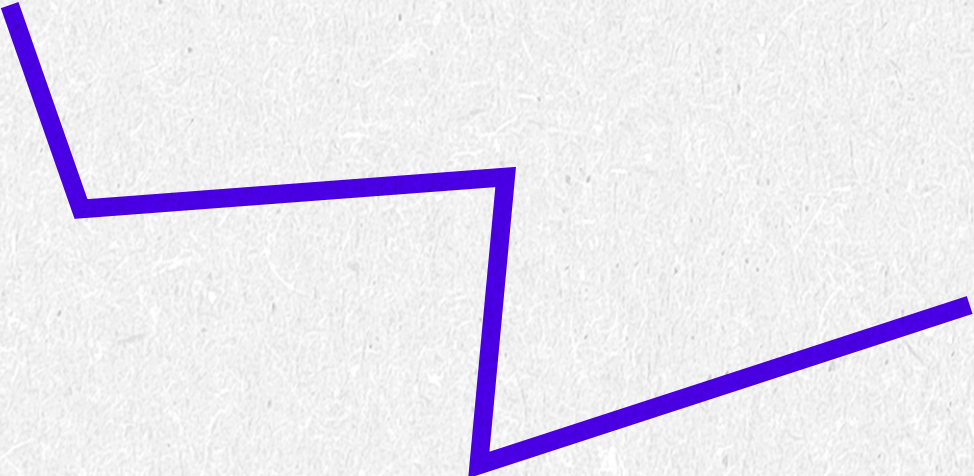


HOW YOUR BUSINESS CAN TAP INTO THIS

Take the first mover advantage and use this feature to include founder intros, quick insights, or teasers of the article/video itself.



STILL THE STREETS, JUST WITH MORE CHAOS



ALGORITHM GOT AN OVERHAUL (AGAIN)

X's feed is now showing way more For You content, favouring posts with engagement regardless of who you follow. This means your sharpest, funniest, or most relatable takes can travel, even if you don't have a big following.

PAY-TO-BOOST IS IN THE MIX

X Premium users (aka those with the blue tick) get a boost in visibility, which means if you're running a brand account, a little coin might go a long way. But engagement still wins over ads. So if the content's flat, no amount of paid push will save it.



HOW YOUR BUSINESS CAN MAKE THE MOST OF THESE UPDATES

Join the conversation, don't hijack it

X is all about timing and tone. If it's not relevant to your brand and your audience, skip it.

Craft banger posts over bland promos

Think punchy one-liners, threads with humour, or proudly South African perspectives on trending topics.

Consider Premium, but don't rely on it

Boosted visibility is cool, but on X, wit > wallet.



NEW KID,

**OLD INTERNET
ENERGY**

VIBES > VIRALITY

BlueSky isn't about clout, it's about conversation. No algorithmic feed, no ad-driven chaos. You see what your network posts, chronologically. That means more real chats, fewer "pls boost" beg-fests, and way more space for authentic, unfiltered content.

BLACK SKY IS RISING

There's a growing wave of Black and South African creators showing up on BlueSky, bringing local humour, slang, and spicy takes to a new platform. People are finding their corners and carving out digital indabas, without trolls or performative noise.

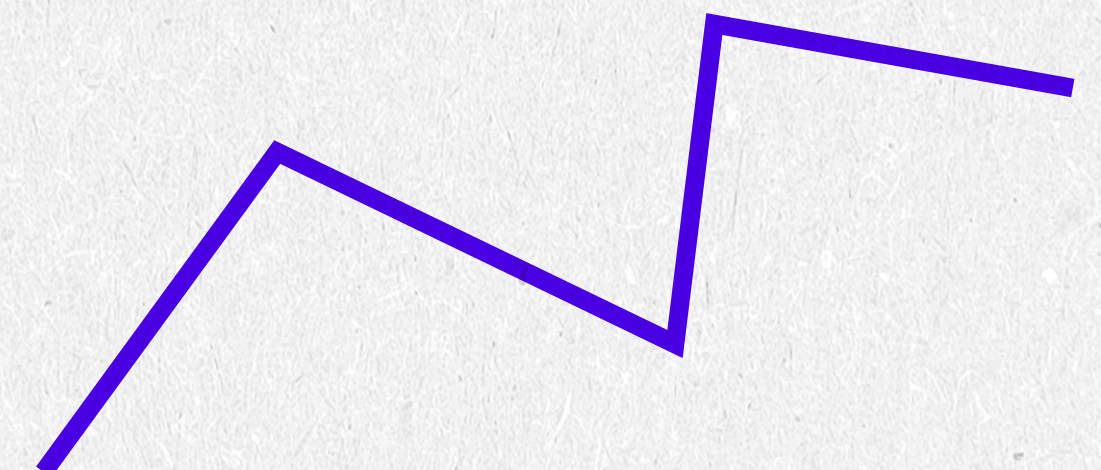
HOW YOUR BUSINESS CAN MAKE THE MOST OF THESE UPDATES

Early adopter = loud voice.

It's still small, which means brands who show up now, with genuine, local content, can shape the space.

Stay local, stay human.

Forget polished posts, voice notes turned text. Spicy one-liners, or cultural insights do way more work here.



YOUTUBE

**LONGFORM,
LOUD &
LOCAL**

SHORTS = REAL REACH

YouTube Shorts are heating up, again. The platform is pushing them hard in the algorithm, especially for creators outside the US/UK bubble.

COMMUNITY TAB = SECRET WEAPON

More creators and brands are using the YouTube Community Tab (like a social feed) to post polls, memes, sneak peeks, and behind-the-scenes updates. It's becoming a low-effort, high-engagement space, think "Instagram captions meet YouTube vibes."

HOW YOUR BUSINESS CAN MAKE THE MOST OF THESE UPDATES

Double down on Shorts

Local humour, food, slang, or behind-the-scenes content works best. Just keep it fast, funny, and real.

Use the Community Tab

Polls, previews, or slang tests are easy wins, and they make your brand feel more human, less billboard.

The digital world continues to **dala what it must** – creating spaces where every voice, vibe, and story can be heard – and one thing about South Africans? We've got stories for days. From kasi corners to coastal towns, our cultures, accents, rhythms, and rituals can't be pinned down to one look or vibe. It's deep, layered, and full of spice. Like the onion on your boerie. Or the masala mix in your bunny chow. Or the chakalaka on the side of your pap.

With TikTok putting local voices on the map, Facebook (Meta) penalising copycat content, and YouTube and BlueSky creating new, authentic spaces to connect, brands no longer

have an excuse. However, you can't just post and hope. You need to listen, show up, and stay plugged into the real **South** **Ah beat.**

The tools are there. The streets are talking. The culture's already moving – so don't just watch from the sidelines. Be in there, like Nando's, the Bokke and Mnisi.

