



Powerful PR in changing times

South Africa has a history of change and the agricultural sector has had its own fair share of change – particularly over the last two decades.

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PROTACTIC

The way fresh produce is grown, packed and marketed is constantly evolving and because there is less disposable income available, grower associations such as Subtrop need to ensure that their members receive optimum benefit for their membership fees, including a good return on funds invested in developing the local market.

One of the main aims of Subtrop is to co-ordinate many different activities that are for the common good of the industry, including marketing and public relations campaigns to increase the awareness and sales of mangoes, avocados, litchis and macadamias.

Protactic has been handling the communications activities for the various grower associations within Subtrop for over 10 years – starting initially with SAAGA and now also working on a project basis with the South African Mango, Macadamia and Litchi Growers' Associations (SAMGA, SAMAC and SALGA respectively).

Protactic develops unique communication strategies for each of the various grower associations which incorporate innovative ideas that effectively boost

the awareness of the crop and which ultimately assist in improving the bottom-line of the growers.

Ongoing research and the monitoring of marketing and consumer trends enable the consultancy to develop key objectives, strategic messages and activities aimed at specific target audiences. Activities vary between the different grower associations and are tailored to meet each one's key objectives.

The constantly changing environment demands excellent communication and continuous assessment of the complete chain, including growers, retailers, hawkers, market agents, media, processors, dietitians and restaurant owners and of course, consumers. The various activities ensure that there is constant interaction and engagement between Protactic and all of Subtrop's different audiences.

The face of communication has also transformed dramatically with the rapid growth of digital or online media marketing. Protactic applies an integrated approach across both traditional and 'new' digital media and incorporates all channels in their strategies and activities.

On a retail and market agent level, Protactic develops volume and quality-driven promotions, including in-store sampling and display competitions. Different types of promotional material such as recipe leaflets, information booklets and bunting for retailers and hawkers are produced to increase awareness and sales.

Research has shown that recipes are popular with South African consumers and therefore special recipe leaflets are

developed and inserted into the various product packaging and distributed with high-circulating magazines that reach thousands of South Africans.

Protactic also works hard at maintaining strong, ongoing relationships with the media. These relationships play an important role in ensuring that journalists and opinion leaders continue to write and talk about interesting facts about avocados, mangoes, litchis and macadamias, such as their versatility and health benefits.

Face-to-face communication remains a very important communication tool, particularly in the informal market. During 2013, hawker promotions at taxi ranks have been arranged to increase awareness on mango atchar and avocados when the products are in season.

Demonstrations and chef competitions continue to ensure that South Africans are informed on the health benefits of Subtrop's delicious crops and on the many interesting ways in which these can be prepared and enjoyed.

It is important to remember that with generic promotions, it is only possible to increase the demand for a particular fruit or nut when there is a steady supply of good quality product available.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Powerful PR is the process of managing how, when and in what way you communicate – so that you can ultimately influence the behaviour, attitude and perceptions of those important to your business and to your long-term success. **ST**