

EDITORIAL

The year 2010 will forever be remembered as the year South Africa hosted the Fifa Soccer World Cup - the first ever on the African continent. From a branding and marketing perspective, the event offers massive opportunities to marketers with the highest viewership worldwide. The sheer impact of this mega-event is guaranteed to shift our nation in terms of both consumer and media behaviour. During this frenetic media time one-to-one communication strategies, with specific emphasis on the innovative use of digital communication will offer new opportunities to engage both local and global customers. In keeping with the move towards one-to-one communication, this edition of *Communicare* explores word-of-mouth communication from two perspectives, namely traditional word of mouth and electronic word of mouth.

Roberts-Lombard explores the referral-marketing practices of travel agencies in the Western Cape, and finds that continuous contact must be maintained with the word-of-mouth referrers of the travel agency to stimulate their positive word-of-mouth marketing communication to the general public. Through word-of-mouth communication, the general levels of service delivery by these travel agents are also improved. Du Plessis, on the other hand, explores the many innovative opportunities electronic word of mouth (eWOM) offers organisations for establishing their brand. Although organisations grasp the incredible potential of social media for eWOM, no clear theoretical guidelines for social media marketing communication exists. In her article, Du Plessis uses a case-study approach with a view to constructing a sound theoretical framework to be employed by organisations in conducting social media marketing communication campaigns.

The focus in the rest of the edition remains on issues pertaining to the African continent. Ridgard and Struthers present quantitative research that explores the extent to which seven locally broadcast soap operas include sex and HIV in their storylines. They also explore whether a connection is currently being made between multiple and concurrent partnerships and the risk of HIV infection. The findings show that sex is a key component of these soap operas, but is only linked to HIV in two per cent of cases. These findings feed into a wider discussion around the role and responsibilities of soap operas in a society grappling with a widespread HIV epidemic.

In the final article, Phiri, grappling with the issue of media ethics in Africa argues that there is a critical need for substantive reflection on ethical norms because of legitimate concern among

ethicists in Africa that the 'confusion' or apparent lack of professionalism can be exploited by governments to legislate media conduct. Phiri regards his article as a contribution towards the reflection on ethical media decisions and how such decisions pragmatically balance forces of globalisation with local resistance.

As we now find ourselves in the midst of all the opportunities offered by the hosting of a sporting event of the magnitude of the Fifa Soccer World Cup, our next edition of *Communicare* will be a themed edition reflecting on the legacy of this event for South Africa as a nation. There is no doubt that the Fifa World Cup 2010 has been - and will continue to be - of great interest not only to communication researchers in South Africa, but also to the rest of the international academic community. The great changes to infrastructure, the calls for national pride and cohesion, and the controversies surrounding Bafana Bafana, the national side, all make for riveting studies.

Sonja Verwey

Editor-in-Chief: *Communicare*