

Ndeye Diagne - Africa at a crossroads: Threads of gold

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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This exclusive #BizTrends2024 interview is with Ndeye Diagne, the managing director West, East and Central Africa at Kantar.

Ndeye Diagne presents to Bizcommunity Marketing & Media editor, Danette Breitenbach on the trends in Africa, as challenging the prevailing notion of Africa's "lost decade", and is critical of the global media's one-dimensional portrayal of the continent. Instead, Africa's story should be headlined as one of resilience, creativity, and growth.

"The global media still predominantly paints Africa in strokes of despair. This one-dimensional portrayal overlooks the continent's vibrant resilience, creativity, and untold stories."

Bizcommunity · #BizTrends2024: Ndeye Diagne

This interview is also available on [YouTube](#), via downloadable [App](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#) and [IONO.FM](#).

Diagne asserts that amidst global economic challenges, Africa's narrative is not a mere footnote but a headline of growth and creativity.

In response to the media's predominantly negative depiction, Diagne draws attention to the danger of a single story, echoing Chimamanda Adichie's TED talk. "These stories are not just stories, they are powerful tools for shaping perceptions and driving growth for brands."

She says it is important to showcase the threads of gold of the continent through Africa's diverse and dynamic stories. "These stories are not just stories; they are powerful tools for shaping perceptions and driving growth for brands," says Diagne.

Diagne underscores Africa's role as an active storyteller. "It is about telling African stories in a better way. They [Africans] are reframing Africa's role in the global narrative from passive subjects to active storytellers, to doers, to go-getters, to opportunity finders and growth finders."



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Four C's

She says Kantar aims to tell motivating stories that activate consumer interest and drive growth.

Focusing on technology, Kantar identifies **C**reativity, **C**reation, **C**ulture, and **C**ommunity as emerging values driving the African consumer. Breakthroughs in green energy, global cultural impact, and technological innovations like M-PESA are reshaping global trends.

These are reshaping global trends, and Africa is participating in the global narrative; it is leading it in so many dimensions," says Diagne.

Turning attention to Ethiopia, Diagne describes the market as fascinating for Kantar, highlighting its progress in gender equality and positive cultural exceptions. Ethiopia's narrative is one of rising, grounded in tangible improvements in education, healthcare, and economic prospects, making it an outlier in the journey towards becoming a part of Brics.

Art and culture

Diagne highlighted the multifaceted impact of Africa's arts and culture, emphasising their role not only as expressions of creativity but also as significant economic drivers.

"Davido's journey from a continent that is often underestimated to the cover of *Forbes* is a testament to the global influence and market power of African creativity," she said.

She says we are increasingly seeing Africa being a trendsetter of popular culture with influential creatives in genres like Amapiano and Afro Beats.

These genres are crossing borders and creating opportunities for brand engagement. African artists are collaborating with

Western stars allowing for market penetration, for example, chart-topper Rema and his collaboration with Selena Gomez.

“African art is beyond cultural appreciation, it's an economic revolution that is possible,” she says.

But it does not stop there, with fashion we are seeing a trajectory of African brands gaining fame across the world. A strong South African example is Rich Mnisi and his collaboration with Adidas.



Adidas reveals Pride collection and campaign in partnership with Rich Mnisi

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“We deny the lost decade story, it is incomplete and inaccurate and needs to be rewritten. So many of these examples demonstrate that,” she concludes.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

Karabo Ledwaba is a Marketing and Media Editor at Bizcommunity and award-winning journalist. Before joining the publication she worked at Sowetan as a content producer and reporter. She was also responsible for the leadership page at SiMug, Sowetan's lifestyle magazine. Contact her at karabo@bizcommunity.com

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