

Your customers hold the power

 By [George Golding](#)

29 Jan 2015

"Your brand is what your customers tell each other it is."

2015 will continue to be all about the customer, for brands.

Q: Your most significant industry trends for 2015?

A:

- Brand power will continue to shift from the corporation into the customer's hands.
- The continuation of the rise of customer-centric, ethical brands.
- Skilled employees leaving exploitative job positions for ethical companies where they are engaged with purpose, enjoyment and within a healthy company culture.
- Mobile payment solutions, the provider agnostic mobile wallet is around the corner. More of the unbanked will have mobile bank accounts with lower banking fees.

Q: Your 'game changer' trend in 2014?

A: Your brand is no longer what you say it is. Your brand is what your customers tell each other it is. This was undoubtedly the year South African brands realised the easy days are over. They need to start doing what they say because in the internet age, the truth is quickly revealed. Ethical, transparent brands have begun to gain favour with consumers and this trend will continue to gain traction and momentum. The greatest brands of the future will be the ethical brands that deliver on what they promise.

Advertising and marketing can no longer be designed to trick the consumer into buying something, but instead should tell them the truth about the offering and let them choose it. When this occurs, the brand has won a new customer and a brand ambassador at the same time.

Q: What do you hope to see less of going into a New Year?

A: Load shedding, broken promises, corruption, crime and poor leadership. Political issues aside, I would like to see less of authorised credit providers providing loans to the poor at excessive interest rates. It is the most exploitive and damaging practice in society. Fuelled by greed, it is entirely out of control and urgently needs to be regulated.

I would like to see less of business service providers overselling to customers, especially in the IT and financial services sectors. Sales consultants should be selling what the customer needs - based on their analysis. All too often, I see quotes

filled with smoke and mirrors with line items that are vague and confusing to the customer. The role of the service provider is to look after the customer's interests and not the interests of the specific commission-based sales consultant.

Q: What do you hope to see more of in 2015?

A: I want to see more SA brands standing by their brand promise instead of just advertising it. I want to see brands taking ownership of the precious trust their customers put in their hands. For example, ensuring food products are safe for consumption, rather than using the cheapest ingredients regulation demands. Brands need to learn to have empathy towards a customer's specific circumstance. Brands need to start doing what they say, removing complexities and simplifying our daily lives. If your product has value, customers do not need to be tricked into buying it.

I want to see businesses investing in cloud-based IT services from reputable providers. Enterprise class business cloud services remove complexities, automate processes and simplify everything. This allows businesses to focus on their core service offering instead of their IT infrastructure.

For more:

For more:

- Bizcommunity Special Section: [Biz Trends 2015](#)
- Bizcommunity Search: [Trends 2015](#)
- Twitter Search: [#biztrends2015](#)
- Mobile App: [Bizcommunity Trends](#)
- Resource downloads: [PWC](#), [Ericsson](#), [JWT](#), [FCB](#), [Millward Brown](#), [Generation Z](#)

ABOUT GEORGE GOLDING

A natural-born entrepreneur, George is as fervent about IT as he is about affordable communications services and business integrity. He is driven by a burning ambition to see the promise of cloud computing translated into tangible business benefits, and to providing fellow entrepreneurs with better alternatives to the services of South Africa's landline telecoms incumbent. George has a postgraduate diploma in Distributed Commercial Information Systems (UCT) and BCom Honours in Information Systems (UCT).

■ [Trends 2015] Your customers hold the power - 29 Jan 2015

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>