

# Beautiful News celebrates 4 years of proving that good news sells

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*In four years, South Africa's fastest-growing positive news platform has become a global movement for social good. Through our stories, we are building communities, changing lives and delivering return on investment.*

Illness. Lockdowns. Unemployment. Disinformation. Division. In 2020, we're expected to adjust to a new normal. Fear and anxiety have become a part of daily life. We yearn for our friends and family. Isolated at home, we go online to an overwhelming stream of bad news. Apathy and fatigue set in. And then we scroll again, looking for a sign of hope.

We are in a state of both survival and recovery. People turn to what they know – creature comforts, familiar brands. Things that they trust. Businesses are facing unprecedented pressure. They are dependent on the love and loyalty of their customers. But they are also under increasing expectation to be meaningful contributors to society and make a difference in people's lives. If a brand isn't purpose-led, customers leave. It's make-or-break.

When lives and livelihoods are in jeopardy, we find strength in our communities. As a positive news platform, Beautiful News unites people to reframe our world. We are a collective of storytellers, patrons, and everyday people focusing on the best of humanity. And we provide a network effect that changes lives.

## **The Beautiful News network effect**

Launched in November 2016 by the co-founders of the [Ginkgo Agency](#), Adrian Steirn and Harriet Pratten, Beautiful News challenges the cycle of negativity in mainstream media by sharing one positive short film every single day. Motivated by the incredible success of the [21 Icons](#) project, it shifted the focus from celebrating living icons to telling the stories of everyday South Africans accomplishing the extraordinary. Beautiful News has since grown into a global movement for social good.

In 2018, we told the story of [Yaseen Abrahams](#). A taxi conductor providing free transport to the elderly, Abrahams' compassion resonated deeply with audiences. His story was shared on the radio. One listener was so inspired by Abrahams, he offered to buy him his own taxi. [Barbara Kingsley's](#) film about overcoming HIV stigma motivated a woman

with a dangerously low CD4 count to start life-saving treatment. [Smangaliso Nyoni](#) was bullied for his love of animals and his shack was burnt down. But when people saw his story, they made significant donations to fund his education. This is the network effect of Beautiful News.

We represent people who overcome in the face of adversity. We tell the stories of trailblazers innovating answers. We reflect the resilience of the human spirit, and call for the protection of the natural world. Our platform provides solutions-based positivity. Beautiful News is not only reframing the world. We are influencing it through pure determination and impact.

## **Our impact**

- Over 1,200 micro-documentaries published from across the world
- 508 million film views and counting
- The [fastest-growing media page](#) on Facebook in South Africa
- 1.6 million followers on social media
- Four billion opportunities to see
- 30 partnerships with media networks
- R435m in earned media domestically

“Beautiful News is a unique opportunity to be associated with an always-on platform,” says Jean Willers, MD of Nielsen Africa. “In this hyper-competitive attention economy, the adoption of new and disruptive technology is key to capturing and retaining a consumer's focus.”

## **Why we need good news**

Right now, positive news is a necessity. According to a 2019 [global digital news report](#) by the Reuters Institute, 39% of people believe the news is too negative. It leaves people feeling anxious, cynical, and helpless.

As disinformation and divisiveness enters the public sphere, we need stories that unite us and inspire action. Guided by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, Beautiful News has built a community of changemakers by showing what is possible. Independent research shows that upon seeing Beautiful News, there was a 54% increase in those who felt optimistic about South Africa, and a 59% decrease in those who felt extremely hopeless about South Africa. We spark hope.

## **Consumers act as champions of brands they believe in – and foils to those they don't**

Brands are not separate from their communities. According to a 2018 [Accenture study](#), “62% of customers want companies to take a stand on current and broadly relevant issues like sustainability, transparency or fair employment practices.” Customers want to see their values reflected in the brands they support. Brands that are purpose-led, authentic and improve people's lives are more resilient and have higher growth.

In their partnership with Beautiful News, Mercedes-Benz South Africa stood out as a brand driven by purpose. Through their association with the positive news platform, they demonstrated themselves to be a business committed to the future of South Africa. They were seen as a part of the community – and the community responded. As a result of their partnership with Beautiful News, Mercedes-Benz South Africa saw a significant increase in brand awareness and love:

- 59% improved perception of the brand
- 257% uplift in brand engagement
- 68% increase in lead quality
- 64% reduction in cost per lead
- Highest-rated regional online store for Daimler Mercedes-Benz

“Beautiful News is the most successful channel partnership that I have been associated with in 20 years at Mercedes-Benz,” says Selvin Govender, CMO of Mercedes-Benz South Africa. “I have watched it change lives, grow brand love and help sell cars.”

### **There has never been a better time for good news**

With every story published Beautiful News creates the opportunity for the brand to benefit as the propagators of positivity. The impact of Beautiful News is far-reaching. In four years, it has represented the spirit of South African people and has created a purpose-driven platform for brand association. It has forged a loyal and engaged community based on trust.

### **This is just the beginning.**

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