

Carve your own niche

Niching (pronounced knee-shing) might sound like a province in China, but don't be fooled by its subtle-sounding innocence. Niching is the latest weapon of mass distraction in a brand's marketing arsenal and is more accurate than any smart bomb.

The whole thing about niching is accurately targeting an ever-decreasing segment of the market — matching specific brands more accurately with their specific and desired consumer.

We're talking purity here, and with purity comes less wastage: of time, marketing effort, man hours, and more especially advertising budget, which translates directly into increased profitability. Interested?

The message is clear and simple; if you want to increase your business, decrease your target zone and refine your range.

Niching works on different levels, as brand gurus Added Value testify.

"Segmentation is essentially about understanding how a market works

and how choices are made," says Charles Broome, Added Value's chief executive. "By tapping into the market from different angles you can check what products are bought by whom, for what reason, on what occasion and from what places."

And from that knowledge you can more accurately apply positive segmentation.

"This ultimately enables marketers to unlock real brand growth, which is pretty exciting stuff".

That 4X\$ market was born of an outdoorsy culture and has dominated global fashion and everything else for almost a decade. One minute you could go into a shoe shop and buy a decent pair of brogues, the next the only shoes you could buy — anywhere — were clumsy hiking boots.

Notice how even cellphones now come in rubberised Kevlar casing that can stop a bullet and withstand a drop from the top of Mont Blanc, which is pretty handy when heading for Sandton in your new Pajero.

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