

EAST COAST RADIO · PLANNING PAPER · OCTOBER 2026

Get Into KZN: Make life feel possible.

A human-centred, neuro-behavioural planning paper, informed by SoundInsights research.

For planners, strategists, creatives, marketers and CMOs.

GET INTO KZN

In this paper.

01 EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE

Resourceful optimism

Why KZN needs the next step made easier, not a lecture on aspiration.

02 SECTIONS 01–04

The human context

Pressure, the intentional shopper, convenience and family.

03 SECTIONS 05–07

The KZN emotional context

Attainable optimism, closer travel and the road as a moment.

04 SECTIONS 08–11

The role of media

Opportunity territories, a better brief and measurement.

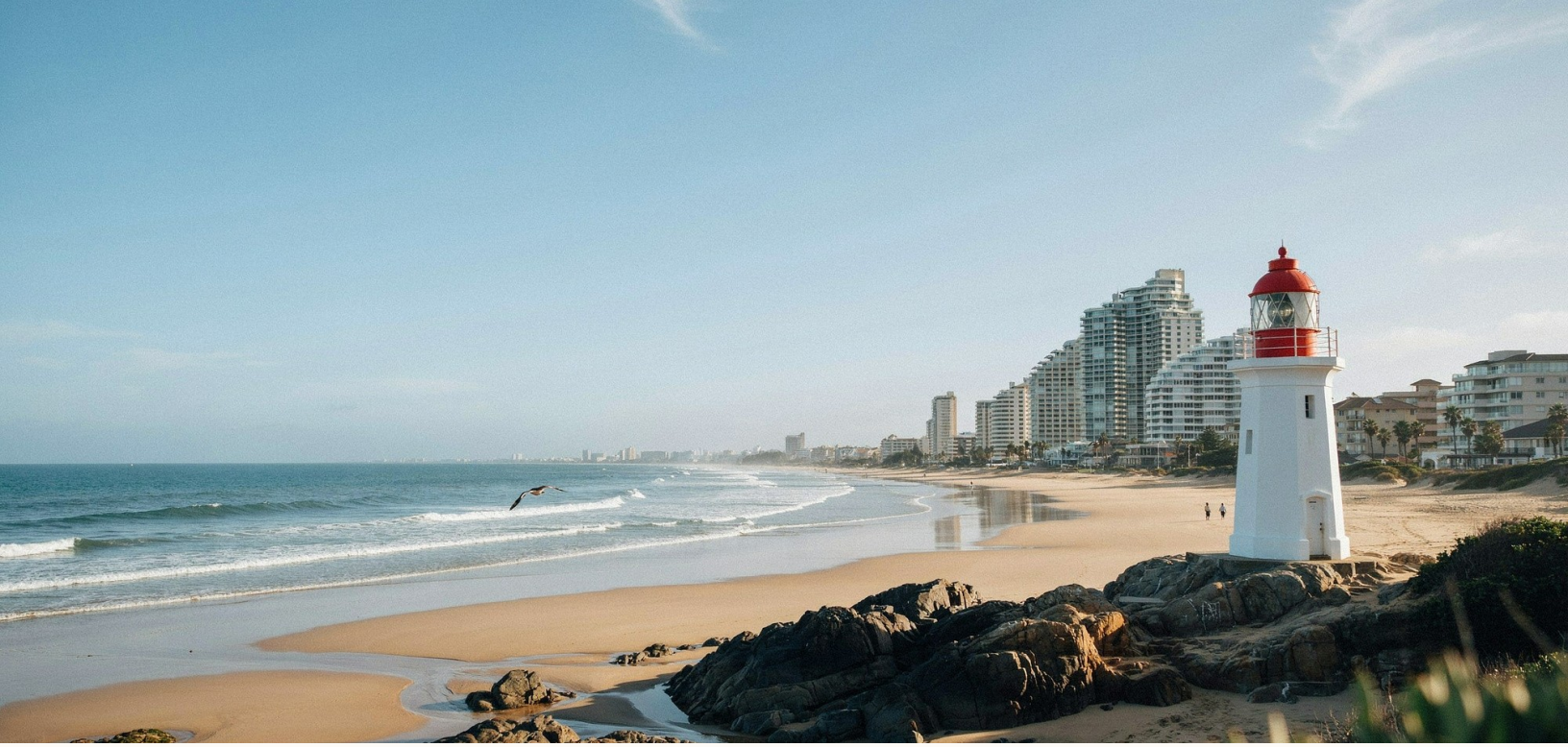
05 CLOSE

Conclusion and research notes

The evidence base, its bases and its caveats.

11

sections, one question: what are people trying to make possible?



EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE · RESOURCEFUL OPTIMISM

KZN doesn't need to be told to aspire. It needs the next step made easier.

Consumers under pressure are more intentional, not less engaged. They plan earlier, scrutinise value and use loyalty as a tool. Optimism and hardship sit side by side in this province, often in the same household and the same week.

That changes the brand's job. Inspiration on its own is cheap. The brands that earn a place in KZN lives remove the friction between what people want and the step that gets them there.

KEY LINE

People haven't stopped wanting. They've become more deliberate about how they make wanting possible.

59%

of surveyed KZN residents feel optimistic about their future in the province. Speak to progress, not just constraint.

72%

of ECR listeners name cost of living as a top financial concern. Make value concrete.

79%

think about their finances daily.

52%

are considering travel within KZN.

A province that watches every rand and still plans for better. Both truths belong in the brief.

THE FRAMEWORK

From exposure to behaviour.

The proposition: reduce friction between a meaningful human goal and the action needed to reach it. ECR works as a contextual layer that creates salience, explains value, validates choices, connects to local possibility and directs to the next action.

1	2	3	4	5
Notice	**Feel**	**Understand**	**Remember**	**Act**
Did it interrupt attention?	Did it create emotional relevance?	Did it process easily?	Did it stay retrievable?	Did it make action easier?

NEURO LENS

These are five planning questions, not neural measures. They borrow the logic of attention and memory to sharpen judgement.

FOR PLANNERS

Use it before launch, not just after. Score the idea at each step and fix the weakest link first.



01 · THE HUMAN CONTEXT

Pressure has changed the decision, not the desire.

33%

struggle to make ends meet; 41% get by with little left over

45%

say their financial focus is surviving; 55% have no emergency fund

71%

reduced dining out; 57% cut non-essential groceries

Brands shouldn't remind people life is expensive. They already know. The job is to make decisions feel safer, clearer and more worthwhile.

NEURO LENS

Ask how much mental work it takes to judge an offer as worthwhile.

FOR PLANNERS

Value is confidence. Show the quantity, explain the saving, make the fee visible.



02 · THE INTENTIONAL SHOPPER

Planning has become a form of agency.

Most retail missions are decided before the store. By the time a shopper walks in, much of the persuasion has already happened.

57%

know what they want before Black Friday

76%

look for grocery specials

47%

start Christmas shopping in the Black Friday window

20%

start back-to-school shopping then

FOR PLANNERS

Black Friday is now a value-management season. Earn a place on the list first, then expand the basket.

Memory starts before the buying moment.

Four moves across the Black Friday season.

01 BEFORE THE WINDOW

Build salience early

Enter consideration while lists are still being written.

02 EVALUATION

Provide useful deal information

Give shoppers what they need to compare and commit.

03 SHOPPING WINDOW

Make mobile access effortless

One tap from interest to price, detail and stock.

04 THROUGH THE SEASON

Keep continuity across Black Friday and Cyber Monday

One story, carried through, so memory compounds.

NEURO LENS

Consistent assets and distinctive audio cues help retrieval. Last-minute intensity can't rescue a brand that never entered consideration.

60%

cite time saving. People pay for less friction when the benefit is visible.

52%

convenience

46%

special offers

43%

price comparison

Translate convenience into a specific gain: fewer trips, less traffic, predictable delivery, one less task.

FOR PLANNERS

Design around the mission. Grocery is replenishment, health is purpose-led, electronics carry consideration.

NEURO LENS

Fluency is part of convenience. Audit for too many options, hidden fees and an unclear next step.

04 · FAMILY

Families are protecting what matters, not simply cutting back.

Cutting back is protection. Planning is care. A local holiday preserves family time. Family relevance must do a job: save money or time, reduce risk, create connection, enable preparation.

Back-to-school spans clothing, food, transport, devices, fees and extramurals. Make preparation feel manageable with costed bundles, planning tools, rewards with a household purpose and finance framed as control.

NEURO LENS

Emotion gives information meaning. Name the feeling, whether reassurance, pride, relief or connection.



05

A province people can criticise and still choose.

Concerns about jobs, safety, infrastructure and service delivery sit alongside resilience, pride and attachment to people, lifestyle and natural assets.

The credible territory is attainable optimism. Not a "sunshine province" story, and not escapism.

NEURO LENS

Familiar local voices, routes and places are fast relevance cues. Use them authentically, never as stereotype.



What brands can legitimately own in KZN.

Four human needs run through every study. Each points to a role a brand can credibly play.

HUMAN NEED	BRAND ROLE	CATEGORY FIT
Progress	Help people move forward despite constraint	Education, finance, connectivity, automotive, employment services
Belonging	Strengthen connection to people and place	Retail, food, entertainment, community, local experiences
Control	Make cost, risk and effort easier to manage	Banking, insurance, grocery, telecoms, utilities
Enjoyment	Keep pleasure and family experience attainable	Travel, leisure, QSR, FMCG, forecourts, entertainment

Category applications are strategic interpretation, not survey findings.



06—07 · TRAVEL AND THE ROAD

Travel gets closer and the road becomes a moment.

83% prefer road travel

61% travel with family

74% save months ahead

60% prefer self-catering

58% like beach holidays

Inspire, then show how the trip works: total price, inclusions, distance, food and activities.

At the forecourt, **87%** want drinks, stretching and fuel; **83%** takeaway food; **77%** bathrooms. **65%** stop at the start of a trip and **59%** mid-journey.

FOR CREATIVES

What does this traveller need in the next 20 minutes?

08. From exposure planning to decision planning.

01 Make it salient

Audio and reach put the need in memory.

02 Make it credible

Presenters, content and proof reduce uncertainty.

03 Make it assessable

Mobile gives price, detail and conditions.

04 Make it actionable

Booking, redemption and enquiry routes.

05 Make it learnable

Measurement tied to agreed outcomes.

FOR PLANNERS

Give every channel a cognitive job. Radio still features in deal discovery alongside internet and social, and audio sits naturally in road journeys.

Five territories and a better brief.

Stretch the household

Get ahead

Keep the good stuff

Make the journey easier

Build confidence

The test: would the idea still be useful if the logo were smaller?

THE BRIEF IN SEVEN QUESTIONS

1. Human goal
2. Friction
3. Brand role
4. Behaviour
5. Context
6. Channel job
7. Proof

FILL-IN SENTENCE

"For people trying to ___ but constrained by ___, our brand can make the next step easier by ___. ECR's role is to ___, and we'll know it worked when ___."



11 · MEASUREMENT

Measure the action the idea was designed to change.

1. Delivery
2. Response
3. Action
4. Commercial outcome
5. Learning

Separate media delivery from customer outcome; agree evidence and data owners before launch. Never claim a campaign "activated the brain" unless neural measures were collected.

The question isn't "What can we advertise?" It's "What are people trying to make possible, and how can the brand genuinely help?"

STUDY	FIELDWORK	BASE
Finance	Aug 2026	N=149
Black Friday	Aug 2026	N=164
Retail	Jun 2026	N=227
Provincial Sentiment	Jul 2026	N=349
Travel and Leisure / Forecourt	May 2026	N=249

Findings are directional; don't sum multi-select percentages.