

# The road to marketing redemption is paved in data

By [Roan Mackintosh](#)

16 Jul 2019

Presenting at the 6th episode of the IAB Series, recently appointed [DQ&A commercial director, Roan Mackintosh](#), explored how to use technology to gain a competitive advantage. According to him, it's all about rebuilding trust between brands and their customers.



Roan Mackintosh, commercial director at DQ&A

We know that in an attention economy cutting through the clutter and being heard is one of the biggest challenges marketers have. It often feels that customers no longer want (or believe they need) anything marketers have to offer. Ironically though, the road to redemption lies in using marketing technology to rebuild the trust that we squandered over the last few years. And trust is today's gold standard for brands looking to survive.

## Time for our mea culpas

As an industry, we marketers have done a terrible job. We have been so obsessed with getting ads out there that we fell into the trap of spamming and creating so much interference that most consumers now have advertising blindness – and in particular banner blindness. Our task now, as an industry, is to find ways of undoing what we have done.

DQ&A firmly believes we, as an industry, have a duty to regain the trust of the public. We need to own the fact that we have caused the mistrust and now we need to use the technology we have at hand to create authentic moments that will shift the opinion of our customers, so they once again engage with us as brands. But how can we do this?

Let's take the great, everyday example of Spotify. Its playlist service called Discover Weekly may make use of advanced machine learning to build its weekly playlists, but it works best if users enthusiastically engage with the service and help it learn what music we like and what we don't. The trade-off for sharing information with the service is not seen as an invasion of privacy, but rather a means to get something we value, in this case, a list of new music we may like and have otherwise not known about. A quid pro quo in the truest digital sense.

It's about bringing it back to responsible marketing, utilising data and getting as much information as you can. The end goal will always be to provide meaningful value to your customers. When you get that exchange right, people will naturally engage with you more, meaning more data by which to enhance your relevant marketing strategies in future and, in so doing, the customer experience increases and levels the value exchange between brand and customer. And brands will be trusted and valued again.

## **Finding tech that just works**

Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric once famously said: "If you don't have a competitive advantage, don't compete."

He will also be remembered for saying: "There are only two sources of competitive advantage: The ability to learn more about our customers faster than the competition, and the ability to turn that learning into action faster than the competition."

Welsh was responsible for growing GE's value by 4000% during his tenure, so it's fair to say that the man knew a thing or two about competitive advantage. But the real secret behind the success was his willingness to adopt new technologies and use them to give his company the jump on its competitors.

Although South African companies still suffer from a reputation of being slow tech adopters, we are certainly seeing some companies taking a much bolder line when it comes to martech and adtech.

This is evidenced not only by our enthusiastic use of tech like the Google Marketing Platform, solid CRM and business intelligence but also the fact that forward-thinking companies are pulling the marketing teams into the centre of their operations and away from the ancillary cost centre, to which they have traditionally been relegated.

Local companies who could be described as being on the cusp of Google's Connected phase in their Digital Maturity Benchmark are seeing the benefits of integrated data, activated across channels, with a demonstrable link to sales processes. And, while they may not be quite at the level of the companies in the most advanced, Multi-Moment phase, they are boldly following the road to reach it.

What we are now seeing from local companies is a decrease in wastage in terms of media due to more targeted marketing, and an increase in the conversion rate as people engage more with the content. What's more, as a result, we see a direct increase in value – both to the consumer and to the brand, which is now able to learn more about their customer and further refine their offering and, most importantly, personalise the engagement.

So, while we still have a long road ahead of us, we can honestly say that by embracing the competitive advantage offered by technology, our path to making things right with our customers is clear. And this is a very good start indeed.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Roan Mackintosh is commercial director at DQ&A

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