

The power of knowing: First insights from Agency Scope UK 2021/2022

 By [Johanna McDowell](#)

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The UK's fourth edition of Agency Scope saw leading marketing communications research consultancy Scopen combine qualitative - opinions and motivations - with quantitative interviews focused on measurable data and facts across a quality cross section of Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) around the country.



Source: unsplash.com

Some 141 marketing professionals participated and over 300 client agency relationships were analysed from the data collected to provide creative and media agencies with horse's mouth information on client needs, enabling them to improve current services and offer new ones.

Brands that participated in the research included Mars, Heinz, Virgin Atlantic, Experien, Ford, Tesco, NHS England, P&G, Unilever and other globally-renowned icons currently among the most important marketers in the UK. Top level decision-makers in marketing, communications and advertising provided candid, vital opinions and facts.

Characteristics that make an agency ideal

Also analysed were 39 agencies across creative and media to deliver a view of their current operations. Early insights show the top characteristics of what would be considered the ideal agency are creativity, account service and strategic planning, in that order.

Interestingly, the top three characteristics in 2018 were knowledge (of the market, consumers and clients); creativity (and innovative ideas); and the professionalism of the team.

At a glance, we see the change in requirements being directly related to Covid-19 and the changes it demanded from the entire industry. Creativity became vital to attract attention in markets that were largely in lockdown and open to far more messaging than under normal working conditions.

Account service, under conditions that required workarounds to make up for face-to-face briefs and discussions, was clearly vital as marketers and agencies came to rely on each other in ways not required before and strategic planning would obviously underpin service.

A second area of interest at this stage is business activity regarding client retention. The research shows that new business activity in terms of cold calling dropped a whopping 40% over the last three years, showing agencies clearly focused more vigorously on current clients.

Lastly, Covid also saw to it that face-to-face meetings became screen-to-screen and our industries adapted. What is clear is that messaging became more emotional, a clear indication of how advertising reaches into the heart of communities and individuals and reflects what people are thinking, doing and wanting.

We look forward to sharing more UK insights as they are analysed and noting how Agency Scope South Africa aligns with global trends.

ABOUT JOHANNA MCDOWELL

MD of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS), and partner in Scopen Africa, with a background that includes being on both the agency and the client side of the fence, Johanna McDowell is well-placed to offer commentary on marketing and advertising in the South African and international contexts. She built her career in marketing and advertising since 1974, holding directorship in both SA and British advertising agencies. She was MD of Grey Phillips Advertising in 1988.

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