

# 2015: Mobile is key

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As holiday memories fade and the reality of 2015 begins, members of the local ad industry should strap themselves in for another bumpy year...



Jeremy Maggs: SA advertising leaders are confident 2015 will be a better year, but not without problems. (Image extracted from YouTube)

SA advertising investment growth slowed last year to 5,6% from 9% two years ago. Dentsu Aegis Media forecasts global adspend growth of just over 6% in 2015.

One agency executive says while his clients might spend a little more, they'll also demand greater output and more return on investment. Writing for the industry website *The Media Online*, Celia Collins and Ilsa Grabe from Carat Media predict online, radio and TV ad investment will continue to show growth in 2015 and that Unilever, Shoprite Holdings and SABMiller will remain the top three advertising investors.

According to the *eMarketer* website, global advertisers will spend \$590bn in 2015 - up 6% over 2014. eMarketer says mobile advertising will be the key driver of growth and that advertisers will spend \$64bn on mobile - up nearly 60% over 2014. International advertising information portal WARC says the biggest increases in adspend in 2015 will come from India (15,1%) and China (10,5%).

SA advertising leaders are confident of a better year, but not without problems.

## Skills shortage a challenge

TBWA's Ivan Moroke is concerned about the narrow skills pipeline: "The fight for talent is the single biggest issue that keeps ad leaders awake and demands a more progressive approach from us as the power is shifting to the talented employee."

That view is echoed by David Moffatt, group CEO of Hellocomputer: "The scarcity of true digital talent with significant industry experience has resulted in a highly competitive human resources market. As the need for digitally savvy marketers grows, we are seeing talent being approached from beyond the communications industry. Operating within advisable financial ratios is becoming harder to balance with securing the best people in the business."

Moroke says client relationships are going to be tougher this year: "The intensity of client demands is the new normal. Puffery won't cut it as brands will and should be asking what value you are adding beyond the words." He believes agency types are obsessed with media choice: "It is only agencies that argue about which medium is important to customers; customers don't."

Ogilvy & Mather's Abey Mokgwatsane believes the environment will get tougher before it gets better. He also says experiential marketing will make a big comeback.

Mokgwatsane also says any brand not playing in the social media space this year is making a mistake, saying there is a potential local audience of 20m.

## **Don't be dull, don't be one-dimensional**

Y&R CEO Andrew Welch says 2015 is the year where the single-minded value proposition ends. "Like interesting people, interesting brands have a number of dimensions, often in contradiction or tension. Don't be one-dimensional and don't be dull."

One of those dimensions will be content marketing. "Consumer brands have to figure out the degree to which they wish to become content producers," says Moffatt. "And as certain social channels increasingly become paid media channels, brands will further need to explore self-publishing through, and community aggregation around, owned digital assets."

## **The social media conundrum**

However, a note of caution is sounded by Vuyo Lee, group executive for brand and corporate affairs at MMI Holdings: "The rush towards social media without a clear idea of what type of content you want to drive through this medium is problematic."

"Just being on social media is not enough; you need a strategy on how you keep conversations alive between members of your audience about your brand rather than one-way communication to your audience."

Welch says global brands will have to refine their understanding of country culture: "Local means local. Global campaigns tweaked to slip into the local market do not make brand sense. Don't do it."

Moffatt says local brands will have to pay more attention to Facebook: "2014 saw Facebook shift from a social channel for brands to the largest digital media platform, with an audience few can rival. As organic reach dissipated, the necessity to increase spend in order to reach Facebook users heightened."

Source: *Financial Mail*, via I-Net Bridge