

Agency Scope South Africa 2019 trends: Evolution or revolution? Part 2

By  Johanna McDowell

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This article is a continuation of [Agency Scope South Africa 2019 trends: Evolution or revolution? Part 1](#).



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From the mouths of professionals

It was asserted by the CMO respondents that media agencies spend less time actively selling their services and have less spontaneous and prompted awareness than creative agencies.



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Importantly, respondents agree that racial and gender transformation is not a “nice to have”, but rather a critical business imperative and key to successful agency and marketing teams. Diversity ensures a richer and more thorough understanding of the target market’s behaviour, allowing for appropriate messaging and creative initiatives.

Marketers, it seems, are on a continuum where the trendsetters are moving back to specialist agencies; interaction with experts in each discipline; and direct relationships with the digital platforms. However, at the same time, many marketers are only now making the transition to integrated agencies in an attempt to ensure integrated messages and strategy.



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Corporates pay for innovation

Even with the budget belt tightened, corporates that recognise the value that an agency adds are generally prepared to pay higher fees for disruptive creative and innovative media plans.

Those that don't see this value are looking to cut the costs associated with the agency and see in-house creative solutions as an option they believe to be more cost-effective. The impact of this on agencies may already be apparent to some, but it's seen – thought processes and financial constraints – as something to watch for in the coming months and years.



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The Agency Scope South Africa 2019 study, so far, shows that marketers see digital as a way to manage and control their spend – which belies the complexity of the digital space, the incredible opportunity it brings if used effectively and innovatively.

The idea of the cost of using this medium ineffectively or with limited understanding is likely to be something that follows the potential issues that can arise when the digital space is seen as “free or cheap”, rather than the one area that can damage a brand within minutes.

Marketers are looking for a truly integrative approach to campaign building rather than a TV-led campaign where all other channels are built around the TV concept, which assumes that consumers from all platforms are identical – even while global research notes the differences.



"Integrated agency" is on SA's marketing minds, finds Agency Scope 2019 study (so far)

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Finally, Agency Scope South Africa 2019 will likely show that many large corporations are looking for hybrid marketing and advertising model which falls between integrated and specialist agencies. They want someone to act as the single-point contact in the integrated agency, controlling the process and pulling in specialist experts as and when they are needed.

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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