

Mutton dressed as lamb - Digital and the media agency

 By [Quinton Jones](#)

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So maybe there is a strong sheep theme to this article - apologies it could be because it was written on a Sunday just before lunch. Who knows...



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This is the best time to have ever worked in media. The advancement of technology and the mobile phone have changed how, when and where we communicate with customers. There is granularity in both the connection and the conversation.

We are able to make future assumptions based on current behaviour driving better and more relevant interactions. The future cost of marketing comes down, ultimately improving ROI through building bespoke data led intelligence.

So clearly the agencies that absolutely are at the cutting edge of digital media and data are the ones that will win this race.

The answer to this is Yes and No, unfortunately! Yes, in the long term, No potentially in the short term.

Light the way

Firstly, digital competency and understanding is a very broad scale with agencies, clients and also individuals positioned on the scale often with daylight between them. It's a complex science. Is this a polite way for saying some people on both sides have no clue what they are doing in the digital space?

Yes, I think it is. The converse is true also - we also have some of the smartest people in our industry on both the client and agency side. Clients are not to blame. The job of the agency is to help clients on their digital journey. Agencies have to light the way.

Let's face it the barrier to entry to start a digital agency is low, the expectations high and that's why so many exist. It seems like anyone who is smart, ambitious and can add an adjective of colour to a common noun is a digital agency. You know them... red, blue, pink, yellow... combined with your favourite fruit animal or thing. Congrats you have a new agency!

Not all those dabbling in digital are equal Mr Client. The fact is sometimes the difference is as vast as taking nutritional advice from a nutritionist or from the counter attendant at your local fast food joint. The fact is they both give you meal options, both leave you full, but they just aren't at the same level.

Integrated media solution

Here's where the differences lie. Digital firstly is not a standalone anything - it's part of an integrated media solution. The second point is that anyone can purchase space, select targeting, spend a budget and discuss achievements with a client.

It's very easy to cover the top and do just enough to get by and keep a client happy. After all, you don't know what you don't know, and will only see a difference when exposed to it.

The real strength in digital comes from having a depth of specialisation, not just breadth. You need very competent people that are continually upskilled. You need to be working with the best industry and bespoke tools. Most importantly, you need making smart media calls that learn and drive messaging at the right time when we are most likely to achieve or contribute to the achievement of an objective.

Scratch under the surface

My advice to clients is scratch under the surface. Is your media strategy truly integrated? Are you working with a media agency that really understands digital and is good at it, or are they just good at talking digital? Don't ever assume scale is competency - it almost always comes down to the individuals in the agency doing the work.

Even some of the biggest network agencies are light years behind smaller specialist shops. Don't have the wool pulled over your eyes. I will most certainly follow this up shortly with an article on what to expect from your media agency, specifically focusing on digital.

Media strategists please embrace the new, and feel lucky that you are able to work in media and advertising at this time. Who knows, with AI and automation, you might just be the last generation to do this...

ABOUT QUINTON JONES

Quinton Jones is director of TM Media, TM is future focused. Media of the future is predictive and data-led. It's about insights and bringing the cost of marketing down through intelligence. TM is a media agency that provides data driven media solutions using the analytics and insights that digital provides, and then matches this with a very creative approach to media solutions.

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