

What to look out for in the marketing and advertising space

 By [Johanna McDowell](#)

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Following our successful trip to the New York Ad Forum Worldwide summit, we met with many agencies of all types and had a chance to converse closely with our fellow consultants. I returned to South Africa two weeks ago and have started to share some key observations and learnings from that trip.



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In addition, we have noticed a number of new aspects emerging in our own country which might be of interest to our Nordic colleagues. So here are some trends to look out for in 2014 - and beyond.

- **Big Data - the new buzz word or phrase:** What on earth is it? Well my understanding of it is that Big Data is so called because it is the combination of a variety of much smaller data - gleaned from different sources on the internet, in day to day life, through social media, through shopping habits that are monitored - which allow advertisers and marketers to be

more precise in their communication to their target audience.

Therefore obtaining better results through digital advertising, direct marketing, traditional advertising, PR or media campaigns. This Big Data can be continuously improved and updated as new information comes to light, and can be added into the information in order to create a much more detailed and fuller picture of the consumer. It is quite obvious that when used effectively this can have a very positive effect on a company's brand or products. So the use of Big Data will increase.

- **New hirings - new jobs:** This means that agencies will be investing much more - and will need to do so - in technology and in the people who can drive that technology to create the communication campaigns that clients will be needing.

I believe that we will see agencies of all types creating new roles within their organisations for highly skilled programmers and developers who will be able to engineer campaigns in spaces that did not exist five years ago.

- **Shopper marketing:** In New York we met a number of agencies who are ramping up their shopper marketing efforts. Shopper marketing was first introduced to the market place about five years ago - but did not really gain traction. At least not on the surface.

However it is clear that a lot of work has gone into the development of shopper marketing as a real science which can be backed by real data and can enable agencies and their clients to be far more precise in their communication campaigns during the purchasing process and purchasing cycle. We are predicting that more and more of these shopper marketing specialists could become the lead agencies of the future as the power of the retail experience continues to rise.

- **Return on investment or ROI:** Measurement matters and while in the past, this might not have been specified to agencies by their clients, agencies are now waking up to the fact that they have to provide measureable results - not just the number of likes on Facebook but real data on what changed for the brand or company when its advertising campaign was flighted or posted.

Marketers need to provide tangible evidence to their financial people that marketing works - agencies are learning that they have to take responsibility for the impact of their campaigns as part of those results.

• **Integrated start-ups:** Digital agency start-ups are no longer viable - as digital agencies have grown they have realised that they need integration into above line or traditional advertising.

Some of them are taking on above line specialists - former traditional agency creative directors especially - in order to ensure that they are providing a full service to clients. For that reason any new start up agency will have to be both traditional and digital - integration is the way to go.

• **Media agencies have become much more than just agencies that book and buy media space:** Their knowledge of consumers and targeting the right sectors is ingrained in their DNA within their agencies. Media agencies have been doing this for years and most savvy marketers work closely with their media agencies - not just to get good prices for their media buy but also to gain insights into consumer behaviour and trends in the media.

Many media agencies are now directing content that the creative agencies must produce in order to satisfy the target audiences. The balance is shifting.

So those are six trends that we can see right now - and of course more will follow.

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ABOUT JOHANNA MCDOWELL

MD of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS), and partner in Scopem 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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