

The agencies of the future will be agile

By [Karabo Denalane](#)

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It is so difficult nowadays to even project what is going to happen tomorrow, that I don't have 10 things that are going to happen next year! But these are my pointers for 2018.



Karabo Denalane, CEO, TBWA\Hunt Lascaris.

End of the traditional agency model

More and more agencies will move away from being called advertising agencies as their output will be far reaching as well as channel agnostic. Essentially we are all diversifying our portfolios and spreading the risk wider. Many client and procurement conversations will be around new approaches to revenue modeling and upsides on value extraction through new avenues where agencies can participate as clients go through similar change.

2018 won't only be about integration but collaboration and I think some interesting and non-descript partnerships will form in

2018. I also see agencies (or creative business) play more of a role in the fulfillment of ideas, as an example, we have in our studio creative and innovation technologists with a sole mandate to “build stuff” - bots, drones you name it - essentially we are putting our fate in our own hands.

New agencies on the rise

I believe in the coming months, you will have some big names – going out on their own. Once you have a great portfolio and a great name, you can pick up work. After all clients buy people and relationships are key. So what keeps me up at night are smaller, more agile teams that can pull people together very quickly. That is a key disruptor for me.

New business shifts

I’m hoping for some increased deal flow (pitches) in 2018. When we won the MTN and Liberty accounts this year, we pitched twice – and I’ve never done that before. So I can safely say that business will be harder and harder to lock down, as we will be taken through more and more hoops by the procurement teams. So agencies must make sure they stack up procurement wise to have any chance on closing.

Meaningful transformation

In 2018 there will be a stronger focus on actual transformation – how do we change the way we do business for the betterment or inclusion of all? Now that most of us are on Level 1 – what next, how do we make action, change and transform this business once and for all?

The importance of social currency

Agencies have always been notoriously bad when it comes to self- promotion. This is changing and you can already see agencies investing a lot of time in their brands, as well as their key individuals. Social currency and PR will be a massive deciding factor when clients choose agencies and social platforms are the first place they will go check us out.

We cannot be politically blind

There will be a lot of political instability as we lead up to 2019, so I do think the temperature will be very high, and agencies and brands will no longer afford not to take part in the narrative. A lot of agencies are generally staying away from it, but we have to have a view. We can no longer be politically blind. I honestly think we have to use creativity to give meaning and contribute positively to the conversation.

It will be interesting to see which agencies and brands stand up.

I also think a lot more youngsters need to be given an opportunity to voice their opinions, as we can’t build traditional top

down structures. This will drive the tapestry of our business. This will make our stories real.

**Karabo Denalane, the chief executive officer of TBWA\Hunt Lascaris, was interviewed by Louise Marsland.*

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