

Building blocks of right-housing for growth and success

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In this age of adaptive marketing where delivering the right message at the right time on the right platform is key, right-housing is vital to the success of leading customers through the sales funnel. So how do you start... and get it right?



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Right-housing not only requires that marketers review their internal and external capabilities, but also those of the agencies they currently work with. Getting this right requires an investment in creating a working model that is dynamic and can be built and re-built to suit a market that demands flexibility.

For a solid foundation, marketers must identify their core strengths and weaknesses; examine their company culture and make changes where required; and determine their key goal and what needs to be done to attain it.

There's much to be learned by noting what other organisations are doing to blend internal and external capabilities across the layers of the marketing ecosystem, including which they tackled first and why.

Michael Storey, head of creative and branding at Ocado in London, is quoted as saying: "An impartial resource to help with designing and resourcing our marketing structure would be a super helpful plug-in." Impartiality in design is important because of the complexity of right housing - if some agencies in your blueprint aren't effective, you stand to lose financially and reputationally.

Right-housing means improving performance over time, and learning quickly what works and what doesn't. Having the right analytics to determine this will generate robust – and cost-effective - decision-making.

Capabilities: Balancing internal and external

According to the AAR Group's Right-Housing for the 2020s, "To find the right blend of internal and external capabilities, you first need to break down the Jobs To Be Done across every layer of your marketing ecosystem; including how you Think, Create, Trade / Buy, Adapt."

Some marketers may prefer in-house solutions with marginal outsourcing, but creating a strategy with the end-goal in mind may require a transformation in thinking and different building blocks for success.

To influence the entire consumer experience requires communications, creative capital, agility and the ability to put data into action. Right-housing these functions means briefing the lead, PR, digital, BTL, ATL and all other agencies to ensure their specific disciplines add value and do not overlap with other providers.

So, external agencies will have to pass the marketer's litmus test, which should include determining their precise specialities and ability to help your business connect better with current and future customers; their willingness to understand and participate in your growth agenda; and their ability to add innovative solutions to your business.

Adaptive layers for new-era marketing

You'll note that as you drill down through each layer in the ecosystem, more questions appear and your right-housing architecture shifts. The process requires strong, hands-on management and the ability to create a model that may need several re-builds when new information appears. Adaptive marketing is here to stay, and your systems and teams should facilitate it.

Therefore, throughout the process, it's vital to remember your creative capital. Each of the building blocks of right housing comprises people who will make sure their block fits in with all the others – or not.

Today's marketing ecosystem must be adjustable and resilient, shifting at the pace set by the combined layers of traditional and online business. Some shifts may be more radical than others, but the house that is still standing after the current challenges of Covid-19 and a depressed economy is also likely withstand most other stumbling blocks.

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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