

Why machine learning is the most important media analysis trend for 2019

By  [Juanita Pienaar](#)

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With media analysis being a critical element of any successful business strategy, it's important for companies to stay mindful of the various methods of analysis and trending topics.

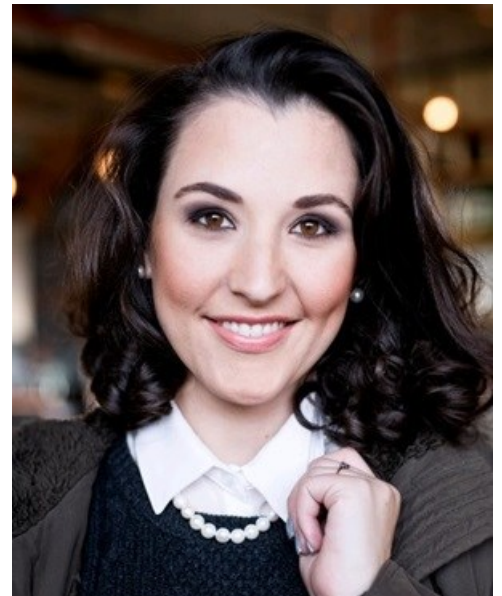
I spoke to Anja Cavanagh, team leader: analysis and media intelligence at media and brand intelligence agency Focal Points to elaborate more on the importance of media analysis, the state of the industry as well as what trends we should pay attention to in 2019 and beyond.

■ ***Tell us more about yourself and what it is you do?***

I grew up in Pretoria and studied at the University of Pretoria where I completed my Master's Degree in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management.

I started working at Focal Points in 2016, where my role is to analyse and derive value from clients' media coverage. Our reporting solutions are co-created with our clients to ensure that our analysis aligns with their specific needs and helps them to reach their communication objectives.

I believe that by using this client-centric method of reporting, Focal Points has established itself as a trailblazer in the media analysis industry.



Anja Cavanagh from Focal Points.

■ ***Which of this year's media analysis trends stands out to you and why?***

I would definitely say that machine learning is the most important media analysis trend for 2019. Focal Points utilises this technology to identify trends in media data and to find the answers we need at an incredible pace.

Our media analysis reports are crafted using a combination of machine learning, natural language processing and human understanding. Using these AI technologies, we are able to process vast amounts of data, which really gives us an edge. The sheer volume of data that we process in order to find insights is what sets us apart from competitors.

Thanks to these powerful technologies, we are able to produce comprehensive media intelligence reports that cater to our clients' specific requirements in unrivalled turnaround time.

■ ***Why do you consider media analysis a critical element of a successful business strategy?***

With more media channels available to consumers, thanks to the internet, it has become essential to offer a seamless brand experience across all channels.

Media analysis is a fundamental tool for identifying where a brand's message is portrayed correctly in the media and where you need to focus to change the narrative. For instance, your brand message may be portrayed differently in editorial content compared to the way it appears in content that you have posted on social media.

It is imperative for your brand's message to be consistent on every channel so that consumers do not misinterpret what your brand has to say. Ensuring that your brand message and voice is the same helps consumers to identify your brand and assists in building trust.

For example, if a consumer sees that your brand is focused on uplifting the community, and that message is consistent across adverts, press releases and social platforms, they are more likely to believe that is *really* your focus. Conversely, if your brand has different messages on various platforms, it is more difficult for consumers to understand and recall your brand.

■ ***Comment on the current state of the media analysis industry.***

It is commonly said in the industry that data is king and he who masters it rules the world. Although this idea isn't something new, its significance to the state of the industry is two-fold.

Firstly, any analysis is only as relevant as the quality and quantity of the data. We see this time and time again, where insights are lacking due to the limited media data analysed.

Secondly, the manner in which the data is 'mastered' is crucial. As mentioned earlier, machine learning is the answer to gaining the most valuable insights in the shortest amount of time.

■ ***Going beyond 2019 and looking towards 2020, how can businesses prepare themselves in terms of technology and all the advancements that come with it?***

The first step businesses need to take is to educate themselves about what these technologies entail and how they all work together. Once businesses have a clear idea of this, they can then start thinking about ways to incorporate them into their own strategies.

The next thing businesses need to do is be perceptive to the media and to any upcoming trends in order to stay ahead of new advancements in technology. At Focal Points, we do this by monitoring the media, which allows us to have foresight into what the latest trends will be as well as how to adapt our own technologies based on what consumers need.

■ ***Anything else you would like to add?***

Social media analysis is something that many brands still don't effectively utilise. Creating and reporting on a social media strategy is critical — especially as customers primarily talk about brands and campaigns on social media.

This also speaks to 'omnichannel reporting', which involves reporting on all media platforms instead of focusing on editorial, social and advertising in silos. As customers come into contact with your brand in many different ways, it is imperative to recognise the importance of a comprehensive strategy in order to cover all touchpoints and report consistently.

Media analysis can assist by looking at all media and let you know if the messages you are putting out on editorial are being carried through to your adverts. It also shows you how social media users are reacting to key messages, if there are any secondary messages being created and the sentiment of conversations. All of this impacts your brand, which is why media channels shouldn't be reported on in isolation.

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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