

Has the cobbler's kid got no shoes?

 By [Johanna McDowell](#)

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Advertising, communications and marketing agencies are the core of creativity for brands across the globe. Scopen's Agency Scope studies around the world show some 45% of potential clients visit an agency's website to see who they are.



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In many cases the website does no justice to the work the agency is actually producing or capable of producing. Rather than appealing to the marketer, it will serve, our feedback indicates that websites might be designed to appeal to other agencies and to recruit staff.

While agencies compete to be seen to be creatively innovative and up to the task they should take a look at their websites through a marketer's eyes.

Here's what a marketer is going to be taking note of:

Firstly, ease of use and contact information. Navigation must take into account that some may be viewing your website on a smartphone and others on larger devices. If one of these decision-makers cannot navigate his or her way around the site, you've lost them, no matter how clever your content and graphics are.

Some users may attempt to find your phone number and call, but if they're led to a form that requires detailed information

and no contact details, they're likely to be gone forever.

Tell us who you are... briefly

Your credentials are important and should show up front and centre. Potential clients want to see what work you've done and for whom. If you have a culture reel, so much the better.

In reviewing your site for your target audience think procurement. Most creatives will not have worked in procurement but can look to their colleagues in management positions for how to appeal to the client and, ultimately, cheque-signer.

Nobody likes their creativity criticised, but designing a website could prove to be the difference between getting the new client or not. Where marketers have to scroll endlessly to find key information, they are often wondering where you may hide their messages if you work for them.

The bottom line for agencies is, "simple is ample". Keep your website up to date and compliant with all privacy regulations. Make finding you and phoning you easy; avoid screeds of text when brevity will do; remember that the bottom line is getting the business, not winning website awards.

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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