

2020 media trends and predictions (or how not to get distracted by shiny new things)

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7 Jan 2020

The evolution of media is a success story and 'media' in its many forms has transformed the way we communicate. The continuously changing media landscape makes it tough to keep abreast of the latest media trends, consumers are harder to reach, and a deluge of data and online touchpoints provides more options for media planning than ever before. The move toward in-housing threatens, but creates opportunities for agencies, as well as collaboration across media agencies and clients. Facing the change is as much about transforming the way the industry works together to create value for advertisers, audiences and media owners in new and exciting ways.



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Today, media touchpoints span beyond just paid media, and all interactions with a brand or service should be considered an opportunity to engage with consumers. But as Damon Stapleton, Chief Creative Officer for DDB in Australia and New Zealand, points out, "When it comes to advertising, we are often seduced by the new way or the shiny new channel. The truth is perhaps more mundane. Things change a lot, people don't." This is why an effective media strategy is key to #GettingMediaRight.

Technology trends transforming the media landscape

It's no surprise that TV is still the leading channel that revolutionised the delivery of information and entertainment to the masses. This rings true especially in South Africa, where TV remains the highest reach channel. While it's predicted that broadcast will still dominate the TV landscape, streaming (online viewing) is gaining momentum. For subscription services like DStv and Showmax, catching the heart of the consumer lies in how well they will be able to understand their audiences and who has the highest quality original content.

5G will finally get real, meaning faster everything, and with the growing network of fibrehoods, we'll see exponentially faster download and upload speeds. For marketers, media owners and agencies this will be a major change as brands will have no choice but to meet customers' expectations and to connect with customers at any time, in any location, using richer, immersive content.

Audio channels will make-or-break in 2020, and smart speakers, podcasts and reinvention in the radio space will be testimony to the role that audio will play in the future. We'll see the rise of augmented reality (AR) that places the consumer at the heart of your content, giving consumers in-house shopping experiences where they can actually view the product in their homes. For example, that couch you spotted, you will be able to view it virtually in your lounge before buying it!

The spaces that brands can credibly occupy

Chances are you might have heard about esports at some point in 2019, and if you like me thought it was just a bunch of guys playing video games, think again, this is a multi-million-dollar industry and has grown exponentially in the last year, but what does this mean for media owners and advertisers? Well, a wide array of lucrative media opportunities waiting to be unwrapped.

While digital channels have become the tickbox for every campaign, building closer connections with consumers will be key to marketing strategies and traditional channels will once again play a key role in brand building for the long term. For purely online brands this will mean turning the wheel and bringing their brands to life in the real world.

Influencer marketing has been trending and this will not slow down in 2020. Brands will seek to work with more authentic and genuine content creators, taking measurement more seriously, moving away from large fan bases and realising that “likes” will simply not be enough.

Brands will become more radical and action driven in their attempts to support issues and will need to create purpose in the right area. Making a statement in the future will no longer stand, consumers will want to see more meaningful impact from brands getting involved in social issues. A great example of getting this right is Carling Black Label's #NoExcuse campaign that impacted millions of people across the world.

The context and catalysts for change

As marketers and brands get to grips with GDPR, we'll see the 'cookie' crumble as data privacy and transparency concerns continue to intensify. In 2020, we can expect to see more direct integrations between publishers and measurement partners, which will enable true cross-publisher measurement for the first time. Author and theorist Geoffrey Moore said, “Without big data, you are blind and deaf and in the middle of a freeway,” and the rise of sophisticated data will allow marketers to deliver more personalised content at scale and brands will continue to develop new ways to target consumers effectively. But data ethics will be at the fore and people's values will come first!

I hope these predictions help you make sense of the changing landscape for 2020 and beyond so you can remain on top of the latest trends without being distracted by every new shiny thing!

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