

This requires concerted effort from three internal agency teams, namely, the suits, technical ‘production’ folk and the creatives. They all need to meet somewhere in the middle. This, I believe comes down to each team knowing enough about the other teams. For example, the suits must, where possible, push back for more time, so as to give the creatives and technical folk enough time to create exceptional work. The technical teams need to respect the importance of an overarching creative concept; a mechanic alone won’t make up a successful future campaign.

Digital-lead advertising

It isn't about jumping on the bandwagon. It is about creating forward-thinking solutions that effectively cut through competing clutter. Keep at it, don't give up - the great ones are worth the effort. An exceptional consumer insight and research can drive an innovative concept. Don't be scared, just prove the concept is viable.

There is massive power in combining data-driven traditional advertising with digital marketing techniques. For example, humble food-packing can be turned into a powerful, engaging online campaign, driving incredible online consumer engagement on an ongoing basis. That TV ad endboard copy you're about to get signed off - does it just sound snappy or did you base it on data that predicts that it will be engaging to consumers?

Digital spend is too low

I have a new point to raise. I've noticed many traditional advertising campaigns executed in our country, across all major categories. However, their online components lag behind in terms of their financial support. I've been lucky enough not to experience this myself. Brands need to spend more on digital to stay ahead, period. It is amazing how effective and efficient digital can be. For example, there is a lot of tactical digital advertising one could do if a brand would just sacrifice a few big billboards, over 12 months. One only has to attend various digital advertising award shows to see the incredible work various digital agencies accomplished on small budgets (imagine if they had sizeable budgets!).

I also think that correctly executed digital marketing would engage with many more people. Case in point, who notices billboards these days, enough for their messaging to work in any case? In my daily commute, I couldn't really care less about billboards that appear along the way. Quite frankly an alien space ship could land next to the highway and I probably wouldn't notice it.

Most of all, when it comes to digital, I'd be able to back it up with tangible data. Don't get me wrong - traditional advertising is not to be understated but digital definitely needs more of the clients' marketing spend. Brands need to look at traditional and digital advertising as tools in the same toolbox.

So, there you go, my humble thoughts on the world of digital marketing in SA.

ABOUT STEPHEN SANDMANN

I have a keen interest in innovative, digital marketing-lead advertising and search marketing (SEO and paid search), which I've developed through my award-winning agency and corporate career at Ogilvy, Quirk (now Mrum), Vodacom and now a specialist digital marketing consultant at Sandmann Digital.

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