

# Naked marketing: Welcome to the new way of things

 By [Chélin Ramos](#)

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Human nature dictates that we're not meant to be confined into one space. But, take away our experiences and something amazing happens - we adapt. Lockdown felt like the beginning of the end, with many of us wondering how we would survive the isolation. What we discovered was a whole new way of existing. We found ways to stay connected to each other and similarly, brands found ways to stay connected to us.



The pandemic has steered our attention away from traditional forms of media in favour of fast-paced digital solutions, available as and when we want them. This increased connectivity has put the spotlight on brands, forcing them to take a naked approach to marketing. By sympathising with what people are going through and truly connecting to what they are feeling, brands are exposing themselves to the market and helping consumers understand the values they are buying into. Stories, experiences, emotions, authenticity – all are essential to ensure a successful campaign and a memorable brand. There's nowhere to hide now, but why would you want to?

Some of the most powerful brands are successful because they create experiences that help their audience understand what their brand stands for and how it can impact their lives. This newfound transparency has transformed the game brands and consumers play, and the rules we have spent decades defining have been rewritten.

## Be exposed (Realism)

Consumers are looking for real content. If it's not believable, it's not worth thinking about. This is the attitude that's changing the way brands tell stories. Before, it was enough to see a product, now consumers want to understand it: Where did it come from? Who made it? What value does it add? Information urgency has created a need for transparency, paving the way for channels like customer reviews, bloggers and micro-influencers, which help consumers make daily purchasing decisions. It's a buyer's world and brands that "get it" are capitalising on consumers' desires for transparency, by adopting simplified messages, honest visuals and softened identities to maintain their positive online footprint.

## Be quick (Mindset)

There's no time (or need) for a production anymore. People are starting to see that big is not always better and brands are fast learning that a quick home video can do just as well – if not better – than a studio production. Content presentation is

not perfect and precise, it's real and relevant.

## **Strip down (Minimalism)**

In its most basic sense, minimalism is about expressing only what is essential. The search for realism has forced brands to strip away complicated visual language and opt for cleaner, easier-to-use experiences. As pointless as it is to hide in an empty room, minimalism is not about playing a game of hide and seek, it's about standing front and centre, saying "Here I am." Where loud and boisterous was common practice, raw simplicity now speaks volumes.

## **Grab attention (Movement)**

Anyone in this industry knows that people love movement. It allows for brand storytelling and sets the stage for truly realistic, personalised user experiences. Engaging illustrations, moving logos that tell stories and micro animations on websites or social pages, it's this dynamic identity and content applications that take viewers on a journey and force them to think and feel. That's all we can really hope for – a connection.

## **Use bare necessities (Relevance)**

A person's attention span is eight seconds. For a goldfish, it's nine. This says a lot about the decisions we make. To put it into industry perspective, the average page session on a website is two minutes, while a viewer can skip a YouTube ad after four seconds. The challenge is that consumers have built a wall against advertising, so we can't simply make things move because it's good practice – we don't have the time and consumers don't have the patience. A successful brand uses its time to empower, not dictate. Content with purpose is becoming more relevant, so be efficient, be consistent and be prepared.

## **Go beyond skin deep (Value)**

A survey of 1 000 South Africans revealed that the perception of value for money is the greatest influence on local consumers when they decide to purchase a product or service. This makes an agency's job particularly difficult. How do we show value in four seconds? In a battered economy that has forced people to be conservative with their wallets, the importance of brand value is reshaping the nature of an agency, as we experiment with strategic and visual ways to show why a brand is essential and why you can't live without it. Communicating value is just as important as communicating truth.

There was a time when brands were able to say whatever they wanted to, without many people questioning them. But the power has shifted from brands to consumers – who are now in control of what they see, and when and how they engage with a brand. This puts a lot of pressure on businesses, making the need for a naked approach to brand strategies paramount. The more transparent a brand is, the more it opens itself to reviews and information-sharing, and the more trustworthy it can become.

Diana Florescu, head of marketing at Rainmaking, summed it up perfectly when she said, "Trust has become the ultimate

currency.” I don’t believe this is specific to the trust between a consumer and a brand, but also between a brand and an agency. For a brand to be completely honest about the way they do business, they need an agency they trust to tell their story. That’s why I love this industry, and the role I play in it.

## ABOUT CHÉLIN RAMOS

I am a results-driven designer who strategically combines creative skills with technical know-how, to develop a presence that brings a brand to life. With the end goal always top-of-mind, I align everything I do to a brand's objective, guaranteeing the memorability and success of its final chapter. And I do it all with a smile.

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