

# Communication planning in a disruptive world

By [Gisela Seeley](#), issued by [Kantar](#)

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Those in leadership positions within the media industry face a daunting task. Technology has completely reshaped business and it's not done yet. Everything - from how (and by whom) content is created, right through to how it's delivered and consumed by the end-user, has been and continues to be transformed.



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While media owners focus on entertaining and informing; advertisers look to grow their business by communicating with and influencing target consumers; media agencies and adtech businesses provide the advice and the tools to connect businesses to prospective customers; and all of them are operating within an environment driven by change.

## The key drivers of change

Data, data, data. The single biggest change to occur within communications has clearly been the arrival of the internet and the concomitant digitalisation of all media forms. This affects everything – from the creation of content, through to how and when people consume that content. Data is a critical driver of change within our industry.

What will be different in 2018 is how we use that data to benefit our client's businesses, as well as ours. The breadth and

depth of data available and accessible from multiple sources is on a scale we haven't seen before. And this brings both opportunities and challenges. Agencies and advertisers can target more precisely, introduce a degree of personalisation to how messages are delivered to consumers and monitor results during campaigns, allowing them to adjust both spend and content as they go.

However, whilst we may have more data than ever before, just because something is quantified does not necessarily mean that it is either accurate or objective. The phrase 'not all data is equal' is an oft repeated watch-out.

Agencies in particular feel that one of the biggest challenges for advertisers as end-users is the need to become 'smart data consumers', knowing the right questions to ask and appreciating the limitations of the data available.

Wherever it comes from – and clearly there are multiple sources of useful data for almost any circumstance – data alone without analysis has little value. Skill is required to concentrate those numbers down to an essence, to extract the insights of value to the business. In 2018, the vital role of data scientists, in making sense of big data will become increasingly important. Additionally, we should expect to see more forward-looking or predictive data.

According to the [Dimension Report](#) from Kantar Media, there are two major implications from the availability of so much data. First, it makes sense that the sheer quantity and short-term nature of what's out there will lead to a degree of automation in how ad dollars are spent.

This is not a bad thing; the growth of programmatic techniques to place ads more efficiently is a positive, but the importance of human skills should not be underestimated, in ensuring that a balance is maintained and that plans and buys are effective as well as efficient.

The second major implication concerns the effect that too great a reliance on automation is having on consumers' attitudes towards advertising.

The world of communications is simply too complex for any one organisation to manage every facet. There is a need for multiple specialists, managed and co-ordinated towards a goal, certainly, but still specialising in their fields.

Looking forward, some feel that data sharing partnerships will become more common between the two major sets of data owners, media owner (and platform) businesses and advertisers.

We believe that inter-disciplinary collaborations will increase. A team brought together from different specialist disciplines is better placed than groups of multi-skilled all-rounders to meet the communications challenges ahead.

Context will become one of the most critical components of a media or brand plan. It's not just knowing the "target", its knowing when that person is ready to engage.

## **Trends for advertisers**

- Data is changing how plans are built and buys are made. Not all data is equally valuable; but accessibility to the most relevant datasets, whoever owns them, is crucial in driving effective communication.
- Data needs interpretation to release its value as a strategic asset. Applying short term buys at the expense of all else, risks damaging a brand's equity.
- Online advertising needs a different set of consumer-centred rules and benchmarks to offline. Offline media learnings cannot simply be translated.
- Context is key; an impression is not an impression is not an impression.

## **Trends for agencies**

- Data per se is less important than what you do with it.

- Automation of process is desirable but not at the expense of human-based interpretive and strategic skills.
- The future is collaborative, not transactional.
- Measurement systems that can be applied across channels are desirable; and should be a core objective for the industry.

## Trends for media owners and platforms

- Diversifying around a core proposition drives revenue whilst maintaining the media owner's key values.

## Trends for adtech specialists

- Look beyond the technology and consider the consumer, and his/her experience of online advertising.
- Help all sides understand and get the most from the technology. Start by speaking their language and appreciating their goals.
- Lift your eyes from the algorithms to consider the broader world of communication and measurement.

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## ABOUT GISELA SEELEY

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