

Great brand communications solutions come from collaboration

 By [Khangalani Dziba](#)

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I have often struggled with the rhetoric and narrative around great brand solutions and ideas coming from this one glorified corner of the office, often called the "strategy department" or the "strategy team."



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These are usually what I choose to term the *cool and smarter kids* of the office who walk around with a chip on their shoulder because of the honour that has been bestowed upon them by the God's of "brand heaven."

Sigh!

Please do not get me wrong or start thinking that this is a jab, because it is not. It is a mere reflection of the experiences I have had in my journey as a brand practitioner and I think they are valid and hold ground given that they have shaped how I have experienced and how I practice brand communications on a daily basis.

Look, perhaps years ago this would have been the case where there was a clear structuring of marketing and where key insights come from. But doing brand work has evolved so much with many talented folk from across different disciplines joining the evolution and contributing significantly to this space. This obviously requires a more open-minded approach.

This says there is a need for more collaboration from all the different parts that make up brand communications. Sitting in one corner thinking that great ideas will flow on their own or in one sector will not only not hold, in my humble opinion, but will also stifle creativity where most of the solves come from.

Strategy

Don't get me wrong, ideas and solutions have to come from somewhere and when they do come to the fore, they need to be refined and make sense for those that they are presented to. In my opinion, this is where it starts but it does not and cannot end with the strategy team. The "big idea" yes, may be formulated at this stage but what I have seen in practice is that it can change so much when it comes down to the operators and the targeted audience.

Operations

This is largely because the people that usually have an understanding and engagement with audiences are operators whom I will chose to call the *on the ground hustlers*. These are the people that take the ideas and bring them to life in ways that will get audiences to respond. How are they able to do it if they do not have the ability to strategically execute? Not possible. All the reason why they also need to be a key part of the ideation session.

Digital

In comes digital, the minds and brands that are connected to the world of digital where things are happening and ever-evolving. These are the people with the *finger on the pulse* that cannot be ignored. In fact, I would go as far as to argue that these are the voices that should be leading discussions in strategy sessions around audiences and how brands should communicate as they are in the know.

Activations and events

Without activations and events, brands would not be able to communicate or land their brand narrative in ways that audiences would be able to connect and to a large extent relate. This is precisely why then these soldiers play an integral part of what we do.

In essence really, strategy, operations, digital, activations and events are just but a few of the pillars that make up the brand communications mix and I believe they all deserve the same light and glory. Ideas do not exist in a silo, but rather in an ecosystem of ideation that recognises and respects the symbiotic relationship brand communications holds.

ABOUT KHANGELANI DZIBA

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