

Reassessing media strategies to re-connect with consumers in 2021

 By [Strini Naicker](#)

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The media and marketing space has changed significantly over the past year due to Covid-19. Over the course of the year, advertisers faced major challenges as media budgets were reduced and brands tightened their belts to brace for the impact of a global pandemic.



Strini Naicker, vice president of commercial and content distribution at ViacomCBS Networks Africa

With consumers staying at home, media consumption has changed drastically along with the media buying behaviours. In 2020, brands were spending less or deferring their campaign ideas to a later date amid fears of the current climate, the economic implications, and decreased revenues.

As we look ahead to this year, we expect that the next focus for brands will be to recover their losses. Research by [Kantar's Media Trends & Predictions 2021](#) shows that next year, audience behaviours will be more complex and difficult to decipher than ever as they migrate between video on demand platforms and subscription services. In response to this, it is expected that advertisers, media owners and social platforms will have to re-assess their media strategies.

In addition to this, the report states that in order to maximise restricted budgets, analytics will have to be infused through marketing and campaign management.



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"Despite the deprecation of cookies, brands will also need to quickly adapt to hybrid methods of ad effectiveness measurement and ROI. Brands will need to move up a gear in understanding how activism plays into brand strength; how their purpose and beliefs will be illustrated in their choice of media and creative strategies. Finally, brands need to place greater importance on the where ads appear and how they are optimised in those environments," the report says.

With this in mind, in 2021, it cannot be business as usual for brands when targeting their audiences. Due to the shift in consumer behaviour, mindset and buying behaviour, brands will need to adjust their approach to reflect these changes.

These are the trends I expect to dominate the media and marketing industry in 2021:

A revision of trading models

I anticipate that 2021 will see media planning and strategy agencies commanding more efficient trading models from television broadcasters. The year 2020 has been characterised by extreme losses in revenue for most businesses. This has caused media budgets to be reduced significantly. This means that traditional pricing models will no longer be cost-effective for brands.

Currently, brands are cost conscious and looking for various ways to trim fat and save costs. Pricing models will need to be readjusted to reflect the new climate and reality.

Media currencies will have to be informed by audience behaviour

Publishers and advertisers have long taken advantage of behavioural data to drive the effectiveness of advertisements and increase relevance in the messages they display to audiences. When advertisers are aware of the ever-changing needs, patterns, and behaviours of consumers, it allows them to better serve the brand and consumer and drive more ad spend. Having a thorough outlook on your audience's behaviour improves the success of any campaign.

In the age of programmatic technology, advertisers will continue to increase efforts to organise data and make meaningful audience connections for brands.



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Future proof current research models to accommodate non-linear television viewing

The TV and video market is vibrant and constantly changing. With emerging new market offerings, linear television viewing is no longer the only tactic that advertisers can use to reach consumers. Brand storytelling through advertising has changed over the years, and the audience has many options to choose from. Non-linear viewing is on the rise as streaming and technology takes centre stage, and therefore our models need to be reflective of the changing landscape.

Overall, linear TV continues to play an important role in audiences' viewing habits, but non-linear viewing has gained serious ground and cannot be ignored.

Use non-linear content integration opportunities

Over the years, there has been a significant increase in the number of media options, leaving audiences fragmented and making media buying harder and more complex for marketers trying to reach their target audiences. Gone are the days of defining your target market using simple demographic terms, nowadays marketers depend on psychographic and behavioural information to gain a deeper understanding of target audiences.

I believe that in 2021, brands will need to increase their appetite for non-linear content integration opportunities. This will de-risk audience fragmentation and capitalise on a captive viewing audience.

ABOUT STRINI NAICKER

Strini Naicker is the vice president commercial and content distribution at ViacomCBS Networks Africa.

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