

Right ecosystem needed for marketing revolution

 By Johanna McDowell

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Having the right marketing ecosystem is needed to reach top marketing results, and the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a revolution that allowed marketers to do that.



Source: www.unsplash.com

The right team

Part of the revolution involves 'right-housing', the process of reviewing your internal and external capabilities as well as those of the agencies you currently work with, to determine overlaps and efficiencies.

According to the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company's (IAS) UK partners, the AAR, 98% of CMOs agree that having the right marketing ecosystem in place is essential to achieving business-critical marketing goals.

South African marketers are on average working with 13 marketing partners, as shown in the *Agency Scope 2021* study conducted by Scopen. However, the cost of Covid-19 was not only financial – it has left various departments understaffed, resulting in pockets of inefficiencies.

Marketers must take the lead

To mitigate this, a rigorous and unemotional audit is required. Right-housing is designed to strengthen your efficacy in the market by creating a new ecosystem that focuses on future-proofing your business while simplifying structures to shed excess costs.

Marketers must take the lead in right-housing, starting with absolute clarity on which agency performs what tasks - even more important now with the added complexity of including Google and social media partners in the mix.

It is, I believe, the kick-off point and is important enough to bring in specialists to assist. If you are right-housing to ensure the longevity of your ecosystem, doing it right the first time is imperative.



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The job to be done by right-housing

In working with marketers and agencies over the years and studying how an ecosystem needs to adapt to non-negotiable brand requirements, the IAS is mindful that a strong brand is one that influences every part of the consumer experience.

This requires communications, creative capital, agility, and flexibility as well as the ability to collate data and turn it into action. Right-housing these functions means briefing the lead, PR, digital, BTL, ATL, and all other agencies to ensure their specific disciplines add value and do not overlap with other providers.

To combat inefficiencies, the brief must be crystal clear. Once each task is housed in the right place for the job, the result must give the client more control over the speed of delivery, quality of work, and value for spend.

A significant shift

It's a well-known fact that the strongest brands are those where there is an obsessive focus on the customer, and all agency activity is pulling in the same direction. In an industry already very different from pre-Covid-19 times, we can't afford to do a spring-clean and call it right-housing.

The old model of a structured marketing calendar is redundant in a world where change is as fast as the click of a mouse. The time taken from brief to completion is quicker, and the cost to client must be based on a genuine return on investment in a tightened-belt market.

The ecosystem must change and, likely, yours is also undergoing a significant shift. Get expert talent auditing assistance where necessary and – importantly- any time you hear, “but we’ve always done it that way”, run.

ABOUT JOHANNA MCDOWELL

MD of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS), and partner in Scopen Africa, with a background that includes being on both the agency and the client side of the fence, Johanna McDowell is well-placed to offer commentary on marketing and advertising in the South African and international contexts. She built her career in marketing and advertising since 1974, holding directorship in both SA and British advertising agencies. She was MD of Grey Phillips Advertising in 1988.

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