

Keep it simple in 2020

By  Mike Abel and Makosha Maja-Rasethaba

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M&C Saatchi Abel leaders say now is the time to approach briefs with razor-sharp focus.



Mike Abel and Makosha Maja-Rasethaba, chief executive partner at M&C Saatchi Abel Group and head of strategy for M&C Saatchi Abel Johannesburg respectively.

Mike Abel, Founding partner and chief executive:

The Hungarian inventor Erno Rubik, of Rubik Cube fame, once said: “The Cube is, at the same time, a symbol of simplicity and complexity.”

The craft of creative companies follows similar logic. While the outcome may be cutting-edge and highly complex, at the root of it all lies a very simple, but not easy, ask: grow the top line, increase market share and build brand equity.

2020 needs to be the year of focus, where sideshows and fads take a back seat to a renewed focus on solving problems for clients’ businesses.



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The time hasn’t come to batten down the hatch, but the fact that there are still no green shoots in the economy means that the latitude to take detours on side roads not aligned to the core ask has reduced significantly.

There is light at the end of the tunnel, but it will take time and the economy lags big global and local events.

“ 2020 is really the time for agencies to look for solutions that are absolutely going to help their clients grow their businesses. If innovation is part of that solution, that's fantastic but let's not embark on roads or alleyways that are innovation for innovation's sake or trying something new because it is something new. ”

Try it because you believe it will work better than where it is right now.

The best chance the industry has of making it through the current times unscathed is to keep it simple and focus. This doesn't mean settling.

On the contrary, a renewed, eagle-eyed focus will result in highly relevant work that will, in turn, positively impact clients' businesses.

It's very simple: how do we retain and grow the clients we have, for retention and a greater share of current wallet, and how do we attract new clients? Then we must ask 'how do you offer people stuff that is relevant, in an imaginative and attractive way?'



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Because, I think a lot of the focus is often on how you do something fresh or different, without thinking it through to say 'but will this give us the desired business result?'

We need to use the brain power of our industry, which is profound, to drive good in this country, to drive a positive narrative as opposed to feeling a sense of hopelessness. We can, and should, all be part of a positive self-fulfilling prophecy.

Makosha Maja-Rasethaba, Partner: Head of strategy for Johannesburg:

Paying attention to fundamentals will be a strong focus for 2020.

“ A fundamental pillar of marketing in general, and advertising in particular, is communication. Chasing fads or ticking boxes just won't cut it in a tight economic climate where the consumer is savvy, stretched and spoilt for choice. ”

You cannot communicate unless you know your audience. And so, for 2020, I think very good advice would be to look at the consumer context and reality before diving straight into the solve and coming up with an elaborate strategy.

Don't fall into the trap of making assumptions. Whether these are based on stereotypes, advertising that's already out there or tropes. Avoid the trap – it is a recipe for missing the consumer entirely, which would make the advertising campaign, and the communication, a failure.



Makosha Maja-Rasethaba named new partner at M&C Saatchi Abel

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Not chasing the latest trends would go a long way towards resonating with an increasingly savvy audience who are watching us and the way we communicate with them. Whether it's technology or trendy platforms, don't forget about the human beings.

Let's talk to them.

ABOUT MIKE ABEL AND MAKOSHA MAJA-RASETHABA

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