

Focusing on expertise and practice areas the way forward for TNS

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TNS South Africa's goal for 2014 and beyond is to sharpen its focus on three key areas, says Mark Molenaar, Director: Offer and Growth. These are: superior quality data and fieldwork, expertise that adds value to clients, and understanding clients' business better in order to provide them with the most useful insights and ROI.



Mark Molenaar

Molenaar's role in all of this is to concentrate on the expertise within TNS, by upskilling its teams and working on their capabilities when it comes to the company's growth tools and practice areas (areas of expertise such as brand and communications, customer satisfaction, new product development and qualitative research). He adds that the company's new thinking means not only having these tools and practice areas in place, but leveraging expert understanding on how to analyse and interpret them for the best client outcomes.

This means ensuring TNS has the right people and resources to be able to deliver that consistently. It means having a more strategic focus when going to talk to clients so that the research company is less reactive and more proactive - understanding the client's business and priorities and making workable recommendations to help them grow.

The key to making this happen, Molenaar believes, is focus. He explains that to become an expert, one needs to concentrate on a particular area, which is something TNS is pursuing both globally and locally. As a result, the company will have people who are focused on becoming experts in one specific practice area, such as brand and communications or automotive, in order to develop their expertise and understanding within that area. This will see them better equipped to deal with any client challenge that arises when working in that area.

While this may seem no different to TNS's practice up to this point, the key difference will be a more intent focus on becoming an expert, rather than just having a broad knowledge across a range of tools and practice areas. Going forward, the emphasis will lie on encouraging client service executives to become accredited in a particular practice area, with fairly stringent requirements on meeting knowledge level and experience requirements. While our structure will continue to focus very strongly on teams who form long term and deep relationships with our clients, we will now embed a deeper level of expertise in each team.

Molenaar ends, "With this approach, we can make sure that whatever study we undertake, we have someone who really understands that practice area and the growth tools we are using, and can deliver the insights the client is looking for."

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