

An integrated approach is the key to successful marketing

 By [Diane Charton](#)

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In today's complex media landscape, brands need a solid mix of traditional and digital media skills from their agencies if they are to achieve the best possible results from their marketing and advertising spending.

With the growing maturity of digital channels and changing consumer behaviour - it is not advisable for agencies and marketers to regard 'traditional' and 'digital' advertising and marketing as discrete disciplines.

Instead, we need a more holistic approach to marketing and advertising that delivers co-ordinated and consistent messaging at different touch points, whilst using the strengths of different channels to heighten the impact of campaigns and strategies.

Rise of specialist agencies

When the Web started to explode 20 years ago, we saw the rise of specialist agencies that had the mixture of technical and business skills to create campaigns and strategies for the newly emerging channel. But in more recent years, the thinking has changed and brands and agencies alike have realised that digital and traditional channels do not exist in a vacuum.



Source: [123RF](#)

Today, nearly every consumer interacts with at least some digital media and most campaigns will have digital components. Consumers use multiple devices - tablets, smartphones, PCs and televisions - and consume media - print, radio, TV, and digital during the course of any typical day.

Our intended customer may even consume more than one channel at a time, for example, using a tablet for email and social media, while watching TV. We're also seeing channels start to blend together - for example, people may listen to radio broadcasts on their PCs while browsing the Web. That means a siloed approach no longer makes sense.

However, the rise of connected markets who consume a range of different media has dramatically changed the skills needed in the agency landscape. Among other requirements, digital channels tend to place a heavy emphasis on automation of process as well as gathering and analysis of data.

What's more, digital channels and media demand levels of dialogue and interactivity that marketers and agencies coming from static, mass media are not accustomed to supporting. The technology has created new expectations of transparency, personalisation, immediacy and collaboration among consumers.

Brand building

Complicating the picture even further is the way that the once distinct lines between paid media (advertising), owned media (corporate websites, magazines and social media accounts) and earned media (public relations and social media mentions) are also starting to blur.

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising to see that the bigger agencies are growing their digital competencies while digital agencies are upgrading their mass media competencies. We are also seeing specialist shops such as media buyers and social media experts join forces with bigger broad-based agencies or seek to create a wider portfolio of in-house skills.

These trends all come from the growing understanding that brands should no longer handle social media, traditional and digital media planning; reputation management, direct marketing, and other aspects of their marketing strategies in siloes.

However, the process of growing capabilities and skills to execute campaigns across a number of channels takes time, and with technology moving so fast, it is hard for agencies to reskill at a rate that allows them to keep up.

In a fully matured industry, mass media and digital media agencies would not be positioned against each other, but we are still a way from reaching that point. That means the practical question for brands is how they can orchestrate skills from multiple agencies for holistic brand building and unified marketing strategies.

ABOUT DIANE CHARTON

As managing director of Red & Yellow, Diane Charton steers the strategic direction of the business. She strives to empower and educate the SA marketing communications industry through a myriad of traditional and digital educational platforms. With a unique combination of marketing, leadership and engineering experience, Charton brings a multifaceted approach to using marketing trends and insights to innovate and empower the industry as a whole. Follow @DiCharton on Twitter.

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