

The marketer of the future

 By [Dr. Ludi Koekemoer](#)

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Today's traditional media is rapidly evolving towards the marketing of the future. The 'brandscape' has changed dramatically in a short space of time and marketers are struggling to keep pace with the new environment.



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What worked in the past is no longer working. Consumers act differently, technology is driving disruptive innovations and communicating with target audiences confuses marketers. Questions arising in marketing globally include: is digital media really the answer? Will online selling kill the in-store experience? Which trends will persist? How do we embrace, even create innovations to make more profit?

The basics are still necessary

There are many good texts on the principles of marketing, advertising, brand management, sales, customer service, marketing research and marketing strategy. Maintaining an underpinning knowledge of the basics is necessary and useful, but the marketing textbook of the future will look very different. If one were to talk to successful marketers today, they would tell you that the 'basics' have expanded to include a study of what works; quantifying progress and success; understanding the new consumer's expectations, needs and problems; uncovering strategic brand, market, trade and competitor 'dark insights'; and how to make customers feel good about themselves and their brand. Adaptability to embrace new trends and innovations in strategic planning is key.

Trends

A large number of trends have recently been published covering, inter alia, including 'The Top 10 Consumer Trends for 2017' from Euromonitor, 'Our Brave New World (Trends for 2017)' from *The Daily Telegraph*, London, 'Artificial Intelligence (AI) Trends for Marketers in 2017' from Deloitte Digital, the 'Top 10 Tech & Media Trends for 2017' from WARC and '2017's Top Trends: Consumers over 50' from Euromonitor.

Digital transformation, the emergence of the Me generation and disruptive innovations impacting on marketing are three trends that will likely be game changers for the marketing sphere.

Digital transformation includes dealing with Big Data and more importantly data digging. Employers will be looking for marketers who can think critically with data, shape data on the fly, uncover hidden insights via chatbots and use cloud analytics for marketing decisions. Digital transformation also includes fibre for speed-of-light connectivity, Internet of Things, unique mobile apps for marketing, Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), Personal Interactive Strategy (PIS) and location based marketing (LBM). Just consider how VR and AR could impact on the marketing of property, clothing, cars or holiday destinations. Viewing and ordering will literally be at your fingertips.

The 'Me generation' is a key trend. In marketing lingo, 'Me's are part of Gen Y and Gen Z, and could be described as the 'Me, Myself & I and my Selfie' narcissists. They have also been referred to as the 'dormant volcano'. Their expectations, needs and problems are largely unknown and their voices unheard, especially those known as 'screenagers'. They do not know a world without technology. They have globally shared aspirations, but suffer from artificial maturity and seek social acceptance online; a life of fun, fame and parties. They love talking about themselves, their idols, their experiences and emotions.

This generation are well informed consumers who demand what they believe is their due, but are not brand loyal. Social media is embedded in everyday life and encourages the notion of real time participation. Many of them avoid brand advertising and have downloaded ad blockers. The hottest apps will filter the clutter of media. They do not like or believe branded content and will create their own content which they will share on Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms. There is a new danger for brands that step out of line, social media provides a powerful voice which can be used to immediately expose them.

The smartphone is the most precious possession of the Me generation, from which they easily embrace the concept of digital money such as Bitcoin, Blockchain and the 'Uberisation' of payments. They enjoy one-cart functionality online where they can order from multiple online suppliers but make one payment and receive one delivery. They show support to retailers who reduce instore friction, provide immersive sensory experiences and make them feel welcome and special.

The crazy world of innovations: It is exhilarating to hear that we will see more innovations in the next 5 years than what we've experienced in the past 100 years. Technological innovations are seen everywhere, for instance the production industry has innovations in packaging, logistics, selling and payments. Here are some innovations that took the marketing world by storm:

- **Transport:** Uber don't own cars, however they are the biggest taxi business in the world. In 2018 the first self-driving cars will be sold which will allow you to call your car with a smartphone to pick you up, drive you to your destination, and then park itself. Your children and grandchildren will not need to have a driver's license or own a car.
- **Accommodation:** Airbnb owns no property and yet it is the biggest room provider in the hospitality industry in the world.
- **Health:** IBM automation 'Watson' helps nurses to diagnose cancer four times more accurately than humans. With Tricorder, a handheld scanning device to be used for self-diagnosing medical conditions, you will be able to take a retina scan with your smartphone and a blood sample by breathing into it. The device analyses 54 biomarkers, identifies nearly all diseases and monitors ongoing health. Light therapy will also be used to increase cellular growth by up to 200% and speed up the healing process.

- **Production:** Over 10 years, 3D printers dropped in price from \$18000 to \$400 and now perform 100 times faster. By 2019, smartphones will have 3D scanning possibilities and by 2027 at least 10% of what is manufactured will be 3D printed.
- **Smartphones:** The smartphone of the future will have long lasting batteries, flexible, bendable screens, voice/eye/motion/telepathic control, will be light, slim and unbreakable with rotating front and back cameras offering optical image stabilisation. They may not resemble our current smartphones, instead looking like a bracelet, part of your spectacles, a T-shirt with a built-in monitoring system, or even a chip on your arm or in your brain. Apart from making and receiving calls and taking pictures, your smartphone will help you live, shop, communicate, make payments and monitor your well-being. You'll be able to use it for access control, user Id, online shopping, store experiences, scanning barcodes to access product data, such as where the food you buy was farmed, and integrating new technology into traditional living.
- **Diets and food safety:** Latest innovations offer DNA diets that are person specific, allowing sugar reduction at the same time as palatability, your own nutritional scanner, portable gluten sensors to detect potential toxins, food safety checkers to detect antibiotics, pesticides and sensor labels to track temperature and moisture levels.

A new breed of marketer is needed

The marketer of the future will be:

- A marketing pro with a new set of intangible capital and appropriate brand capabilities
- Someone who consistently adapts to the new world, technology and disruptive innovations
- A cost-conscious person who can work comfortably in leaner organisations
- Someone with entrepreneurial flair and agility – creative thinkers who dare to be different and develop new forms of data gathering and retailing
- Culturally sensitive with high emotional and intuitive intelligence
- A strategic thinker who can collaborate with competitors in Research and Development (R&D), research, promotions and innovation.
- Someone who can work in cooperation with distributors in shortening order fulfilment, improved logistics and operating efficiencies and with the trade to avoid that 'everyday low price' trap
- A globally focussed marketer who realises that future stars are brands that will be globally acceptable.

Source: [Monash South Africa](#) launched its MBA in July 2016 and differentiates itself from other MBAs with its innovation focus and maximum time flexibility.

ABOUT DR. LUDI KOEKEMOER

Dr. Ludi Koekemoer's illustrious career spans over three large advertising agencies. He has held roles in academia at four institutions of higher learning including as a professor of marketing, chairman of the department of business management and professor of strategic management and CEO of advertising college. Most recently, Ludi developed and launched a unique MBA at Monash South Africa in 2016...

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