

Invest in communication and content

 By [Dawn Rowlands](#)

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"Truly innovative and uniquely African concepts and ideas will place your organisation in the driver's seat."

Q: What do you hope to see in 2015?

A: **Make a mark:** Brands that stand out will create commercial success by attracting more users, more often. Brands that make it easy for consumers to recognise them (and love them) will win. Truly innovative and uniquely African concepts and ideas will place your organisation in the driver's seat and stand out amongst the rest.

Invest in communication: Organisations need to speak one language and integrated communications is the way to ensure two-way engagement and interaction, both internally and externally. Brands that invest at a lower rate than their market share in the trade and on communication will decline faster than ever before. You'll need to be available at multiple points 24/7, as will your brand content.

Content counts: Having your content stand out amongst the ever-present media formats that are converging, with digital leading the way, increasing the number of times and ways that a single brand can be experienced by audiences in the same place - from highly interactive and immersive content-rich mobile experiences, to stimulated visual engagements on digital networks in airports and other high-dwell time environments. Quality content partnerships that allow you to leverage a consistent brand story across your media ecosystem will count! Quantity won't. Content is everywhere and consumers want and need a relevant custodian. Make sure you are that custodian in order for your message to penetrate the market.

Q: Your 'game changer' trend in 2014?

A: In 2014 we saw that applications no longer act in isolation, they are now integrated. Apps behave more like the 'www', for example, Uber has an API that lets other companies put an Uber button into their own apps. The Starbucks' app has an Uber button on the page to find a Starbucks - so that you can immediately call a cab to take you there. These integrations have made it possible for different apps to talk to each other; likewise we began to see last year that Mac started making its software more compatible with other technologies and programs, allowing for convergence and ease of communication.

Q: What do you hope to see less of going into a New Year?

A: Clients/marketers who ask us to generate Facebook likes and not a fully functioning communication ecosystem that delivers results.

Q: What advice do you have for your peers in 2015?

A: **Incubate ideas:** Incubation of technology ideas that provide rich brand experiences will create a massive competitive advantage. The creative use of technology in a retail environment will enhance brand love and drive sales. Up-scaling will become less difficult as the cost of technology declines. This can be seen at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, where the prices of 4K resolution TV screens have previously been extremely expensive. This year it is expected to see more affordable versions in more realistic sizes. This is just one example of how organisations will be able to up-scale using technology as they come into your consumers' reach as well as that of your business.

Creating stories: Data alone, without insightful and consistent brand stories and ongoing management, will deliver poor results. Data centres, made up of layers of data, will help brands refine their story, create immediacy/relevance and reduce the cost per contact dramatically. Your data needs soul. Data is available to everyone, but captivating an audience with the data which you release is the challenge.

The future: different and better: Looking to the future and the type of talent which DAN SSA needs to attract clients to our business, as well as the manner we communicate and approach clients, is of utmost importance, we spend a lot of time thinking about how we can be different and how we can be better... so if we've got the best people with the best tools, we can win.

Q: What would you like to tell your clients?

A: Challenging conventions - ensuring that our clients are completely mesmerised by our offering is one of the facets that's of utmost importance. It is crucial for our employees to question briefs, as this is ideally what clients want from us - they want us to take them on a journey, to an end destination that gives them a really solid business outcome. We cannot simply be mediocre in order to be better than our competitors. Standing out will be crucial to our success in 2015.

Q: Your most significant industry trends for 2015?

A: Within the 2015 plans, consistency is one of the key driving forces discussed. Having sporadic peaks of excellence in certain regions or average performance will only view DAN SSA as inconsistent. I would like to see our talent focussing capability, curiosity and be determined to drive change. Capability to drive consistency. Curiosity to inspire innovation and enough drive to bring that change about.

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ABOUT DAWN ROWLANDS

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