

# Go where the people are

By [Gau Narayanan](#)

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Demands on corporates are changing and agencies need to respond better. Focusing on three things can help agencies to service, and partner with, their clients more effectively as we market in a digital age.



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Consumers have more choice than ever before, and are empowered to choose how, when and where they consume brand messaging. So corporates and agencies are faced with more questions than ever: Which channel? Which platform? How to separate fad from fact? How to remain salient? How to push those all-important sales without being pushy?

How agencies talk and work with their clients is as critical as the strategies they devise to communicate with consumers – examining this process is a major focus and will remain one in 2018 and beyond.

## **Involve clients more**

Agencies need to involve their clients more. Clients need to be part of creative development throughout the strategy-creative-implementation process. The industry needs more open-sourced campaign development that aims to get to the right strategic base, so the creative can be developed quickly and with agility within days.

The second area that agencies need to expedite going forward is speed. There's no time any more for agencies to spend weeks dreaming up ideas and then more time going back and forth to get buy-in. At Net#work we've developed a streamlined, high-performance process called SPRINT which is a series of strategic and creative sessions with key agency and client people. By bringing everyone together we get immediate, direct input and this, along with collaboration with our partners, and input from platforms like Facebook and Google, enables us to get to better ideas, a lot faster. Within a few days, we can bed-down a winning idea that our client loves and that we can implement quickly and effectively; in two days rather than taking two-weeks for a revert.

In terms of strategy, the need for speed is a straight-up response to the digital world; a world where consumers can scroll past a brand message in the blink of an eye. The answer isn't to just blindly 'go digital'.

We need to go where the people are, and be on the right device at the right time. Clients don't need a Snapchat or a WhatsApp strategy, they need a strategy that follows people and reaches them at scale with relevant, fresh content.

### **Agencies must address their internal processes**

Agencies must address their internal processes, structures and talent reservoirs; today's corporates are more streamlined and accountable but agencies retain the models they've employed for decades – to their detriment.

How we're structured, how we write briefs, how we integrate with clients and other agencies – all of this has to change. Passing the relay baton from suit to planner to traffic to creatives isn't going to win the race.

### **Ideas must remain the currency**

Advertising is a people driven business, where ideas must remain the currency. We need to consistently produce ideas that are strategically sound, based on human insights, and able to influence behaviour, which culminates in the sale.

We need to embrace new channels, new ways of reaching consumers, new ways of selling products, new technologies, and new ways of enhancing both client and consumer relationships.

The industry needs more people who are entrepreneurial and open minded; people who want, and are able, to collaborate; and people who are willing and able to learn. Increasingly we need more people who come from different backgrounds with divergent experiences from tech, design which lie outside advertising.

At BBDO our mantra has always been 'the work, the work, the work' - in the simplest terms, we try to come up with big ideas that are rooted in a human truth, from which we can tell emotive stories that move consumers to spend their Rands with our clients' brands.

The simple truth is that we need to adapt and transform how we do the work, who we hire to do the work and what we mean by 'the work' in order to survive the inevitable digital disruption that's heading to us all at break-neck speed.

## **ABOUT GAU NARAYANAN**

Gau Narayanan is Net#work BBDO managing director.  
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