

Agency Scope South Africa 2019 trends: Evolution or revolution? Part 1

By [Johanna McDowell](#)

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As the Agency Scope team finalises the 2019 South Africa study, analysts have noted some brief but stand-out trends from the senior marketers and agency professionals interviewed face-to-face or via their responses to our online survey.



Image credit: Cristina de los Santos on Unsplash.

Fieldwork included more than 200 face-to-face discussions with CMOs and online feedback from more than 150 agency professionals. Here's a taster, in no particular order of importance.

It has been noted, this year, that the average age of the chief marketing officer (CMO) falls within the 36 to 45 age group – with older CMOs having been in their role for over eight years. This may have some bearing on decision-making and the rise of digital, but that questioning is outside of the scope of our research. It's merely a "nice-to-know".



Results from Agency Scope UK 2018/2019 indicate concerns with consumers and the changing digital environment

[Johanna McDowell](#) 19 Aug 2019



Integrated agencies on the rise?

There appears to be a general skew towards integrated agencies that deliver ATL, BTL and digital, this year, which means clients are dealing with fewer agencies. The majority of companies do not have performance bonuses in addition to their monthly retainers, and marketers feel that few agencies are measuring return-on-investment metrics.

There is an increase in the digital marketing allocation of budgets and the three key attributes sought after when selecting new agencies are strategic services, followed by creative services and then integrated services.

"Integrated agency" is on SA's marketing minds, finds Agency Scope 2019 study (so far)

[13 Aug 2019](#)

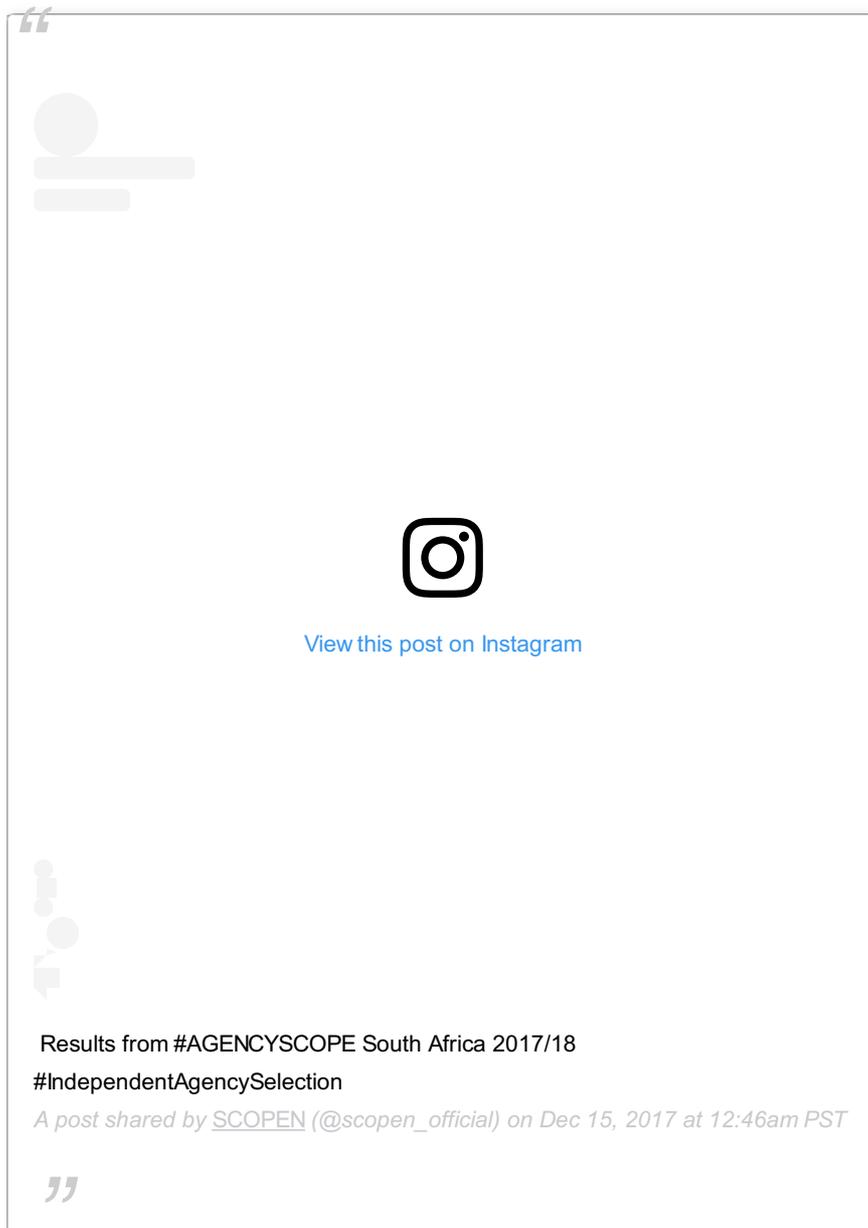




Challenges for agencies, marketers

This bears out the importance of strategy to all respondents, and the agencies are reporting their biggest challenges to include clients taking services such as digital and media in-house, as well as losing top talent to overseas agencies as the so-called “brain drain” continues somewhat unabated here.

Another challenge for agencies to step up and correct is that of the clients’ perception that the agency business model is outdated – and agencies that cannot evolve will be left behind.



Marketers, on the other hand, are looking at a set of challenges that require more of a revolutionary change, given the immediacy of their impact on business.

Firstly, how to effectively reach consumers in a fragmented communications landscape; an apparent lack of pro-active agencies; and lastly – but most importantly – working within the budget cuts brought about by an unstable South African economy.

Add to this the lack of consensus among marketing professionals on whether or not programmatic advertising can be trusted, and issues that need time in the “situation room”.

ABOUT JOHANNA MCDOWELL

MD of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS), and partner in Scopem Africa, with a background that includes being on both the agency and the client side of the fence, Johanna McDowell is well-placed to offer commentary on marketing and advertising in the South African and international contexts. She built her career in marketing and advertising since 1974, holding directorship in both SA and British advertising agencies. She was MD of Grey Phillips Advertising in 1988.

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