

How to manoeuvre through 2018 and come out the other side

 By [Natasha Fourie](#)

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What a crazy year it has been for planners and marketers - it's been challenging right? Navigating new technologies, sifting through the claimed vs the real, local industry research has been turned on its head leaving many agencies and clients really scrambling to build benchmarks for success and establishing a new normal.



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Here is my pick of what is going to be the most valuable skill set for 2018 and beyond:

- **Adapting to changes in research and data:** Many agencies have relied on traditional industry research to predict and manage efficiencies and performance of their media buy as well as to identify target audiences. A large portion of this prediction is utilising long-established benchmarks and target markets that are, in some cases, under review. If the basis of your planning is now in question, how is your media planning adapting to this? Is your agency geared to reconfigure ideal media pressure via alternate data and research sources as well as actively looking at new audience segmentation data and research?
- **Moving beyond pure demographics:** Is it time for us to reconsider the over-reliance on demographic targeting as a sole way of segmenting audiences to looking at a broader definition that includes intention or behavioural based

targeting? After all, if someone wants to buy a car does the dealership refuse them because they don't fit in to a certain demographic? So, the answer could be integrated media planning that can identify and capitalise on behavioural intent or even transactional based data to not only increase the ROI but importantly to also focus on brand messaging. Are we communicating the right message to the right person in a way that enhances a brand's perception in market? There is some incredible data and opportunities out there and the people that are incorporating the best of legacy research with the new opportunities that data and digital can offer, I think, are best poised for success.

- **Integrated planning potential:** Is there a single resource which understands how your offline and online media communication is working and how the mediums are complementing each other? It is essential that they work together as opposed to being managed separately. Increasingly the lines between legacy media and their digital counterparts are blurring and having an understanding of how the consumer engages on and across these respective platforms and the impact on the communication and media plan is essential.
- **Testing:** Are enough of your messaging and media opportunities testing for success? Many agencies or clients are measuring success of the medium/ad unit but not many are A/B testing the impact of messaging and offer on client uptake. Essentially there is the potential to reverse engineer your big message and offering by measuring uptake by market. In particular, with acquisition, there are significant gains to be had by tweaking message and streamlining path to sign up, that can have a greater impact on bottom line than increased media pressure alone.

Sometimes change is a good thing. I believe that the challenges the industry faces, brought about by the changing landscape and the hunt for a 'new normal', will only do us good. In the near future, we will find that we are not only winning with stronger campaigns but that these shifts have positively impacted the bottom line.

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ABOUT NATASHA FOURIE

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