

Agency Scope Insights: Deep, decisive and digital

 By [Johanna McDowell](#)

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As the state of post-lockdown business shifts towards more agility and transparency, Agency Scope is responding to the global call for more in-depth data about what it takes for marketers and agencies to add real value, writes Johanna McDowell, Scopen Africa director and partner and CEO of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS).



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To get to the core of this knowledge, Agency Scope's biennial research on trends within the marketer-agency relationships will pose questions for the 2021/2022 edition that dig deeper into what marketers are looking for in agencies, and how agencies are stepping up to expectations.

Starting in May this year, Agency Scope South Africa 2021/22 will be the fourth edition of the study in the country and one that will not only enable subscribers to pit their strengths against global benchmarks, but also provide first-hand information about the needs of their clients and how the market must adapt to these evolving needs.

When marketers look for agencies, there have always been a standard set of "nice to haves" and another of "not negotiables" in the skills they require. Both still exist, but the sudden changes that turned 2021 into a massive call to digital and remote solutions and communications requires Agency Scope 2021/22 to adjust traditional questions to meet 2022 standards.

What the 2021-savvy marketer seeks

Noting that marketers and agencies upped their game to accommodate their clients through a number of industry "firsts", Agency Scope aims to uncover the specifics of what marketers are looking for. In previous articles I've mentioned the value of digital rising meteorically during lockdown, and that digital agencies are rapidly changing the services they are able to offer.

Agency Scope 2021/22 will take these changes into account and analyse the data to produce a ranking by importance, including strategic planning, integrated services, innovation, business transformation (B-BBEE), research tools, creativity and good account service, among other data.

The importance of this information to marketers is its ability to enable them to evaluate agencies. By the same token, subscribing agencies can use the data to set benchmarks for their own services, based on what marketers most want. Where Agency Scope presented information from which marketers could view their competitors' abilities, we're now asking them to identify their closest competitors in a bid to note broader industry trends.

Furthermore, we aim to interview more agency professionals to produce a Best Agency to Work for list, uncovering key indicators around talent attraction and retention.

In an exciting new offering, a digital Data Platform will be on offer that will be shared with each subscribing agency so they can tailor their own analysis and cross-check by client typologies, service profiles, through the click of a mouse.

We are looking forward to conducting the much-lauded Agency Scope this year and providing detailed analysis and interactive engagement for clients to stay ahead of the fast-moving curve as we enter year two of doing business differently.

ABOUT JOHANNA MCDOWELL

MD of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS), and partner in Scopen 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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