

The uncomfortable humanity of digital marketing



By [Josephine Buys](#), issued by [IAB South Africa](#)

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Today's digital consumer habits cannot be typecast. While we would all embrace a clear causality between our digital campaigns and customers' actions, our innate humanness gets in the way. Trying to translate humanity into compelling marketing data was like flattening a 3D image - you always lost something essential along the way. 2016's digital marketing trends will make us face some uncomfortable realities, but within those lie our richest opportunities yet.

Digital is occupying more of our consciousness and marketing spend. This focus is extending beyond agencies and early digital champions to brands and corporates. Everyone not only needs to navigate this new landscape confidently, they need to bear fruit.

In order to harness the power of digital at our fingertips, we need to embrace the nuances of our customers and drill down to the details. It is only with these details in hand that we can create fresh, compelling campaigns that actually have the impact that digital promises. Detail can seem time-consuming and overwhelming for marketers, publishers and corporates alike. Who has the time to make sense of it? Most uncomfortably, once we have interpreted the detail that data provides, will we like what we see?



Josephine Buys

Our most exciting opportunities lie right in the complex, uncomfortable heart of data. Today's digital tools empower us to be discerning about data. This year we have already seen platforms that manage these opportunities poised to launch in the local market - Oracle Bluekai and Effective Measure emPower, affording the market global best in class tools which give us the power to simply and efficiently reduce detail into a clear message. This lifts the veil of digital and renders digital jargon meaningless. There is no more room for smoke and mirrors or spin. Data tells a story that cannot be ignored.

As we go deeper, we are faced with several challenges. Do we use data to interrogate our entrenched business models or do we cling onto our tried and tested modes of thinking? How do we focus on what matters and apply our budgets to this? As agencies, how do we work with brands to interrogate their assumptions on their customers, and create a new landscape that they can navigate confidently?

In many cases the answer lies in transformation. This begins inside our businesses, as we reformulate our approaches, goals and corporate environment in response to what our customers are telling us. It also takes place inside the industry as a whole. As the custodian of digital transformation in South Africa, the IAB SA is launching several exciting initiatives in 2016. Our native advertising guidelines will be launched at the IAB Digital Summit on 3 March. We will also be announcing a fresh digital transformation initiative that promises authentic, sustainable impact.

We are standing on the edge of a new paradigm in digital, where there is more opportunity than complexity. All we need to do is listen to what our data is telling us, and be agile in response.

About IAB South Africa

The Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) South Africa is an independent, voluntary, non-profit association focused on growing and sustaining a vibrant and profitable digital industry in South Africa. The IAB South Africa represents the digital industry across all sectors including the media, the marketing community, government and the public, and also acts as the channel through which international bodies can enter the South African digital market. The IAB South Africa currently represents over 200 members including online publishers, creative, media and digital agencies, brands and educators between them accounting for more than 36 million local unique browsers and almost 1 billion page impressions. The IAB South Africa strives to provide members with a platform through which they can engage, interact and address digital issues

of common interest, thereby stimulating learning and commerce within the South African digital space. To find out more about the IAB South Africa, visit its website (www.iabsa.net), like us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/iab.southafrica> and follow [@iab_sa](#) on Twitter.

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