

The changing faces of marketing

 By [Glen Meier](#)

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It is estimated that nearly two-thirds of children who started school in 2016 will go on to have jobs that don't exist yet. How do we prepare this new generation for the business of the future, while at the same time retrain hundreds of millions of people whose work is evolving?



Glen Meier

The projection is that, within 20 years, 90% of all jobs will require some digital skills, but we will still need strong cultures in our communities and workplaces that promote mentoring and development of soft skills.

With most roles and jobs likely to become less defined and more fluid, continuous retraining and upskilling can make sure

staff are ready to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise.

And this is true of the marketing industry, as well.

The greatest challenge and opportunities will be to continue to rapidly evolve the agency business model and reallocate and train resources to re-invent themselves as digital explosion accelerates weekly. In our rapidly changing world, digital is the passport to consumers and the key to building successful brands lies in creating compelling content, brand experiences, and engaging in meaningful conversations with them.

First off, we have an immediate need to satisfy. Marketing businesses have to be geared to adapt rapidly, as the past few months has sped up digital transformation by at least 24 months.

For the marketing services industry to keep pace, we have to think digital-first, mobile-first, automated personalised communication, and ensure deep digital is ingrained into every part of your business.

Remotely resourceful

2020 has taught us how to rapidly adapt to unexpected dynamics and paradigm shifts, like the work-from-office versus work-from-home one.

The resourceful and agile businesses will win. The ability to adapt to changing market and economic conditions, innovating and re-inventing to adapt to the changing industry environment, while remaining leaner and improving efficiencies further.

The ability and experience to manage business and brands through dramatically different economic conditions, and adapt to remote working across geographies will become exceedingly more essential.

The new creative generation

The challenge we face is where to find the new skills set – and what is that new skill set – to enable us to do that?

What is required now, today, immediately is an agile blend of multi-disciplinary creatives who can work across the spectrum from concept through to crafting digital content, as well as strategists who can straddle brand strategy, communications strategy and digital strategy.

To move our business and brands forward, the skills we need include a mix of creatives, digital thinkers and strategists who work together. Strategic, creative partnerships will win – those who listen, who understand consumers and uncover the human truths to connect.

We need conceptual thinkers and digital natives to satisfy the very important need for engaging content with big ideas based on deep human truths, while knowing what works best across digital-first platforms.

At the end of the day, creative thinking will remain, because – as human beings – we're wired to out-think and out-strategise to find the most creative business solutions.

The ideal for now are thinkers who can design for digital and produce their own 'moving content'. Marketers are finding these skills in their traditional creatives, who are broadening and growing their skill sets to be able to produce motion graphics and video content.

It's far harder to know what skills will be required a year from now, five years from now, a decade from now. What we do know is that agencies need to continue to be resourceful, multi-skilled and prepared to entrepreneurially adapt our resources to fit changing demands.

More integrated value under one roof

To ensure value, integration and efficiency, successful agencies will need to offer brand design, integrated brand communications and digital marketing, with full brand experience execution, including in-house video content production.

It is imperative to innovate and re-invent to adapt to the changing industry environment, while remaining leaner and improving efficiencies further.

We also have to accept that, to ensure relevance, agency business strategy needs to be considered daily, and we have to accept that regular, continuous change and revision is inevitable.

Long-term vision, short-term action

Brands with strong brand equity will last, though long-term brand planning is being replaced by short-term activities to adapt to uncertain and ever-changing market and consumer demands, which can change from over-supply of stock one month, to shortage to keep up with consumer demand the next.

Where we could create brand plans and forecast 4 to 6 months ahead, we can often now only see 4 to 6 weeks ahead. To ensure relevance, agency business strategy needs to be considered daily, with the ability to adapt and revise the course regularly.

ABOUT GLEN MEIER

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