

Five game-changing trends for 2016

By [Dave Nemeth](#)

19 Jan 2016

The top five trends for marketers to note for this year include VR, AR, the maker movement, device culture, and content in context.



1. VR (virtual reality) and AR (augmented reality) get serious

We have all become accustomed to the rapid changes and developments in technology and the speed of these changes will continue with things getting smaller and faster. The internet of things will continue to link our cars, clothes and appliances to our mobile devices and wearables. The biggest developments will, however, be in VR (virtual reality) and AR (augmented reality), which will be used for business, design and advertising.

Expect to see brands creating their own cardboard glasses similar to Google's cardboard viewer, with downloadable apps of unique experiences. The question is, will ad agencies be quick enough to capitalise on this or will we see new dedicated agencies appearing that will focus on these 'new' digital experiences?

Designers and architects can also add a new dimension to their creations and the medical field are already working on a host of different applications that will allow them to operate with greater efficiency and accuracy. This technology will create better flexibility for project teams working at opposite ends of the globe.

2. The maker movement impacts education and business

One of the biggest complaints by top international design firms in recent years is that graduating students do not understand the manufacturing process of the products they design, hence rendering them useless in practical terms. This was even the sentiment of Jonathan Ive, the head designer at Apple recently. School leavers may be better off exploring, experimenting and creating through maker groups than they would by getting a formal design education. Expect to see this movement continuing to grow but, more importantly, some great products and technology are being created by untrained individuals as well as school kids.

This movement and the popularisation of it, will put pressure on the education sector at all levels to relook at their syllabuses and to re-evaluate just how relevant they actually are. Private schools will be the early adopters of such strategies, creating a gap for individuals or groups to attract students to their new or existing maker spaces for financial gain.

Forward-thinking retailers could and should capitalise on this, as we have recently seen with West Elm in the USA, where they opened maker spaces to the public to view the design and prototyping of their unique designs, which are created by both their in-house designers and collaborators. This empowers and educates and creates a story that really is authentic.

3. Business rebuilds and renovations

Companies are quickly coming to the realisation that innovation won't simply come from employed individuals or departments but rather from the company as a whole, creating an urgency to change culture. Publications such as the *Harvard Business Review* and *Fast Company* have been speaking about this for some years but the urgency will be better realised in 2016. Executives will be forced to explore new approaches such as Design Thinking and Holacracy, which not only define new business strategy but also company structure and operations. Companies will realise that they cannot do everything in-house and use external companies and consultants to assist with this business remodeling, ensuring a smooth process, whilst not decreasing existing revenue by being overzealous and not identifying the correct and safe opportunities.

Along with this, expect to see many changes in marketing departments and in some cases even complete naming changes. The way in which we communicate and connect with clients has never been more complicated. Collaborative teams will be the order of the day instead of specialised roles and responsibilities. This will assist in eradicating the silo culture of many marketing departments, which continues to mislead consumers instead of gaining loyalty. Outdated terminology, such as below the line, above the line, multi-channel and so on, will be replaced with terms such as PIM - personal interactive strategy, LBM - location-based marketing, IOT strategy - internet of things. The marketing department will need to be involved throughout the early stages of product or strategy development instead of later in the process.

4. BYOD culture

With more companies looking for avenues to reduce costs, we will see more companies deploying a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) strategy for new and even existing employees. Just as most companies have stopped providing mobile phones, most companies have realised that most individuals have their own devices and upgrade these through contracts more regularly than they can do on a large scale. With the right schemes in place, it only makes sense for employees to

use the devices, operating systems and even apps that they are comfortable with, instead of prescribing the hardware and software.

This does come with security challenges, but many companies internationally have already successfully implemented this process and we have no doubt that this will soon become the norm.

5. Context vs content

Content marketing was certainly the buzzword for the past few years, with everyone talking about good quality content to promote their products and services. Unfortunately, a lot of great content went out into the digital atmosphere, completely unnoticed by both consumers and Google for that matter. The focus is now on context and just when you thought you and your company had a grasp on things, they have in fact just got a whole lot more complicated.

These five trends will drastically change the landscape of business, marketing and design and will in turn have a myriad of micro trends associated with them.

ABOUT DAVE NEMETH

A leading blue chip international company recently identified Dave as one of the top creative influencers in the country. Dave Nemeth is a qualified designer who has held a variety of senior as well as executive positions with some of the countries leading retail groups, spanning a career of twenty years. Email Dave at daven@worldonline.co.za, follow @davenemeth on Twitter and connect on Facebook.

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