

Three challenges with digital and how to solve them

By [Dale Imerman](#), issued by [The Jupiter Drawing Room \(Cape Town\)](#)

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"People still can't agree on what digital means."

"Digital" is an essential requirement for anyone wanting to do business with connected consumers. The problem is that "digital" means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. It's fuzzy to most because we're dealing with diverse interpretations, lack of technical know-how and contrasting perspectives from individuals on both the client and agency sides.

Firstly, the introduction of technology is not a cue to try and reinvent marketing - the cycle remains the same: Strategy (your insight and plan,) Content (output like video, audio, copy and design) and Data (the results) still need to rely and feed one another to be effective.

Secondly, sit down and have a good think about how to take your clients to school in the most efficient and entertaining way possible, using points of reference that they understand.

For example, when justifying the need for quality content, a Facebook page can be equated to a party venue. Media is how you spread your invitations to get people there. But on arrival if there's no DJ, no drinks at the bar and no water in the jacuzzi, then people aren't going to have a great time. In fact they will likely leave and tell their friends how terrible it was. Content, in this case, is the bubbling water, drinks on tap and some good tunes to get down to.

The digital vs Tradition red herring

For some reason, people still think that digital and "traditional" are two separate entities that have to be treated differently. We strategise for digital differently, we have separate budgets for it, and the way we talk about it puts it in silos.



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Digital has been around long enough that it's now traditional. YouTube is the TV of today. Social networks as media channels are the norm. And mobile access surpassing computers validates change.

Existing agency departments need to find ways of incorporating digital. An example would be gearing up a media department to go beyond selecting and placing adverts on TV, radio and into print. They need to become experts on online media including channels like search, display, social and mobile.

People are displaying fear instead of embracing evolution

Consumers are defining the way we do business and agencies are struggling to help their clients become more agile and find (or create) the right tools and techniques to enable their teams to achieve a digital mind-set that will ultimately become part of the day-to-day approach in a collaborative way.

Agencies will more than ever be required to help their clients see things from the consumers' perspective. But they will need to provide insights and offer tools to justify their motives. Digital marketers need to know more about the idiosyncrasies of their customers businesses.

If brands can feed data that ordinarily wouldn't make it's way to the agencies eyes, and vice versa, then digital as an enabler of sharing this information can contribute to the full consumer journey by allowing identification of opportunities and mitigation risks along the way.

You don't need to look past the generation of leads as an example of sharing data in a way that aids both agency and customer. Agencies need to tap into what happens after the lead has been passed along to gain insight into the quality of the leads to have a chance at refining the consumer journey within the customers business itself.

How to wrap it all up

When something is both art and science, like digital, there are a lot of moving parts. You can't expect to hinge them all together effectively if you and you and your clients are not familiar with the roles that each individual part can play.

The Innovators is a book by Walter Isaacson in which Bill Gates explains one of the reasons his love affair for technology began was because "When you use a computer you can't make fuzzy statements. You make only precise statements."

It's time for agencies to operate in a more precise manner by considering key challenges they will face on their paths to meeting their client's objectives: time, budget and scope to name a few.

When the scope of a marketing effort evolves or increases, the time and cost required to get it done increases too. A tight time constraint could mean increased costs and reduced scope, and a tight budget could mean increased time and reduced scope.

To overcome these challenges, agencies need to become more agile and find (or create) the right tools and techniques to enable their teams (not just the project managers) to organise their work to meet these constraints. By achieving this, information transparency will ultimately become part of the day to day approach on clients. And it is this information in the context of strategy, content and data that fuels innovation.

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