

Being deeply digital



By Jacques du Bruyn

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As an owner of a digital agency, I've been exposed to many interpretations of what digital marketing is and what function it performs within the greater marketing ecosystem. The truth is that the marketing fraternity hasn't helped itself in defining what exactly digital marketing is and where it fits in.



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I still sit in meetings where an above-the-line agency comes up with the big idea and creative executions, and must then hand over the open files to the 'digital agency' to transpose into a batch of online banners.

I'm here to tell you that digital marketing is not switching over from CMYK to RGB. That's merely the default setting. Anyone can do that, and if they can't there are a host of YouTube videos available that will assist in learning how to.

The point is, we need to start pushing digital agencies to be more 'deeply' digital. I've always likened our job to having access to every digital tool (and if it doesn't exist, we'll build it) in the toolbox and then assessing the situation, deciding which tools in the box will solve the problem and arranging them into the best possible solution for the desired outcome.

I'm still amazed at how many local South African digital agencies (self-nominated) have .com URLs. If they truly understood SEO they'd know that local SEO performs far better on a co.za. URL. The average person wouldn't notice or care, but those who are deeply digital would.

Here's what I believe being deeply digital is all about.

Keeping abreast of the latest technology

How will you know what to use to solve the problem if you don't know what's out there? This means not being lazy, and not defaulting to the status quo. It means being curious and interrogating current platforms in order to achieve the desired goal using that platform.

Taking risks

The only way to truly get a handle on digital tools is to try them out. Surely you can't have an opinion on something unless you've actually experienced it? This means taking risks. Venturing forth despite the uncertainty on whether something will actually work or not.

The ability to implement

Good marketing is the ability to come up with ideas. Exceptional marketing is the ability to implement those ideas. It really isn't difficult to dream up digitally robust ideas. I'm sure everyone has at some point thought of a digital solution that creates more convenience in their work, home or play area. The problem comes down to implementation. That's where being deeply digital comes in - the ability to take the tools out of the toolbox and arrange them in such a way as to provide a solution.

Creatively solving tech problems

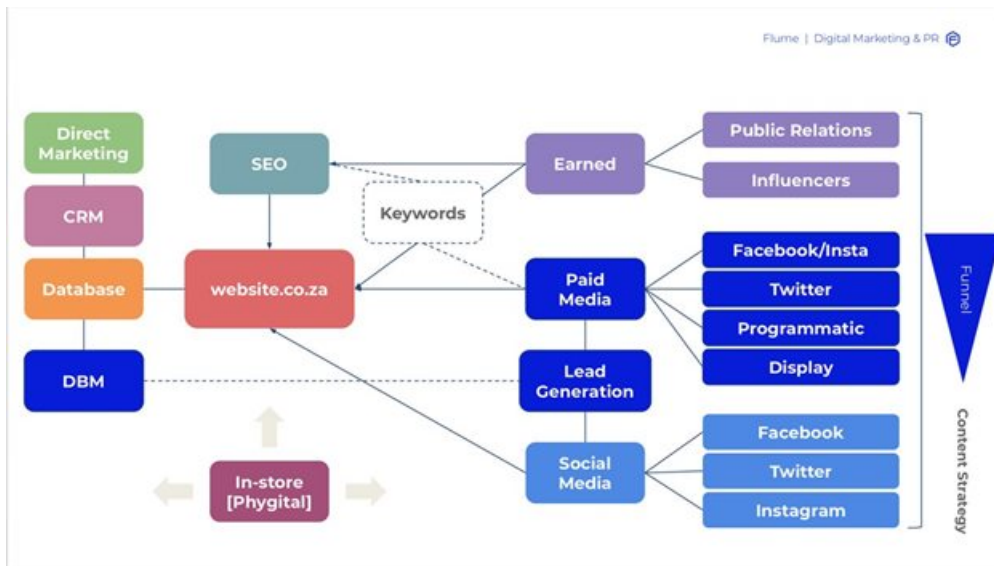
Creativity is not only reserved for a pretty picture or smart one-liners. Creativity is absolutely necessary when figuring out which digital platforms to use, or what to build and how to do so in order to achieve the desired outcome. Who knew that placing tracking pixels on a website in order to attribute leads could be a creative process?

Not taking a brief at face value but interrogating it

Lazy digital is taking a brief and then slapping it on social media. Being deeply digital means interrogating the brief, wrestling with it. Trying to figure out if there's a better way to ask questions. There's a term I love to use: 'How Might We?'. I think it's imperative to include these in briefs;

- How might we increase leads?
- How might we bring the brand values to life online?
- How might we interact with customers whilst they're shopping on the floor?
- How might we track loyalty through our social media pages?

Being deeply digital means not looking at a digital solution in isolation. It's about looking at the greater ecosystem and moving the puzzle pieces around so that there's a connected whole. Every digital platform and tool working together to drive the business goals.



Challenge yourself, push your knowledge and creativity. Start becoming deeply digital.

ABOUT JACQUES DU BRUYN

Jacques Du Bruyn is the Managing Director of Flume, a full-service Digital & PR Marketing Agency based in Johannesburg and Cape Town. He is a UJ and Vega School graduate with an honours degree in Brand Strategy.

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