

The science of success, the art of intermediaries

 By Johanna McDowell

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Miguel de Cervantes, the Spanish author of *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, noted that "experience is the universal mother of sciences". This being so is the art of experience in business is to collaborate with those who broaden your knowledge base.



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In an industry of rapid change and speedy decision making, both marketers and agencies are likely to come up against a gap in their knowledge of the exact capabilities a potential client or provider offers.

Rather than tilting at windmills, working with an experienced intermediary means gaining access to their vast experience with any number of agencies, locally and globally.

The intermediary must be able to bring all this to the table when marketers are looking to either appoint a new agency or renew their existing agency with a view to enhancing performance.



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Specialist intermediaries constantly interact with creative, digital and media agencies as part of their function. The IAS, for example, brings many years of experience in staying up to speed with trends, capabilities, and what international agencies and clients are experiencing.

Agency Scopen has also added far more intimate knowledge of current global methodologies and strategies favoured by multinationals, as well as ongoing industry studies.



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As a market leader, we see the IAS's function as being a catalyst in the growth of the intermediary space. This drives a rise in value that marketers gain by engaging with intermediaries in a partnership that brings insights into every sector and platform in the industry.

For agencies to get the most out of intermediary engagement, we encourage them to see how they can work with an intermediary to be presented in the best possible light to potential clients. It is in the best interest of the industry as a whole that intermediaries assist agencies to develop their pitch and polish their credentials appropriately.

The bottom line for all participants is that intermediaries are there to protect, promote and amplify what each brings to a potential new relationship or the injection of enthusiasm into an existing one.

Any specialist intermediary will tell you that the science may often be reflected in numbers, but the art lies in vision, collaboration and the longevity of robust relationships.

ABOUT JOHANNA MCDOWELL

MD of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS), and partner in Scopen Africa, with a background that includes being on both the agency and the client side of the fence, Johanna McDowell is well-placed to offer commentary on marketing and advertising in the South African and international contexts. She built her career in marketing and advertising since 1974, holding directorship in both SA and British advertising agencies. She was MD of Grey Phillips Advertising in 1988.

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