

'What's next' for the advertising industry?

 By [Craig Naicker](#)

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In 2020, the advertising industry was faced with many of those "what next?" moments; from agencies needing to put staff on reduced work time, salary cuts, retrenchments to even having to close down. Now, as we enter 2021, the question still lingers; "What next?" for the advertising industry".



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My views are very much shaped by what took place in 2020 and the impact that Covid-19 has had on consumers/customers alike.

Should we go back to the basics?

There have been many discussions on what the year 2021 will look like for brands, marketers, and agencies. My take is that we need to get back to basics.

Consumers do not really care about how many awards a brand and its agency has won for curating cool campaigns. What they really care about is how these brands are taking care of them during these trying times and if they can trust them to

take care of them.

Brands need to start asking the tough questions around the true value of a brand promise and purpose. Are we really helping our consumers make it through these unprecedented times? Black Friday 2020 was a great leveller for many brands and their agencies.



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The main strategy in my view was to push price and product (name it a Black Friday special) in the hopes that it helps grow their bottom line. Let's be honest, South Africa's Black Friday offerings were not really specials, and they were never designed to help the consumer.

What happened to marketing with purpose, delivering on a brand promise, placing the consumer at the heart of your offering? Brands need to start all over, refocus their purpose and promise that brings back that human connection and understanding of what the on the ground realities are.

In this digitally-driven world, we know that digital is going to be amplified tenfold in 2021. However, customers are going to lean more on brands that deliver on a human level. Brands are going to need to lead more with purpose and compassion if they want to ensure that the main winners are their consumers. Are agencies going to take the step and challenge their clients' business strategies and push for a more relatable purpose and promise?

My guess is only time will tell...

ABOUT CRAIG NAICKER

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