

The rise of brand worlds

 By [Felix Kessel](#)

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"Clients today are reshaping entirely the agency model." - Felix Kessel, CEO OwenKessel Leo Burnett.

2015 will be a paradigm shift for agencies, says Felix Kessel, CEO of OwenKessel Leo Burnett, as the clients of today are entirely reshaping the agency model and will change the face of advertising.

Kessel says agencies have to partner with clients much more at a fundamental level to gain an understanding of what they need, so that agencies have the time to do great creative, as everything else speeds up.

"Everyone needs to be creative, to understand and work across digital. Writers need to shoot film, and so on. We need to be 'hybrids'.

"That is the final frontier for brands. As they become content, the rules that governed products and services and even brands, before the internet, no longer apply. It's a world with new rules. And we're writing them," says Kessel.

OwenKessel aligned with Leo Burnett, a Publicis Worldwide-owned entity, in April 2014, becoming OwenKessel Leo Burnett in South Africa. OwenKessel was launched by Vaughan Owen and Felix Kessel in 2008 with one client, Amstel. In 2014, they won numerous international and local awards for Amstel, KOO, *Business Day* and MultiChoice DSTV campaigns.

These are Kessel's top trends for this year:

1. Brand worlds: 'Consumerland' is about this need for guidance - everyone out there is trying so desperately for betterment and brands that are going to play in this space need to offer valuable self improvement to consumers. It plugs back into this trend of brands now focussing on their own eco-systems, i.e., tech brands like Samsung and Nike have a brand world they invite you in to. What is your brand world? What is your brand eco-system? How can I become more participatory in your world? There is this chase for improvement."

2. Social currency: "There is a new kind of status in the world. We've always looked at status and as an agency we do some luxury brands. Nowadays status seems to be driven by social media. There is a new kind of social currency that has to do with impact: how much impact I can create in a social space in a 100-character tweet. People are being chased down for their wit alone. Brands need to understand that more. There is no money or fame associated. It is only about 'how much disturbance I can cause'. The EFF are pulling exactly the same trick, but in parliament. How much disruption and reaction they can cause. Brands are going to have to try understand that space. We have heard for ages about brands becoming more human... I don't think that is quite true. Brands need to learn to interact better with humans so brands can facilitate the link between people in their own worlds."

3. Impatient culture: "One of the online e-commerce sites is claiming to deliver in Cape Town in under three hours. This is the impatient culture: people are tired of waiting for everything. People want speed. They want results now. The Internet of Things that has connected everything results in people being overloaded and they want it to be curated. They want to be satisfied **now**. Everything is doubling in speed, in terms of our lives and lifestyles. More brands will find ways into consumers' lives and experiment and discard what doesn't work."

4. Freeing of information: "We will start seeing people being a lot more free with their information. We have the right influx of millennials into the market who don't safeguard any of their info. The only way to function in the digital world is to offer up intimate information. People are becoming more and more risk adverse and more aware of the benefits of sharing. They start opening up more. More services will spring up focussed completely on you. Mega brands like supermarkets will do that with personalised retail products. People want to be known and want that personalised customer service."

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**Felix Kessel was interviewed by Louise Burgers, specialist editor of Biz Trends 2015.*

ABOUT FELIX KESSEL

Born a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, where writing was the only way to survive the suburban ennui of his homeworld, Felix wrote his way into a strange land called advertising. Currently, he is the creative lead at WPP's agency for Distell, TeamLiquid.

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