

# Evolution of our industry: Shortlist for short projects

By  Johanna McDowell

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The start of last year brought the usual New Year predictions, all stymied by the pandemic, writes Johanna McDowell, CEO of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS). Now, the blank slate that is 2021 is seeing innovators seeking opportunities and creating new solutions.



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As a leading intermediary consultancy focusing on the optimal marketer-agency relationship, the IAS quickly notes and explores trends and workable new ideas that are beneficial to all parties.

While the relationship between marketers and their agencies is usually a long and fruitful one and this will not change, Covid-19 has generated many requests from marketers for IAS assistance in finding agencies to help with short-term communications projects to supplement and give additional support to existing agency relationships.

Based on this demand and Scopen research that backs it up, the IAS delved into the value of small, agile agencies being able to step in when a marketer requires a specific skill set and ability within an exacting timeline.



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### Pre-qualified shortlisted agencies

The result is a “shortlist for short projects”, where marketers are introduced to the agencies the IAS has determined are best suited to their immediate requirements. This obviates the need for the long exploration process that usually goes into finding the right fit and presents marketers with a small, pre-qualified choice.

Typically, the short-term projects are in the areas of crisis comms, internal comms, social media management, PR and reputation management, digital requirements, and the like.

The IAS offering a list of five agencies in total, with experience in the relevant disciplines that marketers require, including the following:

- Detailed agency business credentials such as size of agency, location, BEE level, capabilities, case studies / examples of work
- Key contact person at each agency with all the necessary contact details
- Researched opinion on each agency from the IAS regarding competence and track record

Marketers will be able to select one or more agencies from the shortlist to interact and communicate with directly. The IAS will not manage a pitch process in this instance, but merely supply relevant credentials and contact details.

Because interesting times call for specialised assistance, this offering is proving to be a robust addition to the marketer’s arsenal, while generating cashflow among the smaller agencies that have the capacity to step up for brief, often once-off projects.

Time is money – and in this economy, you can take smart, novel creativity and rapid execution of projects to the bank.

## 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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