

# Cloudy, the future is

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Knowledge of trends, tracking and following them is what will give you the edge in your business...

A decade ago, Louise Marsland, special projects and trends editor at Bizcommunity.com and founder of TrendAfrica.co.za, began tracking trends. Together with Bizcommunity.com she hosted the Biztrends Imbizo at Leaderex, held at the Sandton Convention Centre.

The Imbizo, which had been held earlier in Cape Town, featured trend talks a la TEDx style from leaders in the advertising, branding and marketing communication industry. All the speakers are featured in Bizcommunity.com's current Media & Marketing industry Trend Report as well, which looks ahead to trends in 2016.

## A change of pace

Opening the event, Marsland says too often we are scared of what is coming. "Trends help us overcome this fear. It also allows us to find opportunities to build our business or take it to the next level."

What has changed is the speed of change she adds. "What a business has experienced over 20 years is now compressed into five years."

One of the speakers, Odette van der Haar, CEO, Association for Communications and Advertising (ACA) commented on this. "We are at a crossroads. Technology is shaping how we communicate with consumers and history cannot help you. But, keep calm and don't panic. It is the business of communication to come up with solutions to business problems."

Johanna McDowell, MD of Independent Agency Selection (IAS) added to this, saying that the days of the retainer are fading fast, as clients are not relying on one agency anymore and will have at least four agencies on their books at any given time. "They no longer see the benefit of one agency. Their greatest concern is that agencies will deliver."



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There will also be far less big pitches. "Instead clients are feeding projects into agencies as and when they need them. Clients are moving away from the retainer, big pitch one agency model to an ad hoc, project work between many agencies, even working directly with a supplier, for example a printer, model."

A key trend for her is greater collaboration. "Unfortunately creative agencies in South Africa who do currently collaborate do not do it very well. There tends to be anxiety about spend, territory, whose idea is it and who is the creative force."

But to move into the future creative agencies will have to learn to collaborate. "The trick is to put the client in the centre," she says.

David Blyth, Managing Director of Yellowwood Brand Architects, says it is all about making more out of less. "Marketing can be lean and effective at the same time. Reduced marketing budget means thinking differently, not giving up."

This means taking advantage of being short-sighted. "However when you do this, make sure it is relevant to your brand. So, for example, when you get involved in a conversation on social media, make sure it is relevant to your brand or you run the risk of it turning against you."

He urges brands to embrace sales led marketing. "This involves not seeing branding, marketing and sales as separate entities. By combining them in one execution across a number of channels you will get great results."

Explore the outer edges and looking inside a category. "Create discomfort through ideas that are uncomfortable. We have seen this as a trend that leads to new brands or sub brands of a brand. Look inside the category and find something a little on edge. Innovation does not always have to be something big - often it can be sitting right in front of you. Look for exclusivity inside your category. Reformat to create new appeal," he says.

Leverage an obsession. "Zag when everyone is zigging, in other words when something becomes mainstream, do something different. Look for channel innovation."

## Powerful words

Heidi Brauer, Chief Marketing Officer at Hollard, expressed the thought that trends could be a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy, and so she asked delegates to assist her in starting a new trend where we love and care about words. "Words are a power thing that we underutilise."

Having loved words her whole life she believes we do not use them with enough power. "An atom is the smallest unit of ordinary matter. Like this, a word is the smallest element that can be uttered with meaning. One word can mean something; it is the simplest form of communication so it must be the most powerful thing we have. But it is abused."

She spoke about suitcases of words and how we just fling words at each other. "We have been telling stories forever, but now we talk nonsense and do not look in each other's eyes. We are no longer on the same journey."

We are all communicators and no one should be excluded, she says. This is what jargon does, it excludes people. "Words should not disempower people. They should be inclusive."

We need to use language to unify us she adds. "Use words to include and enable relationships with our agencies, and use the words you know are the right words. I love beautiful words but make sure everyone understands them. Communicate real stories not authentic narratives; that is our job as true communicators. Let's not be trend spotters, but trend enablers."

The keynote was delivered by Ann Nurock, Partner, Relationship Audits and Management, former CEO of Grey Canada and Grey South Africa.

## ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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