

Sex, data and advertising

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Forget about Harry and Meghan, the match of the century is advertising and research, with data playing cupid.



Natalie Otte, head of Kantar Millward Brown, South Africa.

Getting hitched

While advertisers and researchers have at times made uncomfortable bedfellows, this is all about to change as the ad industry begins to embrace data (although when we speak “advertising” we prefer to call it insights, or behaviours, not data and numbers). Drumroll please...!

According to Tham Khai Meng, Ogilvy Worldwide CCO, “When data meets creativity, you get pure sex. Data and creativity are two sides of the same coin.”

So, what does data and analytics mean to good creative? In a panel discussion at New York’s [Advertising Week](#) last September, Sami Thessman, CCO, Wunderman New York said it helps you back your idea, because “it’s becoming harder for advertisers to sell soft ideas”, especially as CMO’s are becoming more data focused and analytics driven.

Netflix has successfully been using [data](#) to feed their creative content, their latest [innovation](#) allows you to choose your own end to your favourite show. Even Hollywood uses data to [inform](#) creative decisions. Another great example of this mix is [Buzzfeed](#) who use data to drive the direction of their content. BuzzFeed generates about 600 pieces of content daily,

continually learning from their audience about what's working and what's not (think of this data pool as the world's largest focus group).

Blurring the lines between content and advertising, BuzzFeed created the [Dear Kitten](#) videos for Purina's Friskies, which have clocked up over 65 million views on YouTube. The success of this campaign led to their first [TVC](#), also for Friskies.

According to BuzzFeed, *Dear Kitten's* success wasn't just because the web is cat crazy, but rather, the results stemmed from combining data from previous campaigns to create custom content that resonated with its audience.

We live in a culture of search, skip or share, where people have gone from simply receiving content to seeking it out and potentially sharing it. This presents a huge opportunity for brands with content that resonates but offers little for those that do not.

Seizing on the wealth of behavioural data left by people's digital exhaust, we now try to reach people in the moment when they are shopping or at the point of purchase. But this is also the moment when people are most likely to doubt advertising claims, compare features and pricing and try to make up their own minds.

The influence of advertising therefore is all the more powerful because ad exposure is often decoupled from the purchase decision. People feel first and think second. Advertising's true power is to establish motivating feelings, ideas and associations linked to the brand in people's memories, which will shape the way they make decisions along the path to purchase.

In 2018 we'll see advertisers leveraging consumer insights to produce effective advertising that creates an emotional connection with the consumer and leaves a [lasting impression](#). Brands will start taking control of their own destiny, collecting data to develop a personalised relationship with their customer. Data is the last competitive advantage and, "intelligent" marketing will lead to greater ROI.

According to Alistair Mokoena, CEO of Ogilvy & Mather South Africa, forward-looking agencies will:

Identify: use data to define a growth opportunity for the brand.

Plan: use data to understand which audiences to target and which touchpoints to use at what time.

Inspire: use data to identify insights that lead to a powerful creative approach.

Pre-test: use data to understand the potential of an idea or execution before launch.

Adapt: use data during a campaign to understand what can be improved .

Post review: use data from past campaigns to identify ways to improve results.



Ise Dinner, head of marketing communications for Kantar, Africa & Middle East, Insights.

Screen Does Size Count?

While TV is still the biggest medium in South Africa, we are a mobile centric country. The accepted wisdom is that TV and digital work well together, but in the future mobile and video content on demand could undermine the power of TV as people consume more snackable content whenever and wherever they are. Yet the mobile ad experience is one of the biggest challenges facing marketers today. How do you successfully build a relationship with customers on a 6" screen?

People spend on average four hours a day on their phone (check out the [Moment](#) app to see how much time you spend on your phone doing what, I think you'll be in for a big surprise!).

So with 8.4 [billion mobile](#) connections and 7.6 billion people in the world, mobile is great for reach, but how does one reach effectively? Banners and pop up ads can make you hate both the publisher and the advertiser, and video pre-rolls are not always the solution either. You can't always recut your TV commercial for the small screen, and ad blockers are on the rise.

We'll see initiatives like the [Coalition for Better Ads](#) leveraging insights and expertise to develop and implement new global standards for online advertising. This will likely lead to advertisers creating more compelling content, publishers reducing advertising clutter and media agencies improving targeting.

The quickie

According to Kantar Millward Brown, ads have six seconds to land an impression in the name of the brand. Mark Pritchard, the CMO for P&G reckons brands have two seconds to connect with the consumer – and it's hard to be relevant in six seconds, never mind two, so that means you really need to know your audience to grab their attention creatively. You need to find the C spot, and quickly!

When it comes to digital, the only real way to beat the skip is through creativity. Brands must either work within the six-second window or keep as many people watching as possible.

Either strategy can be effective but both require brands working with people's brains not against them. Deliver too much information too fast and people's conscious minds will choke. Fail to create anticipation that a video will deliver something of value and people will skip. As always, real insight into the audience's interests and motivations is key to delivering an ad that connects and resonates.

Pages that render faster on digital devices will become increasingly important. The [Accelerated Mobile Pages Project](#) (AMP) spearheaded by Google is a collaboration between developers, publishers and websites, distribution platforms and tech companies, who are constantly [working](#) together to make the mobile experience even better.

This open source initiative makes it easy for advertisers and publishers to create mobile friendly ads and content and have it load instantly everywhere. We'll see more marketers using AMP html technology/frameworks to build ads that render faster, making the ads lighter and more engaging.

Coitus interruptus

In our connected world, the perception is that people are always on but that doesn't mean they are always receiving. Digital disruption empowers consumers to get what they want, when they want, and increasingly they don't want to be interrupted by ads that are not relevant or good. We know people actively block content on their digital devices, and that skipping ads has become second nature, especially among younger viewers.

Back in 2005, Craig Davis, then COO at J. Walter Thompson stated, "We need to *stop interrupting what people are* interested in and be what *people* are interested in", and this still rings true today. Negative reactions to advertising can damage brands, so advertisers and marketers must focus on improving the quality of creative and adapting it to different platforms because attention is a reward not a right.

We'll see advertisers using behavioural profiling technology that allows them to personalise messages to their audience based on data collected to ensure the ads are engaging. Matching content to customer's interests and behaviours based on their location, interests, browsing history and demographic group will ensure their ads are relevant.

Brands must treat the consumer's time as valuable. According to the latest [Connected Life](#) study by Kantar TNS, 20% of touchpoints can deliver up to 80% of impact, so brands who identify their 20% avoid bombarding and frustrating their customers while ensuring their investment is focused effectively. We've heard this sentence a gazillion times, "digital offers the opportunity to serve an ad to the right person, with the right message, at the right time", and in 2018 we'll see marketers working harder to get this right.

Alexa Honey I'm home (but you knew that already didn't you?)

Ads often follow users from site to site: a customer who searches online for accommodation in Cape Town will be inundated with Western Cape holiday offers (often still after the fact). Facebook and Google will keep reminding you about the shoes you saw last month but never bought, while Instagram's "[shop now](#)" feature makes it ridiculously easy to buy shoes that Insta models are wearing in between looking at photos of your friends. But don't be creepy, be relevant.

Technology like Alexa will continue to shape the future of advertising. Artificial intelligence will know more about you than you do yourself, allowing brands to reach consumers in [useful](#) and engaging ways, on a scale that has been impossible

until now.

J. Walter Thompson's "The Next Rembrandt" for ING and Google DeepMind's "[AlphaGo](#)" are fantastic examples of AI, both winning big at Cannes Lions.

Augmented reality and virtual reality will play an increasingly prominent role in marketing and advertising, providing a multisensory connection and experience that TV and online simply cannot, with authentic and personalised engagement opportunities. Advertisers who don't follow suit will get left behind.

So how about a threesome?

All too often research and creative partners only meet at the final debrief. Marketers need to share the consumer insights and data with their advertising partners upfront in order to allow the agency to create effective and more relevant advertising from the beginning – it can be unfair on the creative agency who are suddenly put on the spot with confronting new feedback on an initiative they have worked on for months.

For consumer research to be valuable, it must be part of the total creative development plan. Tagging it on as an afterthought is the source of nearly all pre-test evil in the world whereas if done in the initial stages, it allows for better optimisation of the creative idea. A team effort that from the start combines research, creative and client, will produce a stronger final output for the brand.

Over and above, consumer research must focus on optimising ad performance in line with the communications and brand strategy, and this year we'll see research agencies playing a greater role in the creative development journey.

The “C” Spot

If you ask people they will tell you that not all ads are bad, they just screen out the ones that aren't good or relevant. And consumers have changed too. They no longer want to stand on the sidelines, bombarded with a barrage of one-way messages. They want brands to engage them with relevant content delivered in a format that speaks to them. They want to be involved in campaigns that trigger their emotional side, that make them feel something. And the only way to do that is to come up with great, creative ideas that win the hearts (and pockets) of consumers.

This year we'll see more storytelling emerging as the Romeo to the consumer Juliet because people love a good story. Only one third of advertising globally is story led, yet stories are the reason we stay awake late to finish a book, watch a movie or binge watch on Netflix. And stories engage us like nothing else. Here are two of our favourite favourites: [TigerAir](#)

In 2018, the advertisers who are in a happy relationship will be the ones who are open to quickies and threesomes, and know how to find the “C spot”.

**Kantar Millward Brown is a sponsor of the BizTrends2018 advertising category.*

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