

Harnessing creativity and resetting in the "new normal"

By [Candy Dempers](#), issued by [MediaHeads 360](#)

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Six months into the global pandemic, the term "new normal" has been doing its rounds a fair bit and has become the new normal.

We were all forced to adjust to life in lockdown and as restrictions are starting to lift, we can look back at the various stages and the precarious challenges we were faced with.

Having largely been in survival mode up until this point, as the world starts to open and lift restrictions and people are eager to move on with their lives, it's a good time to start thinking about how we can harness creativity (in a personal and professional capacity) from this unusual situation. We may be waiting for a vaccine for a while, so learning ways to encourage our creativity now can make a world of difference if we're forced back into strict lockdown at some point, or if it takes a couple of years for medical experts to conquer the virus.

Adapting creatively is also very important as there are further challenges on the horizon. A shift towards the Fourth Industrial Revolution in South Africa is underway, which will affect much of how we live, work, and connect with each other. Creative blocks are the last thing we will want to cross when we need important ideas to remain relevant in our industries, as well as to keep innovating as things move into an entirely new realm.

"New normal" 2.0: The Fourth Industrial Revolution

The current "new normal" may soon be replaced with an even "newer" normal in South Africa, with the Fourth Industrial Revolution heading directly towards us. This change will not only affect the way we live and work, but also the way we harness creativity and how we express ourselves in the world.

In a nutshell, the Fourth Industrial Revolution refers to the ongoing automation of traditional practices, in the wake of the growth of smart technology. It is a blurring of the boundaries between the physical, digital, and biological world, with AI, robotics, data mining, the Internet of Things (IoT) and other technologies shaping the way humanity operates moving forward.

This shift will disrupt many industries, change how people consume things, and in turn, present new opportunities for fresh ideas. Creative agencies like ourselves have a responsibility to understand what this means and how it will affect the marketing landscape moving forward, as well as how we can use this change to continue to deliver the best campaigns to clients.

A new opportunity for creativity

The Fourth Industrial Revolution will not only present a fundamental change in the way we go about our lives, but more importantly, it will affect the way we relate to one another in the world. There is potential for huge promise, but also, possible peril. As social media has already illustrated, technologies are growing faster than human beings are able to fully comprehend, and with for-profit business models at the helm of these operations, mental health (and the general wellbeing of people) is considered secondary. The long-term consequences of this could be severe.

Countries around the world are therefore already being forced to rethink how society can benefit from the technology-driven revolution ahead, which will require decision-makers to think about how we can create a more inclusive, equal and sustainable human-centered future. In a country rife with inequality and unemployment, we should be asking ourselves how technology can lift humanity up, rather than being divisive or exclusive, and with a leaning towards the greater sustainability

of the planet as a whole. Simply put, we will need all the creative ideas we can get!

Overcoming creative friction

Creative blocks can be difficult to overcome, and with the Fourth Industrial Revolution already being embraced in South Africa, we need creative solutions without hurdles. Sometimes, creative friction is the result of spending too much time trying to come up with creative solutions, leaving the person flat and deflated. At other times, getting started can be a problem, and the idea never enters the room, or hits the page.

Regardless of what brought on the block, a reset is the perfect medicine. Taking some time out to clear your mind, and to focus on your own self-care, can make you a more creative individual, as well a better asset to any creative team. Try meditation or yoga if you are keen to slow your mind down. Jump into that book that has been gathering dust on your shelf. Consume content you may deem mindless (Brene Brown recently talked about binge watching Law & Order because of the predictable nature of its episodes), giving the other side of your brain the time it needs to regroup, and opening up space for creative ideas to flourish moving forward.

Creativity is the cornerstone of innovation, and if we are going to navigate the pandemic and the Fourth Industrial Revolution together as a nation, knowing how to get ourselves into the right space will be key. The quicker we can create processes that work - hopefully built with regular intervals for resetting in tow - the stronger our creative minds grow, the better personal creative projects turn out, and the closer we'll get to staying resilient in times of change and uncertainty. You up for the challenge?



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Candy Dempers is the Managing Director of MediaHeads 360.

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