

Adapting to a new business paradigm

By [Adam Byars](#)

16 Jan 2020

We're living and working in a world that is making less and less sense. Increased confusion, uncertainty and volatility are all having an impact. Businesses are under more operational pressure than ever before.



Adam Byars, joint-CEO and partner at GRID Worldwide.

The challenge for advertising and branding agencies is how to position themselves and how to operate within a system which is under so much pressure. Perhaps most importantly, how do they use creativity to make a difference in this new paradigm?

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is a reality. If anything, it will only gain momentum in the years ahead. Advertising and branding agencies, like many other industries, will need to embrace automation while ensuring that creatively original ideas...



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11 Dec 2019



There is little doubt that there is a tension between the industry's current operating models and ways of working and what we will be faced with in the future.

The question advertising agencies need to ask themselves is how they intend to operationalise themselves to be future fit and to ensure that their clients remain relevant in a 4IR world given that the rules of brand and customer engagement have changed significantly.



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The priority for the industry in 2020 will be to define a formula that ensures businesses are future fit while still retaining their ability to deliver great creative work and grow their businesses both from a talent and operational perspective.

“ To be sustainable in the future, agencies need to evolve their offering beyond the traditional: it's no longer enough to offer a big idea for a TVC or radio spot. Going forward, agencies have to stop thinking in such a linear fashion. Instead they need to embrace big platform ideas that extend across the spectrum. ”

For some time now, Grid has been offering platform thinking as opposed to a single big idea.

Platform thinking for seamless experience

Platform thinking extends far beyond the remit of traditional advertising.



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Essentially, it's about building a sustainable multi-platform offering using big idea thinking to push through the message while at the same time ensuring that there is a seamless customer experience across all the brand's various touchpoints, including a seamless experience between digital and analogue.

Underpinning this platform thinking is an operating model we call 'investment creative'. More than a philosophy or a mere statement, investment creative is literally our operating model, one that allows us to continually remain in beta. It acts as the central pivot of our business and helps us to better understand the world around us.



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In addition to impacting the agency, we also translate that model to our clients' brands and businesses and link it to specific metrics such as our clients' share price, equity, purpose, meaning and even brand love – the very same metrics that underpin our own business.

The investment creative operating model allows the agency to invest in the creative product to deliver specific measurable returns, in the process ensuring that the agency is future fit and able to adapt to the demands of the 4IR.

Embrace technology

While the industry – for the most part – has generally been fairly hesitant to embrace technology, it has its place in terms of better enabling ideas, execution and driving scalability. We don't consider it something to be feared, but rather to be embraced.



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We're also very clear, however, that technology must not be at the expense of losing our unique offering, which is creativity.

How agencies adapt to this new world will determine both our relevance and our sustainability in the future. There is no doubt that agencies that fail to take cognisance of this changed landscape and are not putting measures in place to ensure they're equipped for the future are jeopardising their future sustainability.

ABOUT ADAM BYARS

Adam is an experienced businessman in the creative industry with a demonstrated history of working both locally and internationally in the marketing and branding industry, building key customer engagement experience in my early years on both brand and trade with BAT SA before switching to agency...

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