

The importance of mining an insight

By  Cathleen Makhetha

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The thread that truly ties an agency together.

The advertising and marketing landscape has often proved to be an exciting window into the happenings of a particular place or the lives of people. In advertising history the processes have been very mechanistic where the 'Ad Man' was required to churn out ads for the sole purpose of selling products.

However, in recent times, today's world of constant flux demands the need and know-how for advertising which understands the lives of people, the need states which are to be fulfilled, altruistic desires and aspirations and communication which ultimately champions growth and progression.

It is no longer about an advertisement or a jingle with bells and whistles, but rather the role the product and brand plays in the consumers life and the emotive resonance that speaks directly to their value system. With advanced technology comes the introduction of a variation of ways to engage consumers and really find out who they are habitually and truthfully. Now marketers know which consumer they are talking to, how they look, act, behave, places they go, where they shop, websites they visit and information they gravitate to. Although this is more penetrative than mass marketing and less intrusive than direct marketing, it still doesn't guarantee sales or increase brand love.



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This is where the importance of insight mining comes in. An insight is a deeper understanding of something or someone and can also be described as a 'Human Truth'. In a world which is quickly becoming digitalised; the deeper understanding of why and how people do things is slowly getting lost in the functionality of systems and processes of everyday life. This does not pay homage to the marketing landscape due to the fact that this causes unfair dilution and oversimplification of our everyday consumer who purchases or advocates on behalf of our brand.

Daunting agency processes

Often times in tedious client meetings and creative reviews the insight sits as a one slider drowning in a wordy description which then primarily constitutes it as an observation and not an insight. Insights play a dual role in firstly translating vast amounts or research into key take outs and points to note and secondly setting the pace for great creative work by fostering an intimate relationship between fact and emotion. The insight gathers stereotypes, debunks myths, gives a platform to opinions and then finds a way to connect with the consumer on an intricate level through creative work such as a TVC, radio spot, outdoor media, social media and other platforms. Furthermore it is flexible enough to permeate each medium smoothly because it is ultimately the essence of communication.

To mine an insight is not as complex as performing open heart surgery but requires some brainwork and wit. "Mothers don't have time to cook" is not an insight. "South Africans love to dance is not an insight either." "Children need to be healthy"... you guessed it, is not an insight. Between budgets, processes and tight deadlines nobody ever takes the time to realise the truth or depth of an insight and these statements, observations and opinions are often taken at face value as insights...

Finding true value in integration

For an insight to confidently live within a brands composition it needs to be celebrated through integration. 'The Golden Thread' just like an insight is what ties business objectives, creative excellence and strengthens client-agency relationships on a larger scale; understanding that integration starting within an agency is key in establishing the quality output of work for clients, because if the agency speaks one language it is then easier to stand before clients and share the *lingua franca* of success to solve their business problems.

This happens within an ideal world, however it is noteworthy to always align as an agency before heading off to see the client. It should always be avoided that creative goes off with the brief and creates executions while strategy has to then back-rationalise and search for a fit rather than understand the brands ideal configuration. Where there is a creative brainstorm, there should undoubtedly be an agreed insight from strategy where synergy is the order of the day. Time will always be a factor in our fast-paced industry and meeting client demands can also be daunting, but marketers should always be cognisant of two things: The quality of work produced and respect for the brainwork behind it. Advertising is not solely about systems and processes and products, it's an art to be mastered for the sake of the consumer.

Going back to these basic fundamentals affords the agency increased levels of efficiency, skilled effectiveness, saves time and money while sparing all stakeholders the back and forth about meeting the briefs objectives. Surely it can be said that clients are often nervous about the brands they entrust us with, it is about time we as marketers start trusting ourselves with how much we know and how to successfully articulate it. Consumers are not numbers or sales lest we forget that they have a heartbeat and need to connect to our brands, it is our job to discern the algorithm.

ABOUT CATHLEEN MAKHETHA

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