

Clients say "screw the line" - Godfrey Morley

 By Herman Manson: @marklives

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[Godfrey Morley](#) has been running [Draftfcb Cape Town](#) for a little over a year. As someone who has spent most of his career on the client side of the table - he was head of sponsorship for SAB, communications director for McDonalds, marketing director of Samsung and executive director at Thebe Tourism Group - Morley brings a strong focus on business transformation to the agency.



Godfrey Morley

His vision of how an agency should be run - decentralising power away from the MD; pursuing organic growth and internal efficiencies, as opposed to only chasing down new pitches; ditching the pretend glamour of 'ATL' work and promising a collaborative approach to work ("it's not easy but it's the future") - shows his ambition for aligning the agency with market expectations and business reality.

Godfrey ([@godfreymorley](#)) spent his first six months in the job at Draftfcb Cape Town stabilising the agency, the next six months structuring it for growth (or 'putting the aces in their places' as he puts it) and is currently focused on maximising growth. It's not his first stint at Draftfcb - Morley is also a former MD of the Draftfcb Group.

Split into three clusters

In an effort to give greater responsibility and a broader vision to those in charge of managing client relationships, Draftfcb has been split into three clusters. Two are client-focused, run by managing partners.

These managing partners not only oversee client relationships in their own cluster - they are essentially running a mini-agency within the agency and taking responsibility for everything from finances (including collecting fees) to managing creative excellence and ensuring effective staff management and employment equity.

Taking responsibility for a proper business unit and driving the entire value chain means the days of client 'yes men' are well and truly over at the agency, says Godfrey, and changes the function of client service directors. The managing partners for each of the two client-focused clusters - and more can be added as the agency grows - care about the bigger picture and the health of the agency. so will better manage client expectations. It also helps integrate the agency to a much greater extent than before, says Morley.

The third cluster consists of the creative studio and stands separate, to allow flexibility in allocating resources to work that needs to get done.

Growing organically

Morley says Draftfcb is growing organically with the accounts it already holds and through maximising internal efficiencies - of course, it still pitches for new accounts - but pitches can be drawn-out processes and, in the current economy, agencies can ill afford to bet growth only on new account wins, he says.

He is also shifting focus to what is traditionally considered BTL work (as part of larger integrated solutions), saying this is where especially Cape Town agencies are seeing quick growth and client demand. This is part of the "rise of creativity beyond traditional advertising", according to Morley.

To talent that looks down on anything but ATL work, Morley says the market is dictating change, and it's taking agencies with it. Clients are saying "screw the line", he says, and agencies had better take note.

Morley is also an advocate for collaborative communication between agency, client and sector specialists, saying the days when 'lead agencies' could call all the shots are over, and that clients don't want to do the legwork on finding intra-agency solutions or managing conflict. Clients will note which agencies are able to collaborate and choose to work with them, rather than take on the extra project management work that clashing agencies and personalities bring about, Morley bets.

Collaborative thinking, strategic partners

Of course, this is easier said than done, and its early days yet, but Morley insists collaborative thinking will become part of the fabric of his agency and the people that work there. Strategic partners need to be part of the strategy process from day one and should be able to challenge the agency thinking.

In Morley's vision of things to come, the agency is no longer the sole player in cracking 'the big idea' and then leaving partners to execute. He is looking to staff his agency with people who are good at managing these processes and relationships.

Morley mentions digital agency [HelloComputer](#) as an agency Draftfcb Cape Town has had successful collaborations with. Draftfcb is bringing digital specialists on board, not to exclude digital agencies but to also have an informed opinion on digital at strategy sessions with partners, he explain.

If the agencies of the past were built on ego, says Morley, agencies of the future will be built on sound business practice, and finding and keeping a depth of experience. It will involve decentralising authority, which translates into greater accountability for a wider range of agency people, which will ultimately drive integrated work and media neutrality.

Oh, and all this allows the MD to poke his nose in anywhere and everywhere, laughs Morley, and keep people on their toes.

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The inaugural Vodacom Social Media Journalist of the Year in 2011, Herman Manson (@marklives) is a business journalist and media commentator who edits industry news site [www.marklives.com](#). His writing has appeared in newspapers and magazines locally and abroad, including Bizcommunity.com. He also co-founded *Brand* magazine.

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