

# The challenges of a virtual and physical agency

By [Bongani Chinkanda](#)

23 Sep 2022

Agencies have thrived on community and camaraderie that has included late-night pitches and brainstorming, and the Friday drinks culture that makes creative agencies what they are. Now many agency leaders find themselves having to navigate building a virtual and physical culture.



Source © Chris Montgomery [Unsplash](#) Agencies are having to navigate a virtual and physical model of work

## Pitching

One-on-one pitching allows for immediate feedback on an idea and the client's reaction is invaluable in that moment. You can gauge, based on body language, pretty early in the pitch how it is going, and if there are any points, rectify them quite quickly.

This becomes difficult presenting on Teams when there are interruptions in the comment section. Some clients – and agencies - also hide behind technology to avoid any difficult conversations.

## Embracing technology

Leaders are also being challenged by having to navigate how to best manage staff personalities in and out of an office environment. Bringing the best out of a workforce that has had to deliver without in-person supervision and be self-sufficient during a pandemic has forced leaders to be adaptable.

Here technology was the biggest driver of consistent communications, seamless one-on-one online meetings, leveraging of staff personalities via Zoom and Teams, and human interaction both on and off camera.

But, while many agencies believe that they have embraced digitalisation because they are just using Teams, there is more to efficiencies and navigating tech in agencies by using platforms like Magnetic, Monday.com, and optimising Chase to be able to manage Slack internally.

## Owning the building

Agencies have realised that owning buildings is no longer an important part of a business. Hybrid working and co-working spaces keep overhead costs down.

Offices are now primarily being used as a place to build a company culture and brainstorm client pitches rather than a place to do admin or any duties that can be done from home.



### Agency-client partnership key to great work

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## Importance of mental wellness

It has become more difficult to manage people remotely. In-person seeing how people manage work pressures becomes easier to navigate when you are visibly present.

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of anxiety and depression, its role, and how people have been affected by it.

To me personally, people are not laptops. It is important to be plugged into the mental and physical wellness of the people I work with.

Empathy and showing kindness are important not just because we work together but a basic human perspective.

I would want to know that I'm approachable should my team require my assistance on anything business or personal.

As agencies navigate the business through the post-covid era the importance of mental wellness should not be diminished. Continuous checking in with the people you work with is important.

How we manage client expectations by taking them on the agency journey of leading with empathy is imperative. Chasing revenue should not be the only determining factor when your team is close to burning out.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bongani Chinkanda is the founder of Diaries of a Salesman as well as the managing director of Bravado - an advertising agency.

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