

IAB SA 2021 predictions

By  Jessica Tennant

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The IAB SA recently hosted its 22nd insight webinar on Zoom, featuring IAB SA members Jarred Cinman, Ann-Mari Höfing, Noah Makholwa, Karyn Strybos and Melissa Kariuki.



In this episode, the IAB speaks to their 2021 predictions in the digital marketing industry and shares a forecast on what happens next with insights from VMLY&R CEO, Jarred Cinman; GetSmarter head of product strategy and research, Ann-Mari Höfing; digital lead for Nielsen, Noah Makholwa; Everlyic marketing manager, Karyn Strybos; and Melissa Kariuki, product marketing at Google.

Here, they share some key insights and what they shared in their presentations...

 ***First, tell us about yourself and what's on your list of priorities for 2021?***

Höfing: My name is Ann-Mari Höfing and my role at GetSmarter is head of product strategy and research. I'm responsible for leading the team that defines the organisation's product strategy, including the pipeline of new courses, new products, as well as the consumer insights and analytics team that is integral to the organisation's content strategy.

2021, from a workplace perspective, will be important to consolidate the new strategies we have put in place for the team. 2020 has been a period of significant growth and change, thanks to the Covid crisis, and we want to ensure that we support

the positive momentum that online education has achieved in general.

From a personal perspective, I'm looking forward to a year of consolidation. I completed some study this year, which made lockdown with two children extra hectic, so I'd love some respite and relaxation, although I am not sure this is going to be possible.

Makholwa: Noah here, lover of all things digital. Anime geek, radio nerd, part-time writer and lover of the great outdoors, so sign me up for camping, hiking and long walks on the beach.

In 2021 we will be expanding our offering as Nielsen digital. We'll look to provide more tools to the industry with the key theme and aim being to showcase to marketers where and how they achieve their ROI. Personally, I look forward to driving growth and the adoption of new technologies within our market and industry.

Strybos: My name is Karyn Strybos, and I'm the marketing manager at Everlytic.

In 2021, we're going to automate our employee onboarding communication, plan our internal communication strategies to keep our employees motivated and engaged, look at ways to enhance our customer communications, and analyse additional data to understand our customers better. We're also expanding into the international market through channel partnerships. Exciting times ahead!

Kariuki: I'm Melissa Kariuki and I work in the SMB Marketing team at Google South Africa. My 2021 priorities at work will be ensuring that all our marketing efforts, from product launches to events are inclusive. I am constantly deepening my knowledge on diversity, equity and inclusion and how to put it into practice in the field of work, so I'll continue to do this in 2021. Personally, my 2021 priorities are continuing to support burgeoning young professionals with career insights and tips through my social media platforms.

■ **What is the key theme or message of your talk?**

Höfing: There has been so much said on the impact of the fourth industrial revolution and the future of work. Our study is definitely not the first one that's been completed, and it won't be the last. Our organisation is uniquely positioned to partner with the executives who are our students to navigate the changes that are facing us as a human workforce, and this vantage point gives us unique insight.

“ The changes that 4IR is likely to bring are different to what has often been splashed in the headlines of the mainstream press. We don't believe that the “machines are coming”. We believe that the tech that will change the workforce will be human centric, in order to be adopted, and that we are ultimately in control of this change. It is not happening to us... we are driving it. ”

And changes are happening right now. Covid-19 has accelerated digital transformation. Those of us that thrive through this period are the ones that are already engaged in lifelong learning, constantly adding to our skills toolkit. This will give us flexibility and versatility to navigate the constant changes that come our way.

Makholwa: The theme of my talk is centred around people's privacy concerns in digital marketing and how marketers can go about addressing those concerns.

Strybos: Based on the market changes we've seen in 2020, I'll explore some key communication trends to consider in 2021, for connecting with employees and customers.

Kariuki: In 2021, diversity initiatives will be a standard, not a nice-to-have. Businesses will need to treat diversity as they would other business priorities and thus allocate clear goals, have an action plan and track KPIs.

■ **Talk us through some of the key insights that determine which changes, updates or constants will be happening in the digital advertising industry in 2021.**

Höfing: We will continue to see clients pivot, and agencies will need to do that with them. Very few organisations managed to dodge the demand and business model disruption that 2020 brought. Occasions, motivations have and will continue to change, and being able to keep a very close connection to the consumer will be critical.

Value and quality remain critical as buying decision drivers, but purpose is an element that increasingly drives decision making. How brands can authentically connect to this and tell their story in a compelling and interesting way is important.

Opportunity abounds to connect in the moments that matter. The consumer decision journey is often long and complex, and we tend to simplify things too much, rather than truly understanding the challenge we are solving for our consumers. Building your marketing models around this is critical to remain relevant.

Makholwa: During my talk, we'll look at:

- Insights from the latest Nielsen digital consumer survey.
- How the market is likely to respond to growing privacy concerns, as well as the POPI Act.
- The "death of the cookie" and the way forward for measurement in a cookie-less future.



#BizTrends2020: End of an era as the 3rd party cookie crumbles

Lisa Macleod 14 Jan 2020



Strybos: The new normal requires an internal comms strategy. The KPMG 2020 CEO Outlook: Covid-19 Special Edition clearly showed that CEOs are changing the way of work with 69% saying that they are going to be downsizing office space. A more flexible working environment opens new challenges on how to keep your employees engaged and your culture alive.

As businesses, we need to create internal communication strategies, so that we're continuously engaging with remote workforces, sharing valuable information, creating and maintaining culture, and instilling purpose. We also need to remove as many barriers as we can to ensure that this content is accessible to all employees, even those who are hard of hearing or not tech savvy.

Predictive analytics and data science will help brands understand their customers better to provide more relevant content.

Data science is booming and this is a trend that will continue into 2021. We gain immense value from data – analysing transactions, product usage, behaviours, trends – and by getting continuous feedback from customers, we'll be able to get a better understanding of their preferences and reactions to changes in the market.

Connecting your data to your communication platform allows you to determine the conversations you want to have based on preferences or behaviours, and create automated journeys to manage them. This adds immense value to customers' lives, as you're providing relevant and hyper-personalised content at scale.

Marketers will become more customer-centric. Acquiring a new customer can cost five times more than retaining an existing customer. So, marketers won't only be focused on acquiring customers, but on retaining them through unique and meaningful experiences too.

Automated communications allow us to set specific journeys from pre-purchase to post-purchase stages, giving customers

a consistent brand experience, and ideally creating brand advocates.

Kariuki: Consumers are increasingly demanding diversity. They want to purchase from organisations which represent them and their values and beliefs. If companies don't adapt, consumers will deprioritise them, or if companies outwardly promote opposing values, consumers will attempt to defame them as we have seen.

To truly achieve diversity and inclusion, we need to embed it as part of our culture. It can't be a separate, detached department. It needs to be embedded across the organisation and in all its efforts from product design to hiring and marketing. More so, there needs to be shared ownership across members of the organisation.

We need to rely more on data and numbers as indicators of progress on diversity and inclusion. As with other business goals, measurable goals drive progress and accountability.

■ ***What one main call to action would you advise your fellow industry colleagues at this time to help companies who are looking to beat the benchmark in digital advertising and create great work that exceeds business goals?***

Höfinger: Look for diversity of thought, education, background (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) when building teams. Help your young team members understand their responsibility for their careers and the importance of lifelong learning and continually adding new skills to their toolkit.

We have a responsibility to provide opportunities for growth to young people entering the industry.

Makholwa: I'd urge the industry to start adopting privacy-centric technologies and methodologies. Look into machine learning and walled gardens for a start. Also use this period to run parallel testing with existing measurement policies to ensure the results are comparable and reliable.

Strybos: The year 2021 is one of people first. The more you understand your customers, employees and the types of information that they need to remain engaged and loyal, the more successful you will be as a business.

Disengaged employees filter down to your customers, causing a negative impact on the business. Customers expect excellence, and with fierce competition out there, your business can't take that risk.

By integrating your data into a secure and scalable platform like Everlytic, you can send out timeous, automated communications that speak to their needs. This guides them on a continuous journey, providing value every step of the way.

Kariuki: Take diversity as seriously as you take other business objectives. Approach being more diverse and inclusive as a business challenge and be proactive about your efforts.

■ ***At this time of crisis, please share one key learning that you have personally (or professionally) taken on board, that you believe will assist others to navigate the future of work as we (are getting to) know it.***

Höfinger: Take your job seriously, but not yourself. Learning to work from home, and not live at work is key for mental and physical health.

Makholwa: At this time of crisis it helps to be ahead of the curve. In February this year we were planning for the rest of the year as normal despite the uncertainty surrounding Covid-19. Businesses that were able to adjust to the new norm as well as businesses that had contingencies in place survived the tough conditions of lockdown. Businesses that were ahead of the curve thrived during lockdown. Similarly, there remains some uncertainty around the "death of the cookie" amid growing privacy concerns. Marketers who are in the know and ahead of the curve will thrive in the post-cookie world.

Strybos: Communication is key, both internally and externally. It can make or break a business. Make sure you have a proper communications strategy in place to avoid issues down the line.

Kariuki: We can't accurately predict the changes that are coming, so rather than trying to forecast change, we should focus our efforts on strengthening our ability to adapt to change. Thriving in ambiguity is an increasingly important business skill and this is where I prefer to focus my energy.

This is just a sneak peek into the insights that will be shared at today's IAB Insight event!

In case you missed it, read keynote speaker Jarred Cinman's article on his talk, [The Morning After](#):



#IABInsightSeries: The morning after

[Jarred Cinman](#) 25 Nov 2020



The IAB SA has taken its Insight Series, in partnership with Everlytic, GetSmarter, a 2U Inc. brand and Bizcommunity, online to provide 60 minutes of insights, featuring fellow and future industry leaders, on subjects selected by IAB members and the industry at large to make better digital decisions. Post-event presentation videos are uploaded to the IAB member portal to access ongoing.

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