

Dean Kriel - Macro communications trends, bringing lightheartedness to life

By  Dean Kriel, issued by [RAPT Creative Agency](#)

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Reporting floods, sharing load-shedding memes and advocating for Amapiano, we are nowhere near the 2024 elections yet and already South African consumers are getting playful, looking for quirky ways to bring their lightheartedness to life.

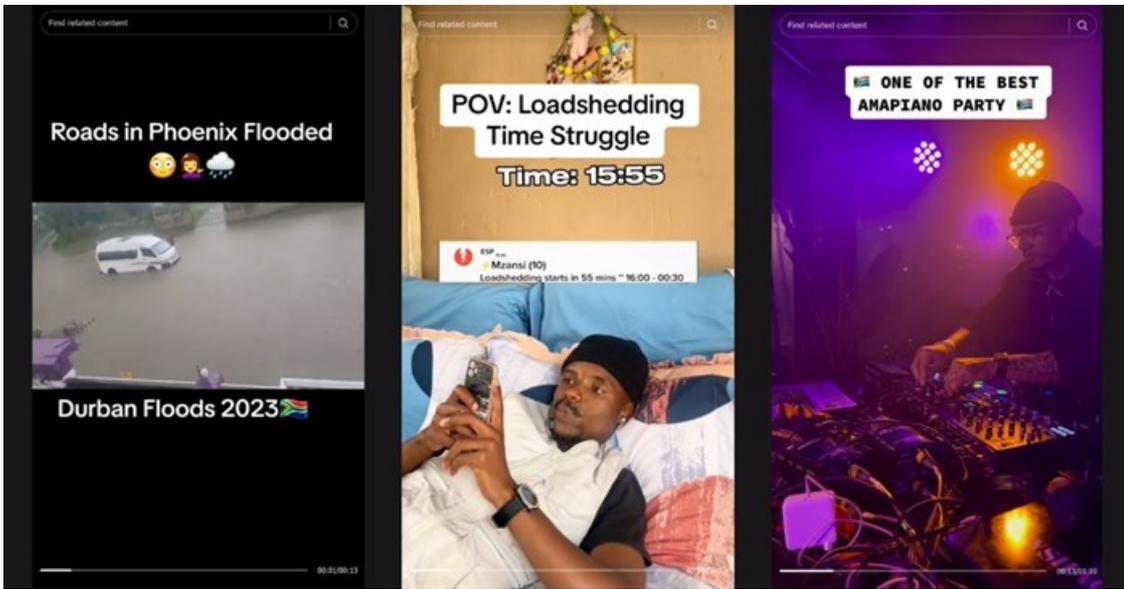


Image supplied. Rapt Creative strategist, Dean Kriel looks for lightheartedness in 2024

As they do so, they will be exposed to playful and immersive 3D and AR experiences as products leap off candy-coloured screens and out of interactive virtual worlds made from pixelated nostalgia.

All the while, they will be very deliberate about the eco-conscious materials they are buying, which promotes minimalist aesthetics.

Communicating in 2024 will be about being niche, relevant and integrated.



January 2024 kicked off with floods in Durban, load-shedding, Amapiano Parties, playful reenactments of police roadblocks on TikTok and #GrootbosConservation celebrating sustainable tourism and biodiversity protection

Niche

As communications face budget cuts of 20-30%, to sustain efficacy, marketers will need to integrate the work of their various agencies to maximise 2024.

They need to be prepared to navigate potential communications backlash to avoid being cancelled, as social media and influencer content democratise opinions and lead public discourse.

To mitigate this, brands will skew towards nano-influencers over paid media, with the promise of higher ROI (measured using tools like Brandwatch).

This new wave of influencer marketing uses expert knowledge through short-form videos to generate followers and fill scrollable moments.



Demand for entertainment, culture and education drives the need for brand ambassadors. Virtual influencers will soon occupy this space

Relevant

As major browsers phase out cookies, contextual advertising is set to revolutionise 2024 by personalising ads based on user context.

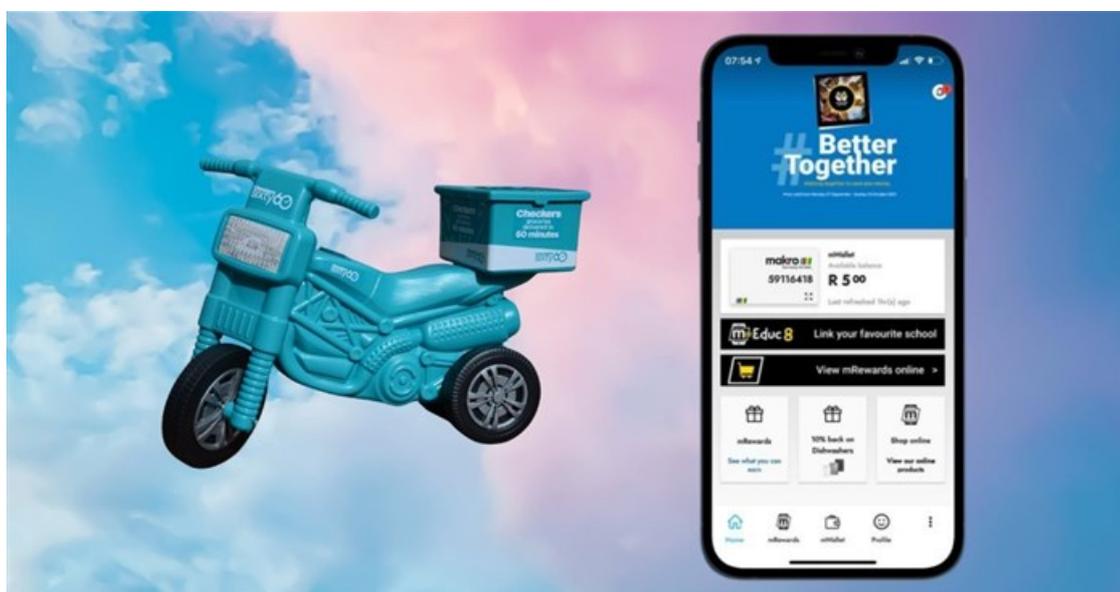
This approach reduces ad fatigue, is privacy-friendly and ensures brand safety. We will see less intrusive ads, with a more relevant and engaging experience for users which will improve ad performance, as there is better resonance with users, and this will lead to higher click-through rates and conversions.

Over the past decade, macro trends have evolved, driven by the need for efficiencies in delivering a contextually valuable consumer experience.

Google Voice Search, first introduced in 2011, will become a key tool for businesses to stay ahead of the competition in 2024. Keyword analysis, website content, and addressing privacy concerns will determine communications success.

Ethics and inclusive marketing will be core to content delivery, following 2023's trend where successful marketers focused on addressing user queries and securing customer satisfaction.

Consumers are now more cognisant of their purchasing power, as they shop around for deals and rewards. The programmes therein are driven by retail media, with back-end systems powered by AI and front-end displays that use language rooted in cultural relevance.



Retail media networks are expanding their offerings, introducing more owned properties and product innovations into their marketing mix

Integrated

Generative AI is also expected to revolutionise marketing by creating efficiencies in developing and personalising creative content.

AI measurement platforms such as Artwork Flow, Rocketium and Fluid Ads will provide creative intelligence to enhance and optimise content. However, creative and media teams need to work closer together to fully leverage AI in the agency model.

In South Africa, these predictions for nano-influencers, contextual marketing, AI, voice search and retail media will have the most impact, fuelled by consumers' optimism and desire to express that.

Key takeaways

My key takeaways for 2024 are:

1. Eco-conscious consumers seeking quirkiness and play will be served with contextually relevant, immersive experiences using minimalist aesthetics.

2. Nano-influencers will need to give brands a base in cultural relevance for hyper-personalised marketing to be effective.
3. For voice search and retail to deliver hyper-relevant experiences, AI should be employed to determine the most efficient creative possible.

ABOUT DEAN KRIEL

Dean Kriel, strategist at RAPT Creative, is a seasoned strategist with a passion for exploring emerging trends and innovations in communications.
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