

TREND: Transformation

Industry pundits across the globe and locally believe the industry is experiencing the greatest shift it has ever known, as the scale of change across business, politics, technology and consumer culture accelerates. In South Africa, this is also the year of transformation, as the revised Triple BEE codes take effect in April.

[Abey Mokgwatsane](#), CEO of Ogilvy & Mather South Africa, emphasises that compliance with the new BEE codes will be a gamechanger in 2015. Coupled with a tough trading environment, agencies will have to "operate with a value mindset" and work with marketers in aiding transformation in the industry to reflect the reality of South Africa's diverse population, he adds.

This search for black talent is the biggest challenge facing advertising agencies and marketers and is already impacting on brand relationships, adds [Neo Mashigo](#), co-executive creative director, Ogilvy & Mather Johannesburg.

The creatives are also all agreed on the fact that true integration of digital into South African advertising agencies has to follow global trends in this regard and that the industry has to deliver on it this year in order to start delivering award-winning and effective work of an international standard. Says [Xolisa Dyeshana](#), Joe Public executive creative director (ECD): "Every year we have these kinds of polls and everyone talks about integration, but I don't think we have cracked it yet. Imagine how we could make our single idea live on all those screens? Now is Africa's time!"

And firmly on their radar is the need to highlight the good that brands do. Purpose-driven branding needs to move from talk to action, says [Pepe Marais](#), chief creative officer and senior partner, Joe Public Group. "The more the world feels devoid of meaning, the more people are attracted to brands that display a deeper sense of purpose." ECD of 1886, [Stu Stobbs](#), is more blunt, saying 2015 is the year that "brands will grow a conscience and deliver work that shows they care". In some cases they really will.

While the educators such as [Dr Ludi Koekemoer](#), CEO of the Triple A, urge the industry to develop the talent pool; talent retention also needs to be encouraged within the agencies, emphasises [Odette van der Haar](#), CEO, Association for Communication and Advertising (ACA).

[Jonathan Deeb](#), executive creative director, FCB, says content seems to have killed the commercial, but what it really means for agencies is that there is an opportunity for agencies to create uniquely South African content with cultural nuances to excite and engage consumers.

In the end, it is also clients who are creating this paradigm shift in the agency model as everything speeds up and brands become "content", and agencies have to understand their clients' business and operations like never before, offers [Felix Kessel](#), CEO of OwenKessel Leo Burnett. However, [Brett Morris](#), CEO of FCB South Africa, warns the industry not to forget the basics of marketing communication - that the challenge is to still create that emotional work that moves people.

****Trends curated by [Louise Marsland](#), specialist editor of Biz Trends 2015.***

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