

# Would the real innovators please stand up?

 By [Patrick Carmody](#)

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Traditional ad agencies often take the heat for their archaic brand solutions which fail to adapt to the modern 'consumer/media/brand-scape'. On closer inspection it appears that it is the marketers who have the real catching up to do.

Few would argue that in the age of media and message overload, agencies need to be more innovative in their exploits to reach consumers. But as much as the media and messaging environment has exploded, the delivery of real innovation from brand marketers has almost ground to a halt in many categories.

## 1940 – 1970

*The age of innovation and meaty briefs*

In an era of rapid innovation, agency accountability levels should have been way higher, as briefs contained news of real consumer value. But ironically this was the time when 'Sir Martin Lurchalot' and his agency cronies rode the gravy train as marketers went 'ad-crazy'.

Take the category of household appliances (targeted at middle class suburban housewives) as an example of the above. Between 1940 and 1970 this category was consistently illuminated with innovation and the consumer in question was offered a raft of new products which added real value to her life.

## 1970- 2007

*Where clients should have no place to hide*

Today our housewife as a consumer group is exposed to multiple 'hollow' messages via a fragmented media landscape but hardly any real innovation is being spoken of on client briefs. To a large extent the 'meaty' briefs have dried up along with real innovation.

Agencies are often expected to fill this innovation gap through inventive messaging and media in the face of a consumer who is perpetually asking brands "What have you done for me lately?"

Surely it is the marketer and not the agency who is best place to answer this question?

## ABOUT PATRICK CARMODY

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