

# Why niche agencies are winning over the big brands

Issued by [GO Content Lab](#)

27 Feb 2020

South Africa's agency landscape is one of Davids and Goliaths. You have the traditional local and multi-national giants and then the fresh niche outfits. In recent years, we've seen global brands increase their collaboration with these new-kids-on-the-block and, in some cases, they are opting to move entirely towards working with this nimble generation of agencies, combining it with their in-house effort.



The move towards 'smaller' agencies could be attributed to brands effectively maximising on their campaign efficiencies while managing a conservative budget and exercising greater control over their campaigns. But what gives these new contenders the edge?

According to the *Harvard Business Review*, [smaller teams are optimised for discovery and invention](#) whereas their counterparts are more prone to hurdles in coordination and communication. Teams with a more niche skillset disrupt rather than develop and they are open to hyper-creativity and not just doing business as usual. In the case of 360° marketing, where this type of agility is crucial, more of the big brands are trusting small marketing agencies.

There are several reasons why niche marketing agencies are pitching successfully to global brands:

## 1. Undivided attention

Working with large teams can be difficult and in a fast-moving digital world, where the customer journey is no longer linear, urgency is a necessity for companies to make the most out of customer touchpoints and micro-moments with less back-and-forth.

Working with multinational agencies could subject brands to slower turnaround times as they serve hundreds of clients at any given time. Niche agencies dedicate their time to a limited number of projects from start to completion, paying closer attention to the scope, reviewing for creep or challenges and, in the end, giving you a realistic report. This ensures that your work is not completed only for the sake of delivery.

## 2. Closer access to the team

If you oversee marketing and communications, it is easier to collaborate when you are constantly in contact with the team accountable for and working on your project. This is the case across creative industries.

Award-winning music video director Hannah Lux Davis, a frequent collaborator with Ariana Grande, prefers working in tandem with the artist because it allows for faster changes, added creative advantage and overall success. Her videos, which often feature promoted brands like Guess, Lyft and Kylie Cosmetics, often go on to rake billions of views on YouTube.

## 3. Flexibility

As niche agencies take the time to understand client needs and seek to maintain a healthy working relationship with a client, they are open to putting the clients' ideas first and making recommendations. This makes them easier to work with on campaigns, no matter the magnitude. This lowers the risk of friction between teams from both sides and projects are not delayed unnecessarily.

## 4. Faster collaboration

Unencumbered by bureaucracy, niche agencies are able to move fast and experiment with concepts while taking calculated risks. As opposed to working with several creative teams spread across the globe, affected by time zones and busy bosses who have priorities other than approving copy or budgets, the work may get done faster with a smaller agency that oversees the project from start to finish. The results are the same and, in many cases, even better as the 2019 SA MMA Smarties Awards showed.

Specialised local 360° brand storytellers, Idea Hive, work with some bigger brand clients as their preferred digital partner, where they don't only co-create and execute campaigns, but use various techniques to predict consumer behaviour and social patterns with the view to developing proactive solutions. Their key touchpoints incorporate influencers, video content, experiential marketing and visual communications.

Chief executive officer, Yaw Dwomoh, suggests brands look for niche agencies who know what their core competencies are. "What sets us apart is a niche strategic brand storytelling offering. We've also partnered with pioneering VR/AR and gamification and digital marketing partners to offer our clients specialised services while we create a cohesive strategy and oversee the process from start to finish. We do this to maintain the integrity of the brand story and the strategy around it."

Every brand's needs are unique, so whichever agency you choose, make sure that you work with someone who understands your reality and your clients and who can back up a cohesive brand strategy, with serious speed and skills.

### **About Idea Hive**

At Idea Hive, we create and execute pioneering brand storytelling solutions to illuminate your brand's power. We apply a strategic framework that extracts and aligns all the key components of your brand's story.



Our team of curious, creative, driven and critical thinkers mould all the elements into a cohesive brand storytelling solution that will change how the market sees and experiences your brand.

We craft and execute heartfelt and character-driven brand storytelling campaigns that position your brand/and or organisation to achieve its full market potential.

We offer an array of tailor-made solutions around our services that includes branding, design, influencer marketing, visual content and communications. All solutions are anchored in ensuring that each brand story is told exceptionally, uniquely and to the right audience.

Imagine a world where brands defeat normal and ideas inspire change.

When we change, we change the world around us.

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