

# Technology: The challenge for marketers



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3 Aug 2018

I recall watching a movie called *Groundhog Day* in which a man wakes up to the same sequence of events, day after day. With the rapid changes the world is facing because of technology, nothing could be further from the truth today. We will almost certainly wake up tomorrow with a new platform, feature, or app; this raises a few critical questions for advertisers and marketers: how will we keep up? Should we rush in to adopt? And how do we adapt to these new trends?



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Technology has undoubtedly assisted in the sales process; never before have we had access to as much detailed information about consumers. We just have to look at the controversy surrounding platforms like Facebook to understand the enormity of this.

## Customer experiences are more immersive

User experiences are also becoming far more immersive, VR and AR are perfect examples. Not only do we have the vital insights into the behaviour of our customers, but we also have access to far more touchpoints than ever before. With this also comes a word of caution, you have to keep the focus on consistent brand positioning and messaging across all platforms and tools.

Every interaction influences your customer's perception of your brand. The explosion in technology has forced marketers to carefully consider how customers are interacting with brands across channels and devices. If we, as marketers, can deliver interactions that are valuable to customers it helps to reinforce their connection to a brand.

With all of these new technologies and channels, it is essential to consider which ones are the right fit for your brand, and even more importantly, the right fit for your customers. Consider this:

- 75% of South Africans access the web via mobile devices, with up to 12 hours of daily media consumption taking place on digital platforms.
- Of our 15 million social media users in South Africa, 13 million are purely on mobile.

Although this is insightful, these statistics are unique to South Africa, and each country will have a different channel and digital landscape to be considered. What is true globally, however, is that there is a significant increase in mobile versus desktop usage.

## Time-sensitive platforms

Another significant challenge for marketers is time. Digital, and in particular social media is tremendously time sensitive platforms. What is trending now, is gone and forgotten in an hour and it has essentially forced marketers into a time-crunch, we have less time to apply campaigns to more channels, all the while, trying to deliver creative that stands out, and delivers to that all-important bottom line. It has also bred an age of instant gratification and impatience; a customer won't sit around and wait for you to deliver your sales pitch, you need to convince them, and convince them now.

Out of the time crunch leaps the next challenge. Marketers have to have the ability to create engaging content that connects emotively with its audience. This agility straddles the balance between making content that feels authentic while still delivering a clear to-the-point message, and quickly. Many brands have adopted the storytelling approach to managing this dynamic, helping to make messages more tangible and allowing for integration across various marketing channels. Content is created in advance, with each touch point considered and applied to a specific timeline, ensuring that the brand remains fresh and relevant.

Technology is an ever-increasing demand for marketing practitioners. Our ability to be experts in all these new advancements in technology keeps us ahead of the pack, blink, and we're left behind. But it also requires the knowledge and skill to determine which new development is right for our clients and then to filter the correct message and approach for each of these channels, in a faster time than we have ever done it before. Good luck.

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