

The importance of the shift to post-modern marketing

 By [Warren Mbss](#)

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I think the trends in B2B marketing for 2019 are going to be focused around the adoption and implementation of marketing technology.



Warren Mbss is the founder and CEO of Demographica.

How can a disruptive company rely on traditional, pre-modern marketing thinking to drive home the values of their 21st-century brand?

A common thread to conversations I have with CMO's of B2B companies across the country is that they're not sure how to structure their marketing budgets - the split between internal resources, media and marketing technology. The way they chop up those budgets is indicative of where they see value and what they deem to be important.

The 2017/18 [Gartner CMO Spend Survey](#) showed that 22% of marketing budgets should be allocated to marketing tech, 27% to labour, 25% to services and 25% to media.

This illustrates the increase in recognition that marketing technology is already playing a pivotal role in the B2B mix because of the way it can seriously enable the efforts of a modern marketing organisation. Once we have that conversation, so many people say that they totally understand the need to implement full-scale marketing technology, but that the company isn't ready for it yet.

If that message got to the CEO, they'd probably fire the whole team! You can't blame bureaucracy or the slow pace of change of a large enterprise for stifling what is right for your business.

Trend 1 – The growth of adoption of marketing technology is going to be fuelled by a decision from one major disruptor

So how then do we go about mobilising the change that brings marketing technology into businesses? Why do large corporates not disrupt themselves? To my mind, they're really good at innovation but really bad at disruption. I think that's because you can create a process for innovation and make incremental improvements to a product or service – adding features or releasing a new model or version.



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Disruption is more difficult for a large organisation, though, because it requires someone to make a big decision – and people are scared of big decisions because they can cost them their jobs. Written into the DNA of these businesses by the people who run them is the fact that they're petrified of disruption.

The decision-makers are therefore acting in their own interests, rather than those of the company. So while the market is ripe for an increased role for marketing technology, it's going to take one decision maker at a major B2B organisation to make the call to adopt it fully. That will change the game and other large corporates will follow within 12-18 months.

Trend 2 – Migration to post-modern B2B marketing

I think the increasing importance of the adoption of marketing technology is going to see B2B marketing teams starting to identify as pre-modern marketers and start seeking out ways to move from there to a post-modern marketing state. That shift will come from the recognition that they don't have the skills, resources, training or education to be able to deliver marketing at a post-modern level.

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We've painted the ideal post-modern marketing scenario for one of our clients – shown them what their organisation could look like and the level of sophistication their marketing could achieve. They loved what they saw – but admitted that if they want to reach that level, they're going to have to change their entire marketing structure and change & upskill their team.

An alternative way of doing this is partnering with agencies that can help them deliver post-modern marketing – whether by working together to upskill their teams or to rely more heavily on the expertise and ability of the agency. But people must be open to change...

I was at a talk where the global head of talent for Goldman Sachs was saying that when they want to promote someone, irrespective of their level within the organisation, the first question they ask is: "Are you prepared to be developed?". They need the candidate to agree and articulate that desire. It forces the recognition that they're not the finished product. If you're not prepared to acknowledge that you need to be developed, you have no chance of thriving.

Trend 3 – Pre-modern marketing agencies need to adapt or die

I sat with one of SA's top creative agencies a while ago when we were discussing partnering up on a financial services pitch which had a major B2B brand component. When I say 'top', I mean their advertising capabilities are second to none. So when it came to discussing the B2B elements of the pitch, they said they had loads of experience and



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I asked to see some of the ads and, sure enough, the ads showed that they have loads of B2B experience – but they also showed that they absolutely don't have an understanding of the fundamentals of effective B2B marketing in a post-modern age.

I think that in 2019, agencies looking after B2B brands who don't truly understand B2B and rely on their pre-modern fundamentals are going to get found out. As the brands themselves become more aware of the importance of the shift to post-modern marketing, we're going to see a lot of them carving out the B2B business from their traditional agencies and partnering with B2B agencies who are better equipped to market their products in a post-modern marketing world.

ABOUT WARREN MOSS

Warren Moss is the founder & CEO of Demographica, a full-service specialist agency focusing on Business to Business (B2B) and niche consumer markets. What makes Demographica unique is the fact that anthropology (the study of human societies and cultures and their development) is at the heart of all of their strategies. Warren and Demographica have been recognised by winning some major business and marketing awards. Warren is also currently the Chairman of the Direct Marketing Association of South Africa.

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