

Fish where the fish are in 2021

 By [Daan Du Toit](#)

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While writing this, I am glad that I did not make any predictions for 2020 as I am sure that they would have all been incorrect - everyone got it miserably wrong. I fear that this year might be equally difficult to predict with uncertainties around vaccinations and their effectiveness, second waves (probably more), mutations and their severity... The list goes on and on.



Daan Du Toit

Differing beliefs and opinions aside, we all desperately crave a sense of normalcy, whether that involves travel, surfing, parties or simply reconnecting with friends and family. In doing some introspection, there are some of my thoughts on how to navigate through 2021:

The demise of print media

One seemingly obvious by-product of the pandemic is the acceleration of industries adapting to new ways of working - this was certainly the case for print media. Sadly, magazines and newspapers were amongst the hardest hit, and while the world seems to have moved on, few will survive in its current form.

Normalised remote working

Initially forced upon us all for the hard lockdown, businesses seem to have adopted remote working on a much larger scale. The pros and cons will always be heavily debated, but I do believe that in some shape or form, this is here to stay. Unfortunately, the glaringly obvious downside to this is the dire consequences this approach has for the commercial property industry.

Less business (and leisure) travel

The reduction in business travelling has been a great relief for many businesses in general (and has perhaps highlighted how unnecessary most of it is). Long distance clients have lowered their expectations, opting for quick-to-action video calls. As an ad agency and testament to this, we have won client pitches exclusively through Zoom calls. Although this will most likely reach a happy medium further into the year, the cost savings are welcome for now.



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Arguably the most accelerated event is that of shoppers moving online. Naturally, the fear of exposure coupled with the convenience of well-executed online shopping experiences have contributed to this exponential shift in behaviour. So much so that McKinsey reported that US e-commerce penetration had grown the same amount in Q1 2020, as it did in the last 10 years!

Businesses who foresaw this shift and prioritised their online shopping portals accordingly were the real winners with the move also giving rise to many successful startup stories and entrepreneurs tailoring their approach to deliver products not usually bought online.



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MyBroadband reported that over a six-month period in 2020, Takealot saw a year-on-year increase of 85% in their Gross Merchandise Value (to R6.26bn). This will most certainly lead to more economies of scale and even better prices. The big question then becomes: Who will survive on the high street?

How to I reach my customers now?

Marketers are now forced to ensure they reach their customers at home as opposed to a billboard on the N1. Sadly, many marketers are still apprehensive of digital marketing, an often-overlooked approach that has fallen victim to unfair assumptions around complexity and cost for years.

Digital marketing in a cookie-less world?

Privacy and data usage was one of the hottest debates of 2020/2021 and the regulations, both new and old, have forced online publishers and advertisers to implement more responsible and secure ways of reaching target audiences. Significant progress was made in this field, with Single Sign-On (SSO) being a highlight of 2021, third party cookies will most likely be dropped from all browsers in 2022.



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While I hate the phrase “new normal” just as much as “pivot”, I do believe 2020 was a year of learning to adapt – an undeniably essential life skill. 2021 will now be the year of buckling up and settling into this new way of living with inevitable ups and downs.

ABOUT DAAN DU TOIT

Daan Du Toit is the co-founder and MD of Mark1, a full service media agency part of the proudly 100% Black-owned Duke Group of companies.

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