Neo@Ogilvy global CEO talks up role of emerging markets, mobile

By Herman Manson: @marklives

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Neo@Ogilvy's global CEO, New-York based Nasreen Madhany, has been visiting South Africa for a corporate summit, where she talked up the role emerging markets will play in the future profitability of her company.

Neo@Ogilvy's global CEO, New-York based Nasreen Madhany

Neo@Ogilvy, a fully integrated division of OgilvyOne Worldwide, is a full-service digital media agency offering media strategy, planning and buying, search marketing, performance marketing, analytics and technology, mobile marketing, social media marketing and related services. The agency launched five years ago and currently operates 33 offices in 25 countries. It employees around 800 staff members globally. The SA office launched two years ago and is headed by MD Mia Scholtz. Post-AlterSage-acquisition, it employees around 10 people.

Growth pace

Over the past five years, digital media has been growing by 20% a year globally and Neo@Ogilvy's growth pace outstrips this every year.

Madhany believes when an agency sells clients on digital marketing it needs to create solutions that incorporate the entire digital spectrum, and describes Neo@Ogilvy's service as agnostic digital media planning. Strategists, media planners and creatives work together throughout the duration of a campaign to optimise performance based on tracking results. Its international reach means it does cross-border work for IBM, Cisco, American Express, Lenovo, and Kodak.

Madhany says that, while its developed market offices continue to grow, the group has identified emerging economies as key growth and innovation points, especially in the mobile market, where emerging markets are often more advanced or regularly leapfrog developed markets.

Lead capability development

Scholtz has therefore been appointed by Madhany to lead capability development for Neo@Ogilvy's EMEA region in the mobile field. She will be exchanging tools and best practice with the groups' Asian offices. In these markets, social media and search are often being driven by access off mobile devices.

Mobile has been the black sheep of digital advertising due to the role the US initially took in driving Internet penetration and the development of digital marketing, says Madhany, who points out that initially access there was driven by PCs. It's in Africa and Asia where mobile has been driving access to the 'net. The global rise of smartphones and tablets means these regions house the expertise required to adapt digital marketing to these developments.

Madhany joined Ogilvy 37 years ago, checking tear sheets against flighting schedules in the Toronto office, and has worked her way up through the agency. While the media landscape was much simpler then, Madhany still believes in the value of a full service offering to clients.

Doesn't happen by default

Digital integration doesn't happen by default, she also warns, saying extensive training is required for staff, as similar skill sets often gravitate to similar. It takes hard work to adopt company culture to embrace an integrated marketing approach, even just in the digital field.

Madhany says she is excited about SA market prospects, saying growth has been faster than she initially expected, and expects the local office to expand its footprint outside the country. It is already serving customer needs in the Kenyan, Nigerian and some Middle Eastern markets.

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The inaugural Vodacom Social Media Journalist of the Year in 2011, Herman Manson (@marklives) is a business journalist and media commentator who edits industry news site www.marklives.com. His writing has appeared in newspapers and magazines locally and abroad, including Bizcommunity.com. He also co-founded *Brand* magazine.
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