

Embrace the possibilities that the future brings

 By Jessica Tennant

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As part of our #EvolutionofWork content feature, Cheryl Reddy, managing partner and Africa lead at Eclipse Communications shares what the future of work looks like from her point of view and how they're navigating the 'new normal' in the aftermath of Covid-19...



Cheryl Reddy

How did Eclipse Communications respond to Covid-19 and how has it evolved over the course of 2020?

Remote and flexible working practices were already a part of our operating system by choice, long before Covid-19. However, Covid-19 turned that mode of operation into the 'new normal'.

We have evolved to an even 'newer normal' which balances all the benefits of remote working (less commute time, opportunity to work outside normal office hours, more family time whilst working from home) with the fundamental need for some level of 'face-to-face' contact with team members in an office environment.

The ability to pivot and get the balance right for all our staff has been key.

■ ***The agency won numerous Awards this year. What do you believe you got right?***

We did what we have been doing for years, we focus on the clients' needs first and foremost, we improved our turnaround time given the exceptional times we were in as a country, supported our clients through struggling business times, we kept consulting and guiding their growth. This had a positive result on our growth.

Our industry is a competitive one and we have to consistently ensure that we are developing the most creative concepts for our clients with the confidence that we have the team to execute those concepts flawlessly.

For our work to be considered award worthy by our peers in the industry is further validation of what we do, which is great!

■ ***How should brands use cultural intelligence to connect with diverse groups on a personal level?***

Communicate and connect with those groups on an emotional level. Get to know them as much as they get to know the brand. All consumers are looking at brands that are engaged in social issues, having honest and meaningful conversations through chatbots, social messaging, calls and more. They crave authenticity and are attracted to brands they feel they can trust.

■ ***What does the future of work look like to you?***

The workplace and the work itself will become much more focused on the employee having 'freedom and responsibility' to decide where, when and how they do their best work and the employer designing the infrastructure (space and technology) to enable that approach to be effective for their business.

■ ***What is your hope for the industry?***

That it can pivot and adapt to create new opportunities and solutions through greater use of technological advances that enable it to survive and thrive.

The dinosaur did not have the skills, intelligence or experience to evolve fast enough to survive but the communications industry (hopefully) does.

■ ***What needs to change and what do you think needs to happen to achieve this?***

We need to embrace the possibilities that the future brings rather than holding on to the 'good old days'. Going back to

normal will not enable growth, we consistently need to be defining our “new normals”.

2020 has shown that the industry needs to be agile, and that brand advocacy and building trust amongst clients are imperative for survival.

▣ ***How do you propose futureproofing the industry?***

Much of what was learnt in 2020 will continue to shape the communications landscape next year and beyond!

It's important to remember that the new age consumer now chooses quality over quantity, something brands must consider instead of merely chasing AVE.

▣ ***Any advice or words of encouragement to fellow industry folk in navigating the ‘new normal’ or rising above the aftermath of Covid-19?***

Create your own ‘new normal’ within the environment that you control.

Dump old stereotypical ideas of what work was and look to what work should and could be for your business and staff.

Guide your team and trust them to create their own ‘new normal’ that suits them and your business.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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