

Bridging the digital gap

 By [Andre Britz](#)

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More and more brands realise they should also be playing in the digital space and are hopping onto the bandwagon. The snag is that marketing is happening haphazardly and money is wasted. In addition, since digital space is comparatively cheaper than radio, print or TV ads, only a fraction of the overall marketing budget is allocated to online and mobile.

Some tips on how to approach your marketing strategy:

- 1. Trust your agency:** Your agency works with marketing concepts and ideas every day. Let them do the work for you - and trust that they know what they are doing. They will most probably surprise you.
- 2. Do not be afraid to be the first:** To be the first implies being willing to take risks. Sometimes it pays off and sometimes not, but when it does, the rewards are great. Look at Starbucks: due to their willingness to adopt new ideas, they have one of the world's strongest Facebook communities today.
- 3. Statistics can be misleading:** For instance, in June, 17 million unique browsers were reported (DMMA & Effective Measure). Of approximately [50 million](#) people in SA (Stats SA, mid-year population estimates, 2011), this is a relatively low 34% internet penetration figure. However, what we often forget is that the online community is very largely made up economically active taxpayers with strong buying power. So look at the bigger picture and see just how powerful online can be.

The question remains - how can a digital strategy work with the above-the-line strategy? Much depends on the target market and objectives. What shouldn't happen is digital being brought in as an afterthought and only for the sake of having a digital element. Digital should be involved from the start to assess how different platforms can work together.

It's about connections

Once the target market and objective/s have been identified, and the platforms have been decided on, look at the ways the various platforms can connect: QR codes, SMS short codes, virtual checkpoints, are but a few options to bridge the gap.

Traditional media is also moving into a particularly exciting space whereby social media is leveraged to enable a more holistic marketing strategy. Guys like [Trendrr TV](#) are working towards leveraging social media around television. Similarly the big boys like Metro.co.uk, *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* and *The Economist* are all using [social media](#) to build their audiences. If publishers are adopting new technology, brands should do so too.

[Studies](#) show that traditional media is not being replaced by digital media - instead consumers are using them together. It is therefore crucial to have a holistic marketing strategy where digital and traditional work together to bring a brand to its full potential.

If you'd like more information, please email andre@aorange.co.za.

ABOUT ANDRE BRITZ

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