

#IamTrending, so now what?

 By [Kirk Gainsford](#)

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I am suspicious of trends and you should be, too. I am less suspicious of how transient trends are than how comfortable following a trend will make you feel. If you are #ontrend, you must be OK. Right? But, when budgets are down and anxiety is up, when marketing teams are stretched and consumers even more stretched, you cannot afford to be following trends. Do you remember your mom asking you what you'd do if everyone else jumped into the fire? We all know the line, when everyone zigs...



Kirk Gainsford, chief creative officer at MullenLowe SA.

Advertising is about standing out, not being “cool” like everyone else. Trendy bars are busy, they might make you feel like you’re doing the right thing and that you’re in the right place because everyone else is doing it.

“ *Am I the only person in this country without a tattoo?— Khaya Dlanga (@khayadlanga) [October 24, 2019](#)* ”

But those bars are full of people just like you. Probably wearing the same thing as you. Try standing out in that crowd. Maybe you say you don't want to stand out in a bar, but if you're advertising and you aren't being noticed, you're wasting your time and money.

“ *When everyone was running to Instagram, Whatsapp or Twitter, chasing influencer strategies, building content calendars, curating and creating snackable content, our planet made 347,222 swipes on Instagram, 2.1million snap chats, 87,500 tweets, 1million views on Twitch, 4.8million gifs on Gify and 4.5million views on YouTube, among many more content platforms, in just 60 seconds online.* ”

That's an uncomfortable place to be comfortable. By the time everyone has jumped onto the trend, it's almost too late to jump off.

Then there are the subtle trends, even more dangerous. You can see them in the work. The jargon, the processes, the tools, the best practices, the research methodologies. The same as. If you repeat the same new process or systems, even the same new data, you will end up with the same results as everyone else.



The trend of trends

Jacques du Bruyn 8 Mar 2019



So, understand the trends, love the new tech, love new understandings and new thinking, love the value diversity brings. Read more and understand more about behavioural psychology, anthropology and persuasion. Reject the old ways of doing things. Be afraid of what makes you comfortable.

“ *Listen to the language you are using in your boardrooms and on your briefs. Are you following the trends or are you inventing and looking for new ways to navigate your way around the increasingly more complex and complicated lives of the people we are trying to reach, charm and persuade?* ”

ABOUT KIRK GAINSFORD

Kirk graduated from Stellenbosch University with a degree in Visual Arts and an Honours in Photography. His first job was in a design studio, but he wanted to be involved in an ideas agency. He moved to AWSG-JWT, where he worked on through-the-line work for clients including Shell, J&B, Smirnoff, Listerine, Halls and Qorets...

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