

Vibrant fresh content essential in digital world

 By [Johanna McDowell](#)

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Of the 90 agencies researched by our company, only 30% placed any significant importance on content for their digital and social media platforms. That so few agencies appear to be properly equipped to deal with content management on behalf of their clients is shocking.

There are two defined parts in every ad agency's strategy in the digital and social media arena. One is the technical side, and just about everyone has this part sorted.

The other part, the one that stands out, is content and here lies the challenge - are agencies equipped with skilled content writers to produce content, and to produce it on a daily basis to keep populating various platforms with vibrant and fresh relevant copy?

We all know social media marketing is much more than just getting more likes and followers. Populating the right platforms and channels as well as harnessing insights including analytics, ROI measurement and learning about brand preferences is another huge challenge. I don't think South African agencies are paying enough attention to content for digital and social media platforms.

Content is more than websites

Content is not just about creating copy to place on a website - it is much more than that. It should be used to manage reputations, deliver customer service, acquire new customers and audiences, increase sales and engagement with a brand on behalf of clients. It is a huge opportunity for agencies that have the practical understanding to research and experiment with digital and social media platforms. It may seem mystifying, but once you get it right there is no looking back.

Websites require fresh content every day to create customer conversations about a brand. One of the tricks of trade, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is still key to successful content management. Discovery, relevance and importance are the three basics of SEOs and these have to be carefully managed. Agencies should also be using brand monitoring tools to review customer conversations and then be responding to these based on the sentiment expressed.

The right content

Content should be written in such a way as to increase engagement with brand. Creating the right content and having the right content to get engagement from the consumer is the hardest part of creating content copy.

This is why content writers (usually journalists) and content management are vital because they populate digital platforms and social media and, if they understand the brand and what has to be achieved, they can work wonders for clients.

Global agencies have become strategic about the process behind their content strategy. As content strategy grows more complex, as enterprises demand more sophisticated ways of building, managing and delivering personalised content to every customer, agencies who don't keep up will be left behind.

Online availability changes the game

The availability of online platforms has changed everything, from launching a brand to buying plane tickets. Getting digital platforms and social media marketing right within an advertising agency is probably the most common and difficult challenge facing agencies globally.

However, the good news that has come from the research that the company has completed is that there are now a number of content driven digital agencies in South Africa that are successful in terms of mastering content management. Their results and effectiveness have been proven to their clients. These agencies will be leading the way in content management in the future.

ABOUT JOHANNA MCDOWELL

MD of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS), and partner in Scopen Africa, with a background that includes being on both the agency and the client side of the fence, Johanna McDowell is well-placed to offer commentary on marketing and advertising in the South African and international contexts. She built her career in marketing and advertising since 1974, holding directorship in both SA and British advertising agencies. She was MD of Grey Phillips Advertising in 1988.

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