

Back to the future of digital

 [Bylise van den Berg](#)

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The fourth annual Habari Media Tuongee, themed Back to the Future, brought together the finest of the digital marketing industry to talk about the past, present and future of digital, as well as international trends. Not your conventional conference, it once again encouraged active engagement and participation from delegates and provided great networking opportunities. (video)

Speakers included industry experts Andre van Assche ([@andrevanassche](#)) and Tej Rekhi ([@tejrekhi](#)) from Sizmek, Lunga Ngcime from Unilever, Byron John ([@ByronJohnza](#)) from Habari Media, Cobie van Jaarsveld from Cadreon and Mike Sharman ([@mikesharman](#)) from Retroviral.



Top takeaways for:

Digital advertising

- Always try to remain relevant.
- Clickthroughs aren't always a relevant metric anymore - rather look at what people do after they have clicked.
- Every person requires a different experience, that's why context is very important - What devices are people using? What time of the day are they viewing that particular ad? How relevant is that experience to them?
- As soon as you start changing your perspective and your mindset, you tend to understand your audience better.
- Advertisers *have* to start thinking about multi-screen, and how they are going to go across the whole spectrum of devices to really be relevant in today's world (20% of all digital campaigns last year globally were multi-screen - in the next two years that's going to go up to 50%).
- Video is taking over.
- We generally don't do online advertising very well because we simply take TV ads and put them online - that's not a clever strategy.
- Consumers are spending so much of their time on social media, so brands need to be there.
- Google Glass is a great concept but for advertising it's too "out there" - consumers won't buy it straight away. What will work well for advertising in future though is smartwatches.
- **We need to stop thinking about digital marketing and start thinking about marketing in the digital world.**

- Mobile has moved to the middle of the landscape and is really very important.
- As a marketer, the opportunity you have to engage with your audience on mobile is huge: they have their devices with them 24/7, it's the first thing they check in the morning and probably the last thing they check before they go to sleep; the average person checks their phone 150 times per day, adding up to 221 minutes per day.
- Many marketers think phones, tablets and phablets all fall under the "mobile" umbrella and therefore only have one strategy for all of them - in reality these different devices need different strategies.
- Since websites are now responsive, advertising also has to be responsive so that the user has a seamless experience on their mobile device.
- Advertisers need to start thinking how they can advertise within apps.
- **Being a mobile-first company means being where your audience is actively looking for information.**
- Don't dismiss feature phones, SMS and USSD is still very much used - especially across Africa.



Welcome from Habari Media's MD, Wayne Bischoff

Creativity and innovation

- We've forgotten how to get from being reductionists to being expansionists so we struggle to solve problems creatively.
- Creativity is a habit.
- Innovation and creativity needs a framework and a process.
- Space and signals are critical when it comes to creativity and innovation.
- **Creativity is the engine of scientific discovery and the fundamental driving force of positive change.**



Practical brainstorming session led by Habari Media's Byron John

Programmatic

- Data will continue to grow in strategic value.
- We are not buying websites anymore, we are buying behaviours.
- The best way to reach your audience is to use native advertising, PR and search *together*.
- **Programmatic isn't a strategy, it helps you do strategy. It is digital data, tools and technology that helps you do better strategy.**

Video

- Video is taking over.
- If a picture speaks a thousand words, video speaks a million.
- Global stats say the amount of video data going through mobile devices is up to 7 million terabytes a month.
- For every second a consumer has to buffer a video, you lose 20% of your audience.
- Video needs to be more than just awareness, it needs to be dynamic.
- 7 second videos are the way forward - especially for the younger generation.
- **Remarkable content, seeded to the right people gets the results** ([@Retroviral's](#) mantra).
- Marketers are too obsessed with impressions and not with actual quality conversions (e.g. YouTube views vs people actually subscribing to that channel).
- We can't look at the future if we're not even doing the current right.
- Quality video content can balance information and entertainment.
- We can't look at video in isolation - it needs a seeding strategy (e.g. bloggers blogging about it, people tweeting about it, posting it on Facebook).
- **Your content needs to be remarkable in order to stand out from the clutter on YouTube.**

Amen to that. To get those creative juices flowing, I leave you with some examples of awesome video content/campaigns

that Sharman shared...

ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out Passing Stories). She is also the editor of Go & Travel, a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work here and here. Contact Ilse through her website here.

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