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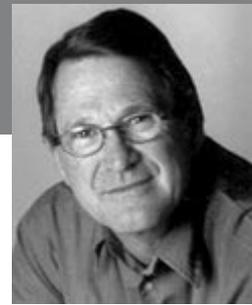
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Bizcommunity.com 2010 Trend Report



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What's in store for marketing, media?

So what does 2010 hold in store for marketing and media, especially as we should be beginning to move out of the recession and as we gear up for the 2010 FIFA World Cup? Here are 10 predictions for 2010.

1. Getting closer to the consumer: brand managers will look towards marketing strategies that involve closer contact with the consumer. In-store marketing that gained impetus in 2009 will continue to grow apace as marketers choose face-to-face strategies over faceless shotgun approaches.

2. Social media: with the cost of Internet access and cellphone usage coming down, however slowly, consumers will resort more and more to sharing their purchase experiences with their personal networks and a growing number of consumer complaint websites. Retailers of goods and services will have to monitor these to avoid being caught up in an e-tsunami of consumer backlash, as has happened in the US and UK.

3. Measurement: with the cost of marketing, particularly mass media advertising, having sky-rocketed during the past few years, more and more marketers will be under pressure to prove campaign results. The days of trusting instinct are long gone. Boards of directors will want to see results and not promises.

4. The big idea: the recession will have effectively killed the notion of relying purely on a "big idea" for marketing success. 2010 will be the start of a move toward pragmatic marketing, featuring built-in measurement tools and the use of logic, technology and common sense. Put it this way, for marketing to work efficiently in future, it will have to be conducted in a way that accountants can quite easily understand.

5. Online advertising will continue to grow: the only media type to have actually grown during the recession, online advertising will continue to make inroads into the advertising and marketing budget pies. Already in the UK, last September, online advertising passed TV to take top spot. But, the growth in online advertising will also mean a paradigm shift in the way advertising is constructed. Online will start demanding a completely different approach to that of conventional media.

6. Online media: newspapers will wake up to the fact that taking advantage of online is not just a question of reproducing their print products online. That was a massive mistake in the past and effectively just ended up with newspaper giving content away for free to the detriment of their print products. Newspapers will start to reassess their online presence or simply go bust.

7. Media convergence: if we do get faster Internet and much wider bandwidth, South Africa could see media convergence beginning to take effect by the end of 2010. Which will mean massive mindset changes among media companies whose newsrooms will be filled with content providers to a variety of media rather than print, radio or TV journalists.

8. The 30-second commercial: South Africa will remain one of the world's last bastions of faith in the 30-second TV commercial. However, given the demand on marketing to become more measurable, more and more big brands can be expected to move away from the very expensive and largely un-measurable mass media shotgun approach to something much more focused. Perhaps 2010 will be the year that branded TV really takes off as a far more effective, efficient and cheaper option to the 30-sec commercial. Don't hold your breath, though. There are still far too many unskilled brand managers around who continue to be convinced that the 30-sec commercial still works.

9. Customer service: it can generally be expected that 2010, being hopefully the first post-recession year, will be one in which marketers and senior corporate executives start taking consumers seriously. Maybe this will be the year when South African companies realise that saying "WE CARE" to consumers means absolutely nothing to them.

10. 2010 and the FIFA World Cup will provide a lesson to companies and their marketers that it is better to offer good value at a good price rather than a once off rip-off.

About Chris Moerdyk

Chris Moerdyk was head of strategic planning and public affairs for BMW South Africa and spent 16 years in the creative and client service departments of ad agencies, ending up as resident director of Lindsay Smithers-FCB in KwaZulu-Natal. Chris was recently listed in a Markinor survey as one of South Africa's top 10 marketing thought leaders. Apart from currently being a corporate marketing analyst, advisor and media commentator, he is non-executive chairman of Bizcommunity. Email Chris on cmoerdyk@mweb.co.za.



The year of digital

One d, two 'eyes', a g and a t and an l, plus on e a - they're just seven unassuming little letters. However, when strung together in the correct sequence, they represent one of the most powerful and all-encompassing trends to hit the advertising industry in decades. And, while we as an industry have dipped our toes during the past few years, 2010 is the year when we'll dive in and get wet all over. Make no mistake, 2010 is the year of digital.

Bringing digital into its own in 2010 are two key factors:

Many, many consumers across all demographic fields and boundaries are comfortable with the technologies. Even grannies have mobile phones, SMS their bridge cronies and conduct their financial affairs online.

Digital platforms are more measureable than traditional media. However, interpreting the data they provide can be daunting.

What does this mean for our industry?

Well, the rise of data does not mean the death of branding and creativity. In fact, agencies will need to pay a great deal more attention to brand strategy while making greater use of digital.

Granted, communications strategy will remain the mainstay of what we do, but the brand strategy discussions will be essential for fruitful client relationships. Agencies that have an 'order-taking' mentality will not survive. Instead, our clients will more and more demand of us to demonstrate proven capability in the area of strategy.

Greater knowledge

What the rise of data does mean for our industry is that a greater knowledge of the digital space, as well as proven sets of capability in this area, is at the top of marketers' list of what they want from their advertising and marketing agencies.

Clients will expect that agency employees use the technologies - say, social media - that they recommend. Familiarity with these technologies is essential, otherwise how do we know that we are recommending the best communications solutions to our clients?

At the same time, to understand more about their target audiences, marketers will rely more and more on virtual communities such as blogs and other social media. Information contained in these community platforms is live and spans a variety of topics. Marketers no longer have to wait six-to-12 months for the market intelligence departments to produce a consumer barometer. Moreover, these platforms deliver a true insight into what matters in the consumers' lives, and not what matters to the marketer.

Mine of data

However, the explosion of virtual communities and digital will give rise to a mine of data and not everyone will know how to mine it. Analytics - such as that offered by Draftfcb partner Crunch will play a critical role as it transforms dry data into rich insights. [The Crunch team analyses a client's data before sourcing and overlays other databases such as AMPS statistics sourced from the Internet and validated, and so on. Then, using visual analytics techniques, it visualises the data and, finally presents it to a client using its proprietary Smartwall, an eight-screen plasma wall that carries rich interactive media and allows the team to tell relevant stories using data.]

The rise of digital also means that agencies that invest in digital capability, in particular human capital, will be more appealing to clients. Digital strategists, and not just digital creatives, add a considerable amount of value to the communications discussion. The pervasiveness of digital platforms requires that agencies think differently about client's business problems.

Web 2.0

And, of course, agencies will have to be Web 2.0 savvy and present 2.0 solutions as part of every campaign. I cannot think of any communications solution that will be implemented without this aspect. Even in South Africa, with our fairly limited access to the web for most of the population, cellular-based solutions are a relevant solution.

Finally, 2010 the year of digital, will see the slow but certain death of 'push' campaigns as brands engage consumers more and more via 'pull' interactions such as social media and other online platforms. This will replace the traditional 'top-down' relationships many brands have had with consumers.

About Jerry Mpufane

Jerry Mpufane is MD of Drafftcb Johannesburg (www.drafftcb.co.za). He leads a dynamic team of 280 people who pride themselves as a truly South African agency, and has overall responsibility for the agency's business strategy. Jerry has, over the last 17 years, amassed experience in the marketing communications field, holding positions in the public and private sectors. He started his career at TWS Communications and his final position before joining Drafftcb Johannesburg in 2008 was group marketing director at the SABC. Jerry can be contacted on tel +27 (0)11 566 6000 or on jerry.mpufane@drafftcb.co.za.



10 communication trends for SA

When we look at trends for 2010, it's important to understand their starting point is not here today, but that they are a result of a prolonged period of activity initiated some time ago and now progressed to being tangible, impenetrable and definitely not faddish.

Unquestionably, 2010 will be a more positive year for the South African media, marketing and communications industry, not least of which will be the fruition of many years of passion and commitment to host of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

1. It's a WWW world: with the continued ascent of the third (PC) and fourth screens (mobile), more eyeballs and more money will be invested in this channel to market than ever before, with ad revenue growth rates around 20-25% year-on-year and user adoption rising dramatically with more accessible and cheaper broadband access in South Africa. Growing affordability of smart phones will put www in more South African pockets than ever before.

2. Rise and rise of social media: companies which took the time in the past year and made the investment in social media will better leverage it in 2010 and start realising greater benefits. Those who didn't have lots of catching up to do (if they can), as social media continues to proliferate and entrench in daily consumption habits of millions of South Africans.

3. Augmented reality: will give customers the ability to find and buy products that they are interested in from wherever they are. More transactions go mobile with a virtual shop in the pocket. Banks in South Africa will continue to lead the way with innovative payment and gateway solutions and more product offerings. Just look at how they offer customers solutions to transact online plus in mobile with virtual cash!

4. Consumer activism: expect more customer activism. Consumers are realising they have a voice and with this comes more risqué behaviour and brashness, including fair dollops of brand-bashing, as increasingly open and transparent conversations about brands and companies take place particularly online.

The nature of the web seems to encourage more forthright speak and consumers are giving more importance to word of mouth recommendations and raw dissuasion than other communications.

5. PR prioritisation: if ever there were a time to take the role of PR and corporate Communications seriously, it's in 2010. Companies will have to recognise the growing importance of PR. Look at how Queensland Tourism in Australia used PR last year to launch and sustain a highly successful global marketing campaign for "The best job in the world".

Companies will also need to hear and participate in the global online conversation that is taking place and have clear policies and teams to monitor and formulate response strategies. Growth in online reputation management monitoring and services as companies need to listen to social media conversations join the customer conversation and get tweeting!

6. Collaboration: marketers will expect more collaboration from their suppliers (creative, media, promotion, research, and design, PR et al) to deliver more relevant communication strategies for their brands that cross over all channels of communication seamlessly and relevantly in this fast changing world. This will impact on remuneration models and need for more measurement and ROI.

Definitely expect mainstream agencies to claw back into their folds areas of media strategy and web design and fulfilment.

7. Advertising rate inflation: a downward trend for most media with the exception of radio and print. Radio listenership remains stagnant, but rates increase dramatically. Print circulations decline, but rate increases do not accommodate this, so print media will be in for another tough year.

TV is still offering the best ROI for now, but this may change when SABC's new management team refocuses on profitability and the positive turn in recessionary conditions pushes overall TV inventory demand back to higher levels. Cinema audiences, although niche, have firmed, but will be dependent on Hollywood blockbusters for a good year.

Out of home (OOH) will grow because of innovation, affordability, inventory and creative solutions. During 2010, most media owners will try and make hay while the sun shines, hiking up rates dramatically over this time. The question is how many marketers will pay the premium, really?

8. Gadgetfication: more and more South Africans will buy smart phones, netbooks, Apple Macs, and of course e-readers such as the Kindle - using e-books at the expense of printed versions, bypassing brick and mortar stores and printed copies.

9. Hybridisation: media groups will attempt to sustain their brand prominence by hybridising their media and extending into new territory.

In the US, Marie Claire has launched a reality TV show that gives the public an insider's view of the day-to-day workings of this major magazine. Vogue has also hit the news with its film documentary The September Issue just released in South Africa, which shows the team under the legendary editor-in-chief Anna Wintour compiling their largest fashion issue ever.

Locally, the line between Twitter, mobile news alerts, Facebook and radio broadcasting is blurring, with customers offered various options on how to receive news or interact with their favourite radio personality.

A great example of this is Gareth Cliff, the irrepressible 5FM jock who has 25 211 followers, putting him on the leader board for one of the most-followed South African personalities on Twitter.

10. Business unusual: the world is starting to slowly emerge from recession and South Africa too is no exception. Fundamental shifts in consumer attitudes and company margins have occurred over the past two years and this will influence the way forward.

In 2010 companies must recognise the need to be more honest, transparent and real to consumers. There will be little room to fake it and get away with it.

Importantly, this year is a really special year for South Africans as we host the 2010 FIFA World Cup. This will bring unprecedented volumes of new international visitors and media attention to our shores in a brief concentrated period of time, provide new experiences and open new gateways for the future.

Learn from it, be proud and, most of all, enjoy it!

About Gisele Wertheim-Aymes

Gisele Wertheim-Aymes' 19-year media career spans a broad range of experience, from editorial, marketing, publishing and advertising sales to media innovation and strategy. In the past two years, her focus shifted to innovation and she headed up the innovation portfolio at Avusa Media before joining First National Bank (www.fnb.co.za) as its head of Media in March 2008. Follow her on Twitter at @giselewaymes and read her blog at <http://toocleverbyfar.blogspot.com/>.



10 global trends this year

Miniaturisation, lateralisation, trillionisation, infotoxication, Googlelisation, domainisation, ghettoisation, cybernetisation, frugalisation, globalisation... What are these trends and how will they affect the world this year?

1. Miniaturisation:

Every business process will go through intense compression and digitalisation so when it comes out on the other side of the tunnel, it will have already considerably reduced its operational costs. This will enable the process to function effectively, more powerfully, and be highly replicable, with a lower cost structure like a proverbial silver bullet.

Will this now shrink entire office floors into cubicles, and cubicles into little icons on websites? Who would need to come to the offices anyway; managers, to put their feet on desks, water cooler crowds, elevator pitch experts or just the office cleaners? Is this the reason commercial office space is about to fall off the cliff?

Both big and small businesses will be shrinking to survive; with increasing competitive pressure the requirement is to become the silver bullet. Are you running a bullet speed operation or lost in the office maze?

2. Lateralisation:

The realignment of both the cerebral hemispheres is also urgently required with the next automobile tune-up. Many exhausted and stressed-out individuals throughout the world have suffered tremendously over the last few years, intensifying with the economic collapse.

This raises serious questions about the functionalities of senior executives, their basic business logic, financial literacy and the right-left-brain balance.

Why did the business systems and financial services fail so badly? Despite all the high level education, was their vision got blurred, or was capital risk management insufficient so the real world imploded? Was it the lack of lateralisation which fogged the reality? Is it time to rediscover new types and styles of educational agendas, new methods and new formats of operation?

A new wave of educational programs will sweep the executive corridors. Are you newly trained and outfitted as a gladiator or you are just an old-time spectator?

3. Trillionisation:

Once society becomes immune to the trivialisation of the trillionisation of nations' debts, it will become a real comfort pillow for the public consciousness to sleep on. After a year of struggle, overconfidence about a US\$1 million net profit may sound like an embarrassingly minute accomplishment when pleading for plant expansion funds to a banker, whose tight-fisted policies, despite receiving a US\$100 billion bailout, still do not solve your business issues.

The overly casual use of the word trillion, as an ordinary measurement of the rising deficit, with each hiccup is going to diminish our respect and regard to the daily challenges of life, dealing in only a few millions of dollars. Is this the reason why nobody is any longer impressed by how much money you have made during this great recession?

New methodologies and new types of presentation collateral will be required to pitch for any serious business game plan. Do you have the new tools to present your business plan or would you prefer the sign language?

4. Infotoxication:

If the information is more toxic than the toxic assets themselves, what is the point of believing anybody? Just stay intoxicated; forget joining AA.

The truth is being morphed into twisted sugar candy by the day to keep the masses high while credibility gaps are getting wider by the hour. Is there really a person or a body on this planet that the global masses would blindly believe? Is there a government, a department, a corporation, an NGO, a global body, a credit reporting agency, a polling service or a bank?

What happened? Was it a meteor hit, or just a daisy-cutter type memory loss? Why has trustworthiness simply disappeared and why was credibility just wiped out? Is this the reason for the lowest rating when any head of state goes for national public broadcasts? Is this the reason that newspapers and TV are becoming irrelevant and disappearing?

Creating solid credibility will be the biggest challenge for both the public and private sectors in this new decade. Do they trust you with their life or with empty bottles?

5. Googlelisation:

If society is already overly dependent on Google without a quick early morning handshake, the day simply doesn't start. The sun does not come out and the moon stays stuck behind the clouds. The entire global search-centric culture is based on Googling to put life in perspective, determine the importance of anything - news, personalities, money matters, buying or selling of any idea.

The new product and services from the mother ship Google will keep us even more comfortably tangled in a kind of great and free service till we all get overly cozy, almost dazed and habitually responding to our stimuli

What Google did in the last 10 years took others a century to even approach. Today, Google can be credited with a trillion dollar savings in time costs, by having information in seconds available to the global public. It is hard to imagine a life on this planet without it.

Become a Google expert and find all the possible options to build your expansion strategies around its access and services. Ignore the sobbing in other media and advertising as they have run out of batteries. The introduction of new ideas, ranging from phone and gadgets to insurance and banking services, will create amazing shock waves and exciting opportunities to feel the global pulse in real time. Are you being Googled? If not, do it yourself.

6. Domainisation:

If several key languages other than Roman alphabets are allowed, it will make the Internet really global. It will be a dynamic adjustment, colourful and yet at times extremely confusing, so what should brand name holders do? Scream foul in other languages; buy dictionaries, or simply go exploring on world trips?

A name is the most important and critical component of any serious business today. If a name is not worthy of protection as it is already diluted and confusing, then it could surely become a nightmare very soon. Only well-balanced and protected name holders will really be allowed to play the superior games on new platforms of TLD now offered by ICANN.

A serious business without a solid global name is like a dull joke in search of laughter. Global understanding of domain name management and naming architecture skills will be where all the battles of social-media-searching and customer acquisition will be headed.

So is your name identity a shiny star or a dull object?

7. Ghettoisation:

Is social media in reality becoming an anti-social-media, as Joe-Social has little or no real relationship with Jane-Public, except as a spectator cheering at dull events? Is it creating its own social-ghettos, where micro-gatherings are only blocking crowd-gathering?

Will this fad mould into another form of personal personification like an old phone directory but with pictures and some quirky messages? If advanced level personal data were manipulated to determine the next action to plant a selling proposition, would it not eliminate all the old selling procedures? Can you imagine this as a new online CyberHeaven or will it be CyberHell?

Is it time to buy stock in delivery vans? Will new processes seriously replace old-style location and large inventory-based retail industry thinking, along with the traditional advertising? Are you in social-media-heaven or anti-social-purgatory?

8. Cybernetisation:

Once all the processes are electronic, digitised, portable and in cyberspace, then what is the point of a regimented 9-to-5 Monday-to-Friday working society? Free at last!

If everyone were working and thinking while connected to some large portal spread out on a global range, what would it do to corporate structure, hierarchies, protocols and decorum? Would society cope with such an open-ended free flow of work? Will it change habits and daily routines?

Will you find more people in libraries, cinemas, malls or restaurants? Will they just stay home and watch 3DHDTV and get more depressed about repeated 'socio-politico-economico-climatico-damaged-news'?

Will the home-craft industry boom and autos stay in the garage? Will backyards turn into small grow-op farms, and will groceries stores be quieter? Are you already undressed to be hard-wired?

9. Frugalisation:

While 'shop till you drop dead' created the greatest recession, then 'save till you drop' will keep you there forever.

Was it the failure of capitalism and liberal economic policies without regulation that resulted in 'beg, borrow and steal, shop at high interest plastic and boost Dow at 15000'? It will surely take all the income to finance these shopping bills.

The capitalist free enterprise system seems broken. Communism and socialism are also not the answer. The society all over the world is getting a free crash course on economy, and what they are going to derive is that saving is perhaps the only way. Wealth is created by actual work and not by spending. Is it possible that the US may end up with a Japan-like decade?

The intense frugality at the main street will spread and linger all over. Are you saving or spending enough or do you have a printing press too?

10. Globalisation:

If globalisation is the only way to go forward, despite all the nationalism, what will the new world would look like? Will it eventually create select alliances and free trades? Will it create blocks, or just battles in a sandbox?

The search for best markets, best labour and minimum regulation is where the private corporate jets would be parked. The talk of nationalism would primarily feed the textual lines to the tele-prompters all over the world, but the real protectionism will not work well for most of the nations.

The internationalism of business is already way out of the bag and this is where all the cutting edge skills are required. Multiple countries, languages and cultures will all dance to one tune in the same boardroom. New global standards will drive marketing, naming and image management. Are you basically local, somewhat 'glocal' or truly internationalist?

About Naseem Javed

Naseem Javed, recognised as a world authority on corporate image and global name identities, is a harsh critic of casual and accidental naming. He is a dynamic speaker on corporate image and branding issues, and is also the author of Naming for Power. He founded ABC Namebank International (www.abcnamebank.com), an image and branding consultancy over 25 years ago. Comments: nj@njabc.com.



Digital coming up for air

2009, by all popular accounts, was an annus horribilis for many businesses throughout the world economy. Dubbed the “credit crunch” or just “the recession”, a global economic meltdown was narrowly averted by the large nations of world spending enough money in a single day as to make Bill Gates' retirement fund look like the contents of the rusty tin next to the off-key guitar player at the Mall of Rosebank.

Fortunately, most South African digital businesses seem to have skirted the worst of it. In my view, this is as a result of being artificially stunted compared with the rest of the world - both because of bandwidth problems as well as a generally poor level of digital knowledge in traditional marketing and business realms. As the bandwidth eased and marketers woke up to the now undeniable imminent demise of traditional marketing, the industry grew, outpacing the slowdown in the rest of the economy.

Some may call this wishful thinking, arguing that in 2010 things will be even harder, but I think in South Africa in particular, a lot of recession was psychological and we'll be back to our drunken-sailing ways in no time.

With that, then, my 10 predictions for 2010 in the digital industry:

1. The first major SA digital campaign:

This is perhaps a catch-all prediction for a general increase and shift toward digital from traditional advertising, but that's a prediction we've all been hearing ad nauseum for well over a decade.

Listen to the local digital marketing industry and one of the biggest complaints you'll still hear is that corporates don't take digital marketing seriously, and they don't allocate the kind of budgets our purple-haired friends shooting TV commercials enjoy.

Last year's Bookmark awards heard this point echoed by the international judges who have helmed multi-million dollar international campaigns.

In 2010 this will change, at least for some. My eyes are on local creative geniuses Gloop, Stonewall+ and AquaOnline - all of which have been gearing up in recent years to make it into the big leagues. I think at least one of them will convince a customer to part with real money, and at least one will stand up on a major international podium such as the Cannes Cyber Lions and take, if not gold, at least something.

Because of the prominence of South Africa this year (the soccer! the soccer! the soccer!) there is a good chance other things we do will be noticed. Our time has come.

2. Bandwidth is a cheap commodity:

I can perhaps be criticised here for predicting something that's already happened, but it's early days enough for me to get away with it. The end of 2009 saw some insanely cheap (by local standards) ADSL prices come into the market. Bandwidth literally came down in price in my own life by around 80%.

For many, this remains out of reach - but only just. Cellular providers are going to have to start competing with the Neotel and ADSL deals on the market. iBurst is going to have to start adding real value, or risk vanishing.

In short, 2010 will be the year cheap broadband becomes accessible to everyone who owns a PC.

3. The computer in our hands:

Despite the huge numbers in mobile internet usage by specific LSMs for specific things (such as Facebook or MXit), the mobile Internet has yet to grab the imagination of the technologically well-endowed. If you own a laptop or a netbook, you don't spend time surfing on a mobile device.

This year, that changes. The iPhone, which has had a relatively low penetration in the SA market, will explode in numbers, followed by a range of other devices, not least of which will be the Google Nexus 1 and other Android-powered devices.

Ironically, the thing that will make the Internet in our pockets work is not even the Internet. It's location (or, perhaps more accurately, locale). Augmented reality (where phones provide "overlays" onto the real world - think the heads-up display in Terminator) is more than a gimmick, and may be the biggest change to the way we interact with our environment since the invention of the eyeball.

Form factor remains a problem, but workable heads-up units will not be far behind. Forget the Bluetooth earpiece; hello the Bluetooth eyepiece.

4. Offshore hosting is viable:

The Seacom cable which landed in SA during 2009 came with promises of giant new bandwidth and cheap costs. As noted above, this does seem to be happening, contrary to the many naysayers at the time.

Perhaps the part least considered (especially by end consumers) is the fact that a fast connection to the outside world means international hosting of SA websites and applications becomes viable.

Take heed, local hosting farms whose insane costs, appalling service levels and outdated technologies have thrived behind the bottleneck. During 2010, serious businesses are going to have a serious option to move offshore where hosting is cheap and service is mind-boggling.

Local providers will no doubt try to be the midwives for companies into this world, offering partnerships and co-location deals. But whether they can move fast enough to be competitive with the big guns out there seems doubtful. For companies with websites that need to be available to SA audiences, this is an incredible opportunity to shave major costs.

5. Social media consulting evolves:

Social media is maturing and consolidating. A number of social media consultants have made a lot of money doing the basics, in the same way early web development companies made a fortune knocking together basic HTML pages.

This year companies will get smarter about managing their own social media - and the days of expensive Facebook pages and large retainers to tweet a few times a week will draw to the close. Those that have the stuff will evolve into agencies offering creative, intelligent social media PR or campaigns. Those that don't will get hurt.

6. Internet as utility:

This may seem a lame prediction, and another tired old horse that's run its share of races. But I do believe 2010 is the point where SA stops seeing the Internet as something to "go to" and as something immersive that's already wherever you are.

This has a number of implications, but chief among them for me is the idea that the concept of a "website" is going to start vanishing. Instead, a brand will need to have a "digital presence" with many parts spread across the many devices and applications with which people on the Internet engage.

Already a business with its sh*t together has several websites, mobisites, Facebook pages, Twitter profiles, YouTube pages - and maybe as many as five or 10 other touchpoints online. They may also offer an iPhone application, podcasts, e-books.

What I'm suggesting is that the notion of what a business is online is going to consolidate into something more cohesive that - like the company website was in the past - will be looked after centrally, will talk the same language, and will have some kind of continuity.

It's a big job that currently spreads across multiple departments within the business and - even more difficult - many different agencies or suppliers. But it's going to happen because people are starting to realise that digital is digital, and to make it work, it needs to be thought of as a unified undertaking.

7. One Profile to Rule Them All:

The above point leads quickly to this one: people don't want to have many different profiles and many different networks of friends and contacts.

Already there are many initiatives to try and centralise the authentication details (OpenID being the most important) and social profiles (Facebook Connect being the most important here). If Google and Facebook can find a way to work together, this could be a done deal.

There are big privacy concerns that come with this, and thus it may continue to stumble, but one thing is clear: we want our information to go with us as we move around the web because who we are, and who we know, is becoming fundamentally important to what we want to find out.

8. E-books:

The sudden emergence of the Kindle as the top-selling product on Amazon in December 2009 caught a lot of people by surprise. As obvious as digital photography, as compelling as the iPod, e-books are a no-brainer if the devices work and the content is easily available. The Kindle - and competing devices - succeed in both these areas, and the time of the end of the paper book is upon us.

Costs are still an issue - as is the lack of a colour screen - but these will both be solved quickly, and I anticipate most people who have a bookcase with more than 100 books on it will have an e-book reader in their hands by this time next year.

9. Content goes commercial:

I have started thinking of Web 1.0 as “the stuff experts published for free” and Web 2.0 as “the stuff everyone else published for free”. The next big thing in content is the stuff people are going to publish for a cost.

Books are a great example of this. Google may find a way to digitise all the books in the world, but authors are not going to just give this content away in the same way they might have blogged for nothing. We have come to a point where people creating unique, valuable content have seen the world devalue that content as far as they are going to allow. They want to go back to commercial models we may all have thought we'd seen the end of.

Whether it's selling e-books or music online, or charging for access to news sites, this year will see the re-commercialisation of content. What's missing is an effective, simple payment system on the web.

Perhaps mobile devices (and networks) will provide some kind of answer for this, or perhaps the Mastercard and Visas of the world will launch innovative new online payment mechanisms. Whatever it is, I expect to be micro-paying for good quality content very soon.

10. On-demand entertainment:

Lastly, I think the entertainment industry in all its guises is undergoing a profound shift from broadcast to on-demand, and SA will experience this in 2010.

There are numerous big media players who are getting into this space (DSTV On-Demand being one) but even more simply than this, the iPhone will popularise the podcast; broadband will popularise on-demand radio stations and video (including the pirated sort); and e-book readers will allow for instant access to new magazines and books within seconds of the desire arising.

Advertisers will have to figure out ways to beat ad blockers and fast-forward buttons on all these devices to get the message to consumers who have a content choice exponentially greater than ever before. But for the consumer, this will be a paradise of colourful amusements only dreamed of hitherto.

About Jarred Cinman

Jarred Cinman is one of the founders of Cambrient (www.cambrient.com), one of South Africa's leading content management and web marketing businesses. He currently holds the peculiar combination of creative director and software director at the company. He has been in the industry for 14 years and is a fairly regular blogger and thinker on all things digital. Email him at jc@cambrient.com, follow him on Twitter at @jarredcinma and listen to him on digital marketing podcast The Digital Edge.



Core trends affecting marketers

If marketers are looking for an easy time in this new decade, they must think again. There are three core trends that are irresistibly affecting the way marketers conduct their business; and they are each substantial.

In an era of increased accountability, marketers must now adopt ways of proving their effectiveness. This is no longer an academic discussion but is set in stone in governance principles and accounting standards.

Coupled with this is the critical need for marketers to re-define themselves. Those who do not shift from being day-by-day functionaries to contributing to the firm's growth agenda will find themselves on the outside looking in.

Thirdly, the industry watched with concerned fascination the successful attack by powerful forces on the tobacco industry. Now attention has turned to alcohol and others and the industry will not emerge unscathed.

In recent years there has been a fierce concentration on the notion **of marketing effectiveness and measurement**.

Michael Dunn published a leading book on the topic (The Marketing Accountability Imperative - Jossey-Bass), which explains the essential need for marketers to account for their actions and their expenditure. The financial crisis of 2008 has reverberated through 2009 and, as recovery gathers momentum in 2010, firms will not easily forget the lessons learned during the crisis that greater care and governance might have softened the landing.

Dunn's book is timely because it provides guidance in areas that will be primary management requirements in the year and years to come.

But Dunn is not alone. The Marketing Science Institute (MSI), which is the barometer of threats and opportunities facing the marketing industry, has been drawing the attention of practitioners to this imperative for much of the last decade.

Every two years the MSI publishes its research priorities. These are the subjects that the MSI will provide research funding for and which it and its members have elected as the trends most vital to the industry's functioning. In one form or another, marketing return on investment has been the number one item for at least the past four periods.

I believe this is the year when management is going to call marketing to account.

Not only is it good governance to be able to support marketing programmes with quantitative evidence of what it is intended to achieve, but the catastrophic failure of businesses in 2008 makes it clear that every business function must demonstrate that it is contributing to the profitability of the firm and is creating shareholder wealth. Marketing is no exception.

There is strong evidence of a shift taking place in the **role of the chief marketing officer (CMO)**. The nature of the shift is described in the eponymous book by Scott Davis (The Shift, Jossey-Bass, 2009).

For too many years, marketing has been a function. The board allocates money for marketing on the basis that it is something that has to be done and which might or might not product results. The fear has always been that perhaps value would be lost without it, but there is no clear understanding of exactly what it does or how it adds value.

This has started to change in recent years and the trend will pick up speed in the years ahead.

The foundation for the shift is that marketing builds brands and brands contribute to the wealth of the company. Davis summarises this in the sub-title for his book: "The transformation of today's marketers into tomorrow's growth leaders".

Davis sees a four-stage evolution with marketers who were functional, routine, Tacticians evolving into Facilitators, who communicate within the organisation and who develop a language around the brand that is understood and spoken within the firm.

Next is the Leader who combines the previous roles but who uses customer insights and knowledge to apply marketing muscle throughout the organisation. The Leader drives the firm towards a marketing led strategic goal.

Finally, the Visionary marketer encompasses all of the preceding roles and, additionally, plays a role at the board level of contributing fully to the company growth agenda.

The revenue line of the income statement is the responsibility of marketing. Increasingly, this is going to be recognised by boards of directors, along with the realisation that it is the marketing programme that builds it and sustains it.

This trend implies that marketers will increasingly join the board but that their language of reporting will not be that of the marketing function but that of the boardroom itself - finance.

Marketing is going to be forced to adopt a more **socially responsible approach** to its promotional activities.

In May 2010, the World Health Organisation (WHO) will issue a draft strategy for the reduction of the harmful effects of alcohol. Already we have seen in early editions that marketing is viewed as being a prime suspect for encouraging underage and excessive drinking.

Pressure will increase next year after the strategy has been accepted to place limitations on all forms of marketing. The extent of this depends on the success or failure of several bodies that are arguing against harsh measures.

This follows the almost total ban of smoking and there are other product groups being considered: food, motor cars and drugs. At the very least, marketers will have to pay greater attention to the social responsibility that they carry when devising and developing their strategies.

About Prof Roger Sinclair

Dr Roger Sinclair is a professor emeritus at Wits University, academic partner of California based Prophet Brand Strategy and inventor of the BrandMetrics (www.brandmetrics.com) brand valuation tool. Email him at rogers@brandmetrics.com.



Positive outlook for meetings, events industry

I'm a firm believer that, due to the dynamics of global economic shift we've experienced, the way we live, work and run our businesses has changed irrevocably - life will truly never be the same again! This holds true for the South African meetings and events industry in 2010.

1. Gone are the days of experimentation and excess and extravagance. **Less is now more.** The carefully considered, back-to-basics approach to life, living and finances will continue to impact the live events and meetings industry with tighter budgets, resulting in fewer, more strategically relevant, targeted and smaller face-to-face meetings and events, both locally and internationally.
2. Smaller travel budgets means **less travel** - and an increase in online and electronic resources such as tele- and video-conferencing and Internet-based discussion groups and forums.
3. As citizens and consumers **increase their scrutiny** of governments, industry and commerce with demands for responsible choices, equity and integrity, we will see this reflected in cautious business approaches and increased corporate governance. For our industry, the pitching process is probably only set to become more competitive and convoluted as suppliers are scrutinised more and more thoroughly.
4. **The Environmental Lobby** will grow in momentum both globally and locally. As mentioned before, travel to meetings will be carefully considered, while event and location/venue greening awareness and practice will go from strength to strength.
5. As our industry continues to mature, **the legislative drive** to formalise and safeguard our practices will continue. Here we'll witness the drafting of bills and laws to ensure standards are upheld, along with accreditation initiatives for professionals.
6. In South Africa, our country and economy will boom this year in anticipation of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. As we gear up for this watershed event, we will continue to buck international economic and social trends in the short term, while we brace ourselves for business after the world cup tournament has left our shores.
7. We will see many enterprises starting up and perhaps even taking off as a result of real and perceived opportunities which result from this long-awaited "defining moment." Unfortunately, some will not survive in the long term.
8. Already, the meetings and events industry is experiencing the **positive spinoff** from large organisations and corporates planning their 2010 FIFA World Cup hospitality calendars and events. And there is plenty more to come.
9. With many local and international businesses clamouring to secure special venues and host a handful of celebrities at their 2010 FIFA World Cup bashes, it will be interesting to watch and see who turns up where. (I foresee a battle of the brands looming here- this is where great customer relationship management will win the day!)
10. The strong will survive well beyond 2010. However, we'll need to be **flexible, streamlined and entrepreneurial** - continually looking for ways of re-energising and reinventing ourselves, scanning our horizons and constantly regrouping to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

As an industry, let's celebrate our ongoing ability to reinvent ourselves and create new opportunities for growth and innovation, to find new solutions to conquer challenges and to constantly deliver a high quality product.

About Karen Ashwin

Karen Ashwin is the founder and MD of The Event Production Company (www.theeventcompany.co.za), South Africa's event pioneer. Karen is considered one of the industry's leading personalities and with a 16-year track record, The Event Production Company having conceptualised and executed most of South Africa's largest and most innovative events. Contact her on tel +27 (0)11 883 0470 or email karen@eventcompany.co.za.



10 trends for a world in flux

In a world in flux, what is the impact of the global peak experience of last year? Here are 10 trends for 2010 from the 2010 Flux Trend Review.

1. Peak experiences:

The global financial crisis and ensuing recession of 2009 and can be regarded as a global peak experience. Peak experiences refer to these types of events that stand out in our mind, affecting us deeply and in most cases, changing our thoughts and behaviour patterns: 9/11 was a similar global peak experience.

What the crisis and recession has done is made us more aware of our actions (their impact and responsibility we need to take), to our business practices, the planet and our fellow human beings. It has shifted our thinking from a self-centred “me” era, to an era of “us” and “we”.

As a result, people are looking for deeper life experiences, as well as brand experiences (product and services) that stand out. Brands and corporate companies need to adapt quickly to this changing consumer mindset.

2. Shift in value systems:

A global economic crisis acted as a catalyst to other important issues. Systems that govern our lives are changing and redirecting.

2009 was a year of tumultuous change, which led to a questioning of personal value systems. With global retrenchments numbering tens of millions (and counting), it would be foolhardy to think that there would be no domino effect. Retrenchments, or threat thereof, have forced people to question their life's motives, embarking on a search for purpose.

As a consequence, even the idea of luxury has been turned on its head, with more and more people valuing the idea of extraordinary thoughtfulness, more time with loved ones or premium service over material things such as handbags and branded sunglasses, and other logo-splattered commodities.

This soul-searching has also resulted in a much-needed empathic movement around the world. Whether it is sympathy for a retrenched co-worker, or hostility toward uncaring politicians or greedy corporates, there is a growing civil voice that is calling for a new world order. We are experiencing a broad-spectrum paradigm shift in the way people think, make decisions, and choose to live.

3. A new world order:

Business will no longer be done as “usual”. The consumer revolution is well and truly underway as more and more consumers take responsibility over their purchase decisions. Despite the downturn, there is an increasing trend towards people spending a little extra and opting for better quality, timeless design and value for money, as well as earth-friendly, fair trade versions of their regular products.

We have moved from a passive consumer to a very active and vocal consumer who wants to be engaged with, not talked at. For advertisers and marketers this is a dramatic shift from “broadcast” advertising to interactive engagement, and brands that do not deliver on this will ultimately be outperformed. It is now necessary for companies and brands to not only engage with their target market, but also embark on multiple conversations to secure loyalty.

4. Shift of power to ethics:

We are seeing the beginnings of a shift away from a power-hungry, greed-based, profit-at-all-cost leadership model towards a more ethical and responsible style of leadership. This is most evident in the election of Barack Obama in November 2008. It signals a dramatic shift from the head (logical, egoistic, bottom-line approach) to heart (empathetic, care for the planet and for the entire human family) - notable in the attention being given to CSI programmes of late.

This same shift of style of governance can be seen in South Africa, with the marked difference between the aloof and centralised Mbeki administration and the more engaging and empathetic style of the Zuma administration.

5. The start of the Female Century:

As an extension of the previous point, we can track a move from left-brain, logical thinking, towards a more right-brained, intuitive approach when it comes to leadership and decision-making.

Archetypal feminine principles such as caring for the home and the family are coming into play, the only difference being that now the world is seen as our home, and all the global population, our children. How we organise our society is being commanded from the bottom up.

Most job losses in 2009 occurred in traditionally male-run industries such as the banking sector and manufacturing, and by the start of 2010, there will be more female workers in the US than men (as reported in Time magazine). This is the most significant social change in a single generation, and sees women gaining more power in terms of their income and spend.

Even technology is finding its feminine side. Social networks - which are also becoming more and more pivotal to the way in which we operate our lives - tellingly, mimics how women operate: forming communities and engaging in conversations.

6. The rise and rise of social media:

Social media is responsible for the biggest change in social dynamics in the past few years and is literally "rewiring" our brains to think, act and communicate differently than ever before.

People find like-minded friends via cyberspace, and, no matter how obscure their interests, there is always a group to support it. Boundaries such as race, geography and culture have become less important and shared interests matter more. Social media has enabled real-time global conversations and given everyone with access on the planet the ability to publish.

Depending on your age group, Facebook may already be old hat, and early adopters are already looking for the next big thing to surpass Twitter.

Whatever the format, social media has proven to be not just a passing fad, and has resulted in the most dramatic upheavals in industries such as print media and marketing and advertising. Ignore this space at your peril.

7. Niche tribes:

The shotgun approach of one marketing strategy for a mass audience is now not only ineffectual but also hopelessly outdated. Traditional, tried and tested methods of marketing and advertising are being thrown on its head.

The idea of "tribes" contests the idea of lifestyle standard measurement (LSM). This model takes into account the unique interests of people, and the ever-splintering niches that define them. You are no longer able to box people in set categories and assume their behavioural patterns are based on an empirical, soulless definition of them as a target market - this understanding (and the types of interaction it presupposes) is moving towards a more organic model that celebrates individuality as a primary factor.

Hence the need for multiple consumer conversations (see trend # 3 - a new world order).

8. Pick-and-mix society:

Our new society - buoyed by an increasing number of maturing digital natives (the Net Generation) - has become used to a myriad information ports, shopping sites and "How to..." blogs.

These cyber citizens have grown used to the freedom to customise anything and everything online, and are becoming increasingly frustrated with the limitations of the offline world. They can wear what they want, eat what they want and watch what they want, when they want and how they want. They shun traditional information avenues preferring peer to peer or word of mouth validation of themselves, or a new product that is targeted to their tribe.

They are eco-aware, techno-savvy and distrustful of any voice of authority, be it political or corporate. They demand transparency, accountability and social responsibility as core policies, not badges of honour. They are hesitant in handing over their loyalty to a brand, and will only cede that loyalty if the brand echoes or meets their complex benchmarks of authenticity and integrity.

9, Ambient awareness:

In an age of information overload, tools are being developed to filter and alert us according to our interests or industry. Thanks to tools such as Twitter and RSS feeds, we can filter exactly what information comes to us, according to our preferences.

Most young people do not read newspapers or watch televised news, their reason being "If it is important enough, it will come to me". This is in stark contrast to the pre-Internet generation, who were weaned on a one-way, "broadcast" style of learning and information consumption.

In 2010, we should all become accustomed to "skimming": the ability to absorb vast amounts of information, without the yearning (or perhaps time) for in-depth analysis. The downside to this new skill is the growing concern that we have too much information at our fingertips, but not enough knowledge. The knock-on effect is that we are also becoming busier, but less productive.

10. Empathetic economy:

The demand for transparency, authenticity and accountability is getting louder and louder.

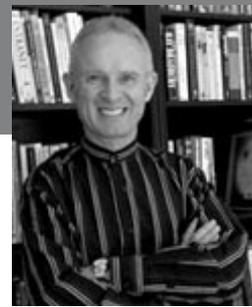
Civil society demands more ethical traits as we reach a fork in the road concerning the management of our economy. On the one hand, we have a greedy, power-hungry and profit-driven economy where money is wedged at the top, which will always keep the poor and the young at a disadvantage (this essentially is where the problems affecting future of the planet lie).

On the other hand, we have a more social-, ethical- and empathetically-driven economy emerging, which is mindful of the planet, rewards philanthropy and spreads wealth and goodwill throughout all levels of society, spreading wealth - and therefore power - from the hands of a few to the hands of many.

These are both extreme economies, and repeat the age-old ideological battle between capitalism and socialism, but fought with 21st century hindsight. Only this time round the ideology is not between countries, but a race to find a sustainable solution for mankind. After all, we have proved to ourselves in the last two years that, as a species, we have a spectacular ability to self destruct, and will if we don't find a new way forward.

About Dion Chang

These top 10 trends for 2010 are from the 2010 Flux Trend Review, edited by Dion Chang -innovator, creative thinker and visionary. Chang is a sought-after trend analyst, and while his feet remain firmly planted on African soil, he uses a global perspective to source new ideas, gauge the zeitgeist and identify cutting-edge trends. For more trends and information about the 2010 Flux Trends Review conference taking place on 25 February 2010, go to www.fluxtrends.co.za.



Telecommunications tsunami for 2010

The new undersea cables have begun arriving, new fibre-optic networks are being rolled out, and new connectivity technologies are moving from the horizon to the foreground. What does it all mean? Are there spin-offs beyond the telecoms industry? Let's dig deeper.

If 2009 were a year of earthquakes in the telecommunications sector, 2010 will bring the tsunami.

The past year has been breathtaking in the scope and scale of events in the industry. The divorce between Telkom and Vodacom and the listing of the latter on the JSE, the collapse of the Bharti MTN merger, the landing of the SEACOM undersea cable, the first cut ever in the interconnect fee for calls between cellular operators, and the beginning of the roll-out of new fibre optic backbones across South Africa, mean that nothing will ever be the same again.

The coming year will see the implications of all these events not only becoming clear, but also transforming the market.

1. Operators begin to leverage the new fibre-optic networks to supply corporate clients and resellers with **bigger, faster and more flexible capacity**. Resellers, in the form of Internet service providers (ISPs) and communications service providers, begin to make more noise about the more cost-effective packages they are able to offer as the result of this.

2. The rate of Internet growth in South Africa **continues to accelerate**. According to the preliminary findings of the Internet Access in South Africa 2010 study, the number of Internet users in South Africa last year not only grew by more than 10% for a second year in a row, but in fact outpaced the 13% growth seen the year before, reaching 15%. This increased growth rate is expected to be repeated in 2010.

3. The number of **cellular subscriptions declines** for the first time, as new connections fail to keep up with churn. The drop in the interconnect rate will, however, result in more calls being made by customers, which will arrest the decline in the key industry metric of average revenue per user (ARPU).

4. The first **4G** or fourth generation mobile broadband technology will begin to come to market. Formally called Long Term Evolution (LTE), 4G will mean mobile broadband speeds starting at the current speed limit of 7.2Mbps, and increasing over the next decade to 100Mbps, the current speed being offered via fibre optic networks.

Meanwhile, mobile broadband will make a significant enough contribution to cellular networks' revenue to spur them into better provisioning, ie ensuring better 3G throughput across their networks instead of only in key hubs. However, performance will still lag far behind fixed line broadband (ie ADSL).

5. **Fibre to the Home (FTTH)** will increasingly come into focus as it becomes viable for affluent communities and new gated communities. Word of mouth will spread on the performance of FTTH, which emulates the experience of cable broadband subscribers in the US and Europe, and more and more people will say "I want a bit of that". This will create a demand that may not yet be met, but that will fuel the growth of an industry still in search of a customer base.

6. Web 2.0 will lose favour as a defining term for interactive online architectures, services and sites, when it becomes clear that it is merely a streamlining of so-called Web 1.0. Web 3.0 is already over-abused by all the digital marketers wanting to be seen as being ahead of the curve. **Web 4.0** is the answer, as it will align with the arrival of 4G-based services. It won't arrive fully formed in 2010, but as 4G begins to deploy, the possibilities of mobile services will begin to arrive in public and business consciousness.

7. **Cloud computing** becomes more than a buzzword, and case studies begin to show that it is a key strategy for the future, but it will still be resisted by smaller companies as merely a buzzword. It will be pushed hard by global IT companies such as Microsoft, IBM, Intel, Cisco, EMC and VMware (the latter three have created the VCE coalition to deliver an integrated, open standard architecture for cloud computing), but large corporate clients with skilled CIOs will lead the way in implementing it in ways that the vendors might not have anticipated.

In South Africa, the arrival of cloud computing in a big way will be almost synchronised with the arrival of massive new bandwidth that makes the concept viable. The concept of the Private Cloud, where an enterprise has its own dedicated patch of the cloud, will be more compelling than the public cloud from which any customer will pick and choose applications.

8. **Mobile commerce** finally becomes a distinct industry segment, both driven by cellphone banking and by the myriad mobile payment solutions coming to market.

9. With better, more and cheaper broadband, we will see **more Internet-oriented start-ups** emerge in South Africa. Because there are likely to be so many more start-ups than in recent years, there is a higher probability that we will see start-ups with a sustainable revenue model rather than merely a venture capital-oriented revenue model, as has been the case with the best-known examples from the past few years. Some of the most successful of these businesses will capture a slice of the emerging mobile applications and mobile commerce markets.

10. Following on from the above, established South African brands with an international presence AND a sustainable revenue model emerge more strongly **above the radar**. Clickatell, Acceleration, and Fundamo, are among the brands to watch.

About Arthur Goldstuck

Arthur Goldstuck recently released the headline findings of the Internet Access in South Africa 2010 survey, which showed acceleration in growth in Internet access in South Africa, and the fastest growth in a decade. More information is available at www.worldwideworx.com. Follow Arthur on Twitter at [@art2gee](https://twitter.com/art2gee).



Fundamental changes for internal comms in SA

The field of internal communications is changing globally, as companies realise that without an inside-out brand-building approach, it is impossible to deliver on the external marketing and media campaigns that create the brand promise in the minds of consumers. 2010 is likely to see fundamental changes in internal communications in South Africa, as companies start focusing on staff issues - from retention strategies to the releasing of discretionary effort.

In recent research by the Institute for Corporate Productivity, it was found that “[t]he favoured tactic companies overall have already taken to further reduce turnover is better internal communication with all employees, 81% naming it as the top method.”

1. Corporate governance raises the role of communication:

King Report III has opened the door for communicators to obtain buy-in with regards to stakeholder engagement from c-suite. While governance moves communication one step closer to formal business recognition, the onus now falls on communicators to champion their cause further and drive the importance of communication through strategic alignment and the promise to produce measurable results.

2. Closer synergy between internal and external communication:

2010 is likely to see closer alignment between external and internal communication and marketing strategies. The starting point is to identify the purpose of communication and the communication key objectives. It is only through synergistic alignment that staff can deliver what is being promised to consumers. Inside-out approaches must become more prevalent than outside-in approaches; ie start by telling your staff what is expected of them to deliver the brand promise, and then go to the public.

3. Focus on value:

It was recently determined by a Towers Perrin research paper that only one out of five workers today is giving full discretionary effort on the job; and close to four out of 10 workers are disenchanted or disengaged. It concluded that engaged workers are not born, they are made, and this can only be achieved through communication.

Internal communication can no longer be seen as sending out the company newsletter, email or loading content on the intranet - it's about achieving key strategic objectives. Companies pay for 100% of their staff's time, but receive on average 60% effort. The role of internal communication is to drive engagement. A tall order indeed, but something that can be done, and measured - and more practitioners in South Africa need to see this.

4. From corporate communications to culture and behaviour modification:

The role of internal communication needs to shift up to the level of employee engagement. There are four main milestones on the road to behaviour modification

1. create awareness,
2. change perceptions,
3. obtain buy-in, and
4. change behaviours.

The first two fall under what is today practiced as internal communications - sending out the content and sharing it. The latter two fall under the optimal approach to employee engagement - modifying behaviours within the organisation and inculcating a culture of communication. This is the difference between asking staff members if they know what the value statement is, and whether they know the behaviours required to deliver it

The culture must also enforce communication at a business level - staff should be measured on their communication as a key performance area and not be allowed to say 'I didn't have the time'. It's time to stamp out the paternalistic culture we have become so comfortable with.

5. Management training:

RoperASW research tells us that “55% of surveyed managers said they believe they communicate well with workers, while only 35% of those workers agreed”. These numbers are going to have to change if internal communication is going to work.

How can this be done? Simple. Through rigorous training of an organisation's stewards on the principles of communication and how to be effective communicators.

The stewards are the leaders of a company, and they are the ones who engage with frontline staff who, in turn, engage with clients. Senior management are far removed from this process in most instances. Therefore, it is line-management who need to be engaged not only on how to communicate, but why.

6. Robust measurement principles:

In a recent survey Talk2Us conducted, we found that 73% of communication managers do not conduct regular evaluation of the three key drivers - content, process and impact. Twenty seven percent indicated they used measurement techniques, but not at regular intervals or only measured various aspects of the communication process.

Measurement is the only real tool communicators have to prove that their efforts produce results, and the only way they can further enhance existing communication models. It is also imperative that managers' efforts to communicate are measured.

7. Alignment between brand promise and employee behaviour :

Employees may very well know what their company's brand promise and values are, but the real question to ask is how this is translated to consumers. It is a well-known fact that 60% of the key message is lost in each phase of the cascading of information. The people who devise the value statements know exactly what they mean by it. But front-line staff often do not, and therefore customers certainly won't.

8. Use of social media in internal communications:

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Wave and other social media tools and applications have fundamentally changed the way people communicate. Used widely in external communication, social media can also be a powerful tool to use within an organisation. It does not have to adopt the same platforms, but rather the principles of finding ways of effectively engaging with Gen X and Y. Vertical integration into mobile communication will also take off, as evident by global research.

9. Put your money where your mouth is:

Internal communication is a powerful tool to engage staff. Communication practitioners tend to end their message rollout through channels. 2010 must see lip service being stopped. A wellness campaign does not only involve writing a messages about being healthy in the quarterly magazine - it's about a long-term campaign that allows for follow-ups and repeatedly reinforced information based on the initial findings, etc. Reason leads to conclusion, but emotion leads to action.

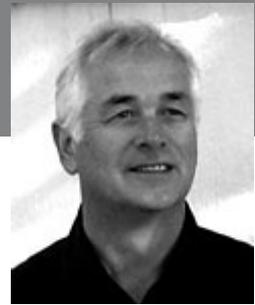
10. Optimisation:

It's no longer about doing the rights things or doing things right. It's about doing things differently. 2010 should see communicators reassessing their content (does it align to their business strategy and objectives and is it informative - does it speak the head, heart, intuition and hands etc), processes (do employees know where to go access information and make use of the tools you have in place?), efficiencies, measurement standards, audience segmentation, and the preparedness of the stewards to deliver the communication imperatives.

All in all, there is a lot of work to be done in the field of internal communication. It is not a public relations function, nor is it a stand-alone. It is a specialised environment that requires a strategic business approach. The year ahead looks set to be an exciting one for internal brand engagement specialists.

About Linda Hamman

Linda Hamman is CEO and Daniel Munslow is chief communications officer at Talk2Us, a consultancy that specialises in employee engagement and the implementation of strategies that inculcate a communication culture through behaviour change (www.talk2us.co.za). Talk2Us was launched by Linda in 2000, motivated by her philosophy around staff alignment with the brand promise and customer experience. Contact Linda via email at linda@talk2us.co.za and Daniel via daniel@talk2us.co.za.



The year the penny drops?

The traditional marketing industry is based on two key assumptions. Consumers are ignorant and believe what they are told. Without this advertising can't work nearly, not nearly, as well. Yet we have seen internationally that both those assumptions have proven to be false. 2010 could well be the year the penny drops, but probably not completely.

The assumption was once true: consumers were ignorant - they got their information from the company, from salesmen from advertising. Customers also used to believe what they were told; they trusted advertising - business controlled the brand message.

Not only does research around the world show that trust in advertising has declined but we also know that through the Internet and by their own connections, customers have access to an unbelievable mountain of information, opinions and comments. Just these facts have changed marketing forever. It's with this backdrop that I make my predictions for 2010.

1. Someone will notice that, in spite of conventional wisdom, South Africans are connected. I mean, more than 30% of us access social sites on our cellphones alone on a daily basis. Everyone has a phone, even at the lower levels of society, with the majority capable of connecting to the Internet. But they won't know how to use this information.
2. Marketers will be the first to cotton on. They will be influenced by their international contacts and will finally realise that the excuses of "but the majority of South Africans don't use the Internet" and that we just don't have the bandwidth are exactly that: excuses. With the new undersea cables coming into South Africa and Africa, bandwidth as a problem will soon be a thing of the past.
3. Local advertising agencies will be leaning back, secure in their misunderstandings but becoming slowly unsettled, as they listen to their international colleagues talking about the international media bloodbath and the need to rush to digital. They will see their international associates buy digital agencies - or even start a division of their own. BUT they won't be the core of the business.
4. Agencies will still see digital and online as a media channel and start integrating into them more and more, not realising that the key characteristic of the Internet is that it's a social creation. It's about people connecting, not about the technology, or even the sites themselves.
5. Internationally, the lead will be taken by thought leaders - who realise that social media is not separate from the individual's total life experience - making sure that digital eventually becomes the centre of the brand connection, not an adjunct.
6. From a technology point of view, manufacturers will be accelerating their efforts to make sure that connection to the Internet is ubiquitous and cheap. At the high end, Apple's iPhone is already carrying more web data than any other mobile device; but there are netbooks, tablets, the Android phone and the soon-to-be announced Apple iSlate all making sure that, more and more, the web experience is accessible and separate from the technology.
7. The way people are finding stuff on the Internet is changing; this may start having an effect on traditional digital marketing. The filter that most users will place on getting the data they want will be their friends. SEO optimisation techniques will be under huge pressure from new search algorithms and as "friend" filters and real-time search guide web users.
8. There will be a lot of flapping in media circles as traditional media morphs. The resistance movement led by the News Corp relics will continue to resist and will become increasingly irrelevant. Media entrepreneurs led by the former journalist will reinvent the way the news is spread and the financial models related to that.
9. With every major change in society, new players will emerge, new approaches will take form and the cards in the pack will be reshuffled. I believe that we will see the first major signs of that in South Africa in 2010.

Marketing will change because consumers have changed. Consumers are no longer ignorant, whether they are 25 or 52 and living in Diepsloot or Dainfern; they have unprecedented access to information, they are buying online and are part of massive electronic networks.

Maybe the penny will drop, maybe it won't. Then next year's predictions will be to guess how big the splash will be as the dinosaurs fall into the marketing tar pit and their new competitors, more nimble, like mammals, create a new marketing ecosystem.

About Walter Pike

Walter Pike is the founder of PiKE | The Integrated New Marketing Agency (www.pike.co.za) and was until recently head of faculty: marketing and advertising at the AAA School of Advertising. He founded the AAA Digital Marketing Academy (www.digitalacademy.co.za) in order to prepare students and the marketing and communications industry for the change. The Digital Marketing Academy is now independently run by PiKE in conjunction with the AAA School, offering fully accredited courses. He blogs at PiKE's Thinking (<http://walterpike.com>), is a well-known public speaker and you can listen to his weekly insert called Key Concepts on The Internet Economy on Classic FM every Friday. Follow him on Twitter at [@walterpike](https://twitter.com/walterpike).



FIFA fever and the youth

As the recession subsides into the euphoria of 2010, what trends will we see play out among South Africa's sharpest critics - the youth? The 2010 FIFA World Cup will take centre stage, but that stage will be shared with service demands, tech saturation and ad aversion. How can brands aiming to impress under-23s live up to these evolving expectations?

1. FIFA fever: all eyes on us:

The 2010 FIFA World Cup is not just about soccer for young South Africans. It also represents the chance to elevate our country onto the global stage. As one 16-year-old anticipates: "It will thrust our country into first-class status". The trend gained enormous momentum in 2009, with young South Africa touting it as the number one reason they're most optimistic about living here.

Hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup looks set to bring an unprecedented resurgence of national pride across all age-groups, especially those under 25. This is amplified by things such as the work the Department of Education, with corporate partners like Coca-Cola, is doing in schools under the banner of 'My 2010 School Adventure'.

2. Brand ingredients:

In recent years we've tracked the shift in the youth interaction with marcomms from brand presence to brand experience - where the expectation from brands extends beyond packaging plus an ad. In 2010, this trend continues to thrive in the youthspace.

In this evolving consumer terrain, the role of brands is about being facilitators of an experience - and their product/service will ultimately provide consumers with the ingredients to create their own.

This year the Pick n Pay School Club has partnered with nine brands to conceptualise and create curriculum-aligned educational material that will be freely distributed to over 1.5 million learners and 70 000 educators across the country. In this way, brands are able to enrich the learning process of young South Africans and have a powerful (and relevant) impact in the lives of the future generation.

3. Servicesphere:

Last year we reported on the trend Human Touch: the need for real human contact in a digitally connected world. In 2010, we see an extension of this into the service and retail industry. Young people are increasingly demanding of service providers.

The Sunday Times Generation Next 2009 study identified that good service is far more important than a vibey store, and even the stock it carries. In upcoming months, we expect human touch to gain more clout as a valuable asset in the servicesphere. And retailers who acknowledge this by taking the right measures to train and recruit their employees are in a stronger position to win over young consumers.

4. 'Cause you mean it:

Yes, you've heard it all before: young South Africans have grown up in a society faced with real issues such as HIV/Aids, crime and poverty. However, in a post-recession economy - we see people the world over becoming more cynical towards how brands react to the challenges facing society, and brands' integrity is at stake.

Higher end consumers - particularly young ones - are more tuned in to whether a brand's green agenda is for real or for profit. Brands that jump onboard for one good cause day a year will increasingly be measured against others that are committed 365 days a year.

5. 'There's an app for that':

Apple's iPhone has done more than redefine mobile communication but it has catapulted the consumer into a new realm of control where they have access to an infinite amount of tips to entertain, improve and educate themselves at their fingertips. From mobile calorie-counters to locating public toilets, there's even an app which promises to turn your phone into a mobile Nintendo Wii.

At the start of 2010, Apple announced that more than three billion apps have been downloaded from its App Store by iPhone and iPod touch users worldwide. The fact that by far the majority of young South Africans are not iPhone owners hasn't eclipsed them from joining this global trend and a handful of local companies, such as Mibli with Microsoft OneApp, have launched their own independent app offerings. But, make no mistake, in the youthspace this isn't just a game to see who can collect the most apps; it's about getting equipped with tools for success.

6. Vitamin C2C:

Young urbanites might love a good TV ad, and laugh out loud at a radio ad - but nothing is more persuasive to them than a recommendation from their peers. This trend - of consumer-to-consumer marketing - has been on the brew for some time already, but in 2010 local brands will need to amplify their youth strategies.

In the post-recession economy, brand and corporate cynicism are on the rise, and if brands aren't relevant, interactive and discursive - young people will ditch them for brands that are. Cell C campaigns offer the most affordable deals to impress its customers, but word on the street amongst savvy teens is that being cheap is sometimes too cheap.

"We avoid Cell C because it gives [our peers] the impression that we're cheap... but maybe we'll get a Cell C simcard to use only when we go on MXit," says Thuso, 16.

7. Edgy steady:

Edgy steady is a resounding mantra for youth brands in 2010. It calls on companies to be innovative in creating irresistible opportunities for young minds to sample, engage and consume brands.

And while thinking out of the box is mandatory, there is a limit - young people expect the brand to remain true to its core brand offering - its true persona. If a brand deviates from what young people think it should do and tries too hard to impress them, they'll 'drop it and mock it'.

So, the best approach to working this trend is to ask young people in the know before you roll-out what you reckon is an edgy big idea.

8. TAC Generation: tracking, alerting and checking:

Enter Google, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and seemingly infinite other social networking sites (SNS). What happens next? Well, in the connected market, the appetite for TAC (tracking, alerting and checking) becomes insatiable.

The tools to do so are at their fingertips, and they give young consumers a new level of control which is just what they want. We're moving towards a society where 20-somethings will spend more time checking their online profiles than they do investing in homemaking to impress peers.

However, in South Africa, where less than 50% of young people say they have access to the Internet, the trend will emerge more slowly and in higher LSM households first.

9. KISS:

Yes, young consumers want to feel in charge and they want to take control of their own experience. But there are clear limits too. When it comes to entering competitions, teens and young adults are not looking for an adventure obstacle course - they want simple low-effort mechanics, so KISS (keep it simple, stupid).

Smart brands recognise that many young consumers want to steer clear of the anxiety imposed onto them by choice overload - so they'll stick to the brands that they trust and provide them with brand-true simplicity and no-nonsense surprises.

10. Open Happiness:

Taking cues for the world's biggest brand's latest slogan, in 2010 we will see a growing consumer consciousness geared towards achieving happiness. It will ultimately become a potent by-product of marketing strategies looking to engage coming-of-age consumers.

The Sunday Times Generation Next 2009 study revealed that happiness was polled in second position on young adults' birthday wish list - making it more significant to them than a party or a car. Discerning young minds know that you can't buy happiness and they're not going to be misled by transient marketing attempts to offer them instant happiness. Brands that provide a channel to their own personal growth and happiness are going to have more appeal than brands that don't.

Capitalising on the 2010 FIFA World Cup spirit, MTN has generated massive hype around a word to describe the vibe: Ayoba! MTN has brought Ayoba back and it's quickly re-entered young urbanites' vocabulary to express more than their 2010 excitement but has become synonymous with any feel-good experience.

About Jason Levin

Jason Levin is MD of HDI Youth Marketeers (www.hdiyouth.co.za). After a false start in the financial services sector, Jason spent 10 years in advertising, digital marketing and brand consulting. He met HDI Youth Marketeers in 2004 as a co-founder of the Khuza Awards and consulted to them intermittently thereafter, but moved over permanently in April 2008 as its new MD. He now spends his time understanding what makes young South Africans tick. Since joining the company, HDI Youth Marketeers has been awarded runner up in Financial Mail AdFocus's Branding & Design Agency category and FinWeek AdReview's HotShop of the Year in 2009. Contact Jason on tel +27 (0)11 706 6016 or email Jason@hdiyouth.co.za.



Mobile on the move

This year is set to be a big year for the country because of the 2010 FIFA World Cup coming to South Africa. But it's also big, given the country is coming out of a recession. Cost-cutting and optimisation are key for companies this year, and mobile technology provides a number of ways for companies to improve efficiencies, while reducing costs.

Here are 10 mobile business trends to be seen in 2010 in line with this.

1. Mobile MMS statements: this global technology was first developed right here in South Africa. And with companies such as Multichoice, the Ellerines Group and Deloitte all becoming involved in using mobile statements, it will play a big role in reducing costs and improving efficiencies in the sending out of statements. This will also be a driving force in the corporate sector for carbon points, as MMS statements are a green product. In addition, statements may include company specials - opening up another marketing avenue to the client.

2. Mobile banking: the strong growth of mobile banking will partner with the above trend as people get their statements via MMS, and settle those accounts immediately by logging on via mobile Internet banking. Mobile banking also represents an ideal way for banks to increase reach and reduce queues in branches, lowering costs.

3. Mobile ticketing: while this technology has been available for some time in South Africa, the integration with companies' backend applications has made mobile ticketing's progress slow. However, as ticketing technology evolves, the likes of the airlines, the Gautrain, movie theatres and more will soon begin using mobile ticketing.

4. Increased smartphone penetration: smartphones continue to drop in price, increasing their penetration into the market. More sophisticated phones result in more mobile marketing opportunities for companies through mobile web advertising, MMS, mobile branded gaming and more.

5. Mobile applications: the application stores launched by Apple, Google (Android OS), Nokia and so on are leading to a much wider array of mobile applications, which will drive mobile commerce to be a major force within the next five years - especially as people become more aware of their mobile phone's computing power. Microsoft's Windows Mobile, Symbian's S60, the Maemo platform and RIM's BlackBerry will all contribute to different applications for different lifestyle sectors like business, sport, leisure and so on. These are, of course, linked directly to the growth in smartphone penetration into the market.

6. Mobile advertising: local mobile websites (mobisites) have carried little advertising in the past as companies came to grips with reaching the market through this new channel and companies with mobisites have looked to boost their readership numbers. However, mobile advertising is on the increase on mobisites, with banner advertising becoming more prevalent and text advertising expected to feature strongly in 2010.

Mobile advertising via MMS, which is already big in this country, will continue to grow as more and more corporate companies use MMS. This technology has proven to have around a 40% response rate in campaigns, which is far higher than traditional marketing response rates.

7. Mobile marketing diversification and integration: as the suite of mobile marketing options continues to grow, so companies will not only begin to use a broader range of technology within the mobile sphere to interact with their base, but they will also integrate mobile marketing into the traditional marketing mix, with strategic interplay between the two. This will see mobile marketing becoming a real force into the future, with mobile marketing running side by side with traditional marketing in terms of marketing spend.

8. Mobile broadband usage: this will increase for a host of reasons. Better download speeds; the increase in the number of mobisites and mobile content; the increase of mobile GPS navigator devices in the market (which have a data component); and increased instant messaging usage from mobile phones are just some of the driving factors here.

9. Mobile TV: DVBH technology has been around for some time. But licensing issues around owning a TV licence and broadcast rights have been holding up the market. However, there appears to be forward movement within the industry now and we could well see an offering coming into the market. While DVBH resolution is not quite as high as PAL, many of the phones support a video-out, which means the phones can be plugged into TV sets. Though this would not provide the viewing quality which most digital TV subscribers are used to, it would open up digital TV to a much wider audience in South Africa.

10. Location-based mobile services: these will continue to flourish as the social media phenomenon moves into the mapping space and a greater number of phones carry GPS receivers and location-based applications. Mobile marketing based on people's location will also begin to grow in 2010, with increased profiling of users and adverts being served to people based on their locations.

About Eddie Groenewald

Eddie Groenewald is the CEO of mobile marketing company Multimedia Solutions (www.multimediasolutions.co.za). He has 18 years experience in the telecoms industry, of which more than a decade has been in the mobile sector. He is responsible for driving multimedia solutions business strategy both locally and internationally.



What's in store for digital marketing?

2010 is upon us! As we start yet another year with so much to look forward to in South Africa, both online and offline, we'd like to take a look at prospective trends to watch in 2010. Here are our thoughts on what we expect to see over the coming months.

1. Great customer service and results will be the key to success: with so many ways for businesses and individuals to express themselves online, customers are often bombarded and experience information overload. Among all this clutter, how do businesses differentiate themselves from their competitors? One way is through exceptional customer service and value-added extras. This leads to positive feedback from customers in the online space and the knock-on effect will be a virtual word-of-mouth exercise in positive PR.

2. Mobile operators will reduce tariffs: there's already been much speculation in the news and pressure from government for mobile phone operators to reduce exorbitantly high wireless communication costs in South Africa. In 2010, we hope to see a reduction in call and data costs. This should bring with it increased connectivity and larger numbers of users to the mobile web. This in turn should open up a number of opportunities for savvy businesses, particularly as emphasis shifts to mobile marketing.

3. More through-the-line advertising strategies for big brands: in 2009, we've already seen a number of traditional advertising agencies take the step into digital. As many are beginning to close the loop by tying their online campaigns to their offline messages, customers are able to engage more personally with their favourite brands online. We expect this trend to continue and develop even further in 2010. Examples from 2009 include the Real Men That Can't Sing (Klipdrift) campaign (DraftFCB), Steri Stumpie (King James) and Goodbye Citi (Ogilvy). All of these campaigns integrated websites and social media presences with radio ads, billboards and other offline advertising to great success.

4. Crowdsourcing and using the Internet as a platform for activism to increase awareness: the trend of adding "twibbons" to avatars and the popularity of sites like Avaaz.org are a virtual catharsis. But more than just showing support, people need to mobilise. We expect to see a continuation of these types of activities online - hopefully with more people actually taking action. We hope to see more action on the ground resulting from worthwhile and charitable online campaigns.

But there is also wisdom in crowds, and without a doubt, businesses and brands need to listen to their customers. Nowadays, customers have a voice and know what they want - and they express it online. We predict that crowdsourcing will become more prevalent among businesses looking for new ideas and virtually guaranteed sales.

5. Google Wave will either improve or disappear: there was a lot of hype about the beta rollout of Google Wave in 2009, but it seems to have fallen rather flat since then. Unless there are significant changes to the product, we think many users will be left wondering what it actually does. In many ways, a more useful and simplified browsing experience is Mozilla's Ubiquity, which allows you to search the web and perform common online actions in a far simpler and more meaningful way, using plain-language commands.

6. Social media marketing is going to become more mainstream: social media will continue to explode, and as the number of people using these sites increases, more businesses will try to leverage these platforms to build better customer relationships. Platforms such as Twitter and Facebook will become key touch-points as these are real-time and more about what's happening now. MySpace will continue its demise into obscurity.

7. Mobile web marketing to take a bigger slice of the pie: with a reduction in mobile communication costs, we'd expect to see a greater inclusion of mobile initiatives in businesses' marketing budgets. These include elements such as mobi SEO for mobi sites, more time and effort being spent on mobile web design and usability (ie building specific mobile versions of websites) and of course, mobile PPC advertising.

Google seems to be leading the way here. Adwords has for some time offered mobile advertising through its AdSense network. Google also recently acquired AdMob, already a well-established player in the mobile advertising arena.

8. Faster Internet: broadband speeds are set to increase by 50% or more due to additional high-capacity bandwidth from improvements such as the Seacom cable link. For the end user, this will greatly improve their experience of the Internet and enable them easier access and more face-time with their favourite brands, social networking and media sharing sites.

9. An increase in niche social networking sites: there is so much clutter and information on social networking sites that it's becoming problematic for users and it's also complicating things for advertisers. We predict that in 2010 we'll see the establishment of more niche sites that narrow their focus onto a specific industry or interest. These sites will have lower membership numbers but will consist of tight-knit, likeminded communities.

10. Bing is going to become a bigger search player: In August 2009, Yahoo! and Microsoft reached an agreement to combine their respective search and search advertising businesses. Clearly this is an attempt to position themselves as a stronger competitor to Google. Early signs indicate that Bing's popularity is increasing and we think that in 2010 Bing will definitely take a larger part of the search market.

About Jonathan Andrews

Jonathan Andrews is the eMarketing strategist at AlterSage (www.altersage.com), a Cape Town-based boutique online marketing agency that offers tailored solutions that achieve targeted exposure for clients. Contact him on tel +27 (0) 21 462 0036, email jonathan@altersage.com, follow him on Twitter at [@jono1980](https://twitter.com/jono1980), view his profile on LinkedIn and read his regular contributions to the AlterSage blog.



The big 10 of marketing

As business sectors continue to implode, morph and warp, I'm sure we're all agreed that standing out from the mundane has never been more critical. Here're 10 easy key trends to differentiating yourself, your company, your brand or your region and to achieving enhanced global marketing clout and job creation opportunities.

1. HEART-felt: bringing genuine good feelings and intentions into every single commercial initiative, no matter how small, will go a long way to weeding out irrelevant or resource wasting endeavours. Happy customers and much-loved products and services start within a company's DNA. Attracting and maintaining a skilled, contented and empowered workforce in a well designed environment, is the only foundation for the successful company of the future. Included under the "heart" way of doing things are: giving back, adding value, respecting human and environmental health, job and skills creation, recycling, reinventing and activism.

2. LEADERSHIP-ship: a natural follow-up to the above - classic management techniques will be making a comeback - strong, visionary leaders are required to lead strong, motivated teams and as a hedge against the lack of corporate direction that is continually needing to ask customers what they want and calling it a trend. Tribes do not continually want to be asked where they want to go; they want to be confidently led where they are supposed to be - they are of one mind, they move forwards like a school of fish.

3. CONFUSION-ism or asking why. For example, if a plastic housing is a plastic housing, why are well-designed cellphones and appliances expensive and the ugly ones cheap? Perhaps this will be the year when manufacturers and brand owners realise that the bottom [and very wide] end of the market is as aesthetically appreciative as the top and that catering to them might bring unexpected rewards - call it inverse luxury.

4. HOW WE BOW TO WOW: every company's secret weapon of the future and one that may be applied freely. HWBTW uses design and strategy to question where aesthetic and experiential value can be added into products, services, brands and retail interfaces for the good of all.

5. REGION-alism: global trends show that consumers have had enough of boring multi-national brands (BMBs). Brands of the future have heart and soul, and reflect, celebrate and promote a desirable local and lekker reality.

6. AFRIQUE boutique: following on from the above, still a potentially untapped resource and the antidote to the above-mentioned BMBs, local products will increasingly incorporate the awesome innate design vocabulary of our region into mass production models and make our region an even more saleable item. What has been the point of BEE policies if we have brought no real African culture into our boardrooms? The Japanese, the Americans, heck, even the Indonesians, sell their unique cultures globally. If we have the production capacity to produce everything in South Africa where are our local mass-produced versions of anime, Disney, the Muppets, Thomas the Tank Engine, Tellytubbies etc etc empires? What happened to the District 9 merchandise?!? [insert tantrum here]

7. ME-dium: everyone is a medium - online 24/7 self-expression will continue to proliferate and this is all good. John Vlismas summed it up very well (in an interview with The Media Online 01/12/09) when he said, "I don't think you can ever write enough, no matter what walk of life you inhabit - it's a great skill to sharpen... writing is really just forcing the voices in your head to speak clearly and say something worth listening to." It will be up the existing media to keep their edges sharpened.

8. RE-novation: it is an understatement to say that everything mostly needs upgrading [look around you]. Renovation can add value to any products, objects, items of clothing, buildings, personal or corporate value system. Review, revise renew, renegotiate, replenish, rethink... What's your favourite RE-word?

9. FUN-istocracy: funny is the antidote to everything that's wrong with the world, real or imagined. Like court jesters of old, funny people will be sought out as consorts of the highest and mightiest. It doesn't pay to take yourself too seriously; it's bad for your net worth.

10. EDUCATIONALISM is the new capitalism: none of the above are worth a bean without it. Education will move out of the classrooms into the streets. Brands and benefactors will pay for public spaces and play areas that inspire, educate and delight. Every interface is potentially a medium to engage an enquiring mind and ideally should be incorporate 1-9 above. We are probably one of the countries in the world most deprived of inspiring built public spaces - when this changes, we will see huge mindset changes.

About Terry Levin

Terry Levin is the custodian of Off the Shelf Marketing (www.offtheshelf.co.za), whose mission is the creation of new global African empires via the creation of iconic Pan-African product and brand development solutions. Terry is a regular contributor of events coverage and opinion to Bizcommunity.com. Email her at terry@offtheshelf.co.za.



Doing more with less - PR's mantra this year

The continued rise of online media and the corresponding decline of print means that PR is evolving. This, coupled with static PR budgets and high client expectations, means that we will need to be more creative this coming year. Here is my view on some of the trends for 2010.

1. Digital PR: the growth of digital media creates more opportunities to get clients' messages out. The online space has become a critical communication channel, but it is also calling on PR execs to become more interactive in our approach. Gone are the days of getting an article published and simply adding the clipping to monthly client reports. The online medium compels conversations, and sometimes readers' comments are less than kind. PRs therefore need to constantly monitor what is being said online and decide whether to respond. Which brings me to the next trend.

2. Online reputation management (ORM): while Google Alerts are a useful tool, a more thorough tracking system is required for effective online reputation management. Tools such as BrandsEye track all mentions online and have the ability to check if the content was positive or negative, gauge the overall feel and provide an analysis about the sentiment of a brand online. As PRs increasingly recognise the importance of online reputation management for 2010 and beyond, these kinds of tools become invaluable.

3. The blogosphere: this trend has two components. Firstly, PRs will increasingly need to target bloggers in the same way they target journalists. Certain blogs have huge followings and the opinions of these bloggers and their readers are important for most brands. 2010 will see PRs increasingly building relationships with bloggers, and tracking their sites in the same way that we currently track publications.

The second component to this trend is content development. It is critical for clients and PRs to recognise that organisational blogs are becoming a primary PR tool. Concept development, and the decisions on what content is posted on the blog, should sit within the PR function.

4. Social media expertise: to date, a PR's understanding and use of social media has been seen as a specialisation. From 2010, social media as a PR tool will become standard practice rather than specialisation. Social media is mainstream, and clients will come to expect us to harness it as a critical component to our communications strategies. In addition to reading and listening to speakers on the subject, one of the best ways to brush up on knowledge and skills in this area is starting to blog.

5. Integration: with an increasing number of communication channels as a result of social media, an integrated approach will become more critical from 2010 onwards. For example, when a organisation launches new products, PRs should be the ones determining how the communication strategy will roll out across the various media. Timing and synergy is the key to success, and these decisions should be left to communications experts.

6. Conversations that count: thanks to the digital medium, organisations are having more intimate conversations with their consumers. This trend drives transparency within organisations—they are obligated to be truthful because their consumers have access to so much information online. Businesses are going to be challenged to be more human, and more real.

7. 'Cause'-based PR: this is an interesting trend as in some ways it contradicts what PR has traditionally attempted to do. Given some of the global challenges we face, such as climate change and sustainability, we will increasingly see collaboration between organisations to highlight particular causes, rather than a specific focus to get their messages out. In some instances the 'cause' becomes greater than the organisation—but with positive spin-offs through brand association.

8. Employee focus: the retrenchments of 2009 and the potential of more to come, have left many employees feeling vulnerable. Open communication is critical for building stability and security by keeping staff informed. In 2010 and beyond, the way in which organisations go about doing this will be different. Many are considering internal social media sites based on the Facebook model, building a tool where staff can connect, communicate and interact. If implemented and managed correctly, this can be more successful than the traditional newsletter approach.

9. Getting wired: while wire services have been around for years, their use as a critical component of a communications strategy will become more apparent. Getting press releases out on the wires significantly increases chances of the release being published, and also aids search engine optimisation. The advent of the 'social media release' - which leads journalists to a site containing text, photographs, supporting documents and video clips - also has a significant part to play as it offers publications the ability to customise the content of the news story to a format that suits their readers, rather than simply reproducing a standard press release word-for-word.

10. FIFA fever: and then, of course, there is the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Will everything in the news be coloured with the FIFA brush, or will the media be fevered-out? As PRs we'll have to be on our toes to find creative ways for our clients to get their voices heard among all the action. The focus on South Africa may mean more international media opportunities for locally-based organisations. It promises to be an interesting year for all of us...

About Ronelle Bester

Ronelle Bester, MD of Red Ribbon Communications (www.redribboncommunications.co.za), started her career in technology at Dimension Data as marketing manager of the Western Cape. She has a BTech degree in public relations from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and has lectured in public relations at both the University of South Africa and Varsity College. Email Ronelle at ronelle@redribboncommunications.co.za, read her blog at www.redsiren.co.za and follow her on Twitter at [@ronelle](https://twitter.com/ronelle).



Year of the Tiger for digital

The Year of the Tiger, 2010, is going to be a beast for those involved in anything digital. Below are my top 10 picks for the changes we'll see this year. No doubt half are obvious and the other half will be wrong, so feel free to add your two cents in the comments.

1. Augmented reality does NOT hit the mainstream as a marketing channel:

Augmented reality: the most over-hyped technology of 2009 with the most potential for the future. A strange juxtaposition, but I think the truth with augmented reality is that we're still in the gimmick phase and it's going to be a while before we see campaigns using this technology to deliver real long-term ROI.

True augmented reality requires a huge amount of processing power to understand any image on the fly in order to overlay data - so much so that even with 2010 technology, you'd need a backpack to put it all in.

It also has to be said that even with the simple augmented reality implementations that we've seen over the past year, the vast majority of people do not have phones that are capable of using the technology. That's why I'm going Grinch on this one and predicting that, despite all the hype, this year augmented reality will stay a gimmick used mainly for its novelty, not for its value.

2. Social media marketing moves beyond the hype:

The days of the social media rock star or guru are over. Just because you have a bunch of Twitter followers and Facebook friends does not qualify you to devise and implement a successful social media strategy - let alone one that delivers real business value.

Instead, the social media practitioners who understand brand positioning, customer relationship management and the nuances of social influence will start to demonstrate what social media marketing is really all about.

Sadly, these true professionals will have a tough time as many marketers were naïve in 2009 and bought into the ramblings of the rock stars who promised the earth and delivered very little. One thing is certain: the appropriate use of social media can have a profound impact on most businesses, both externally and internally. 2010 will be the year we go beyond the obvious and start to see the real action.

3. The slow death of CPM advertising continues while ad buying becomes increasingly centralised and automated:

OK, this is a controversial one as the majority of the world's largest content properties survive on this model. The marketing world is increasingly becoming performance-driven and advertising is no exception. When buying advertising on an impression basis, you can argue all you want about post impression purchases and brand building, but when that same ad is competing against performance vehicles where the ROI can be tightly controlled, economics suggest that there can only be one winner in the long run.

When one compounds that with real data-driven targeting and the kind of increase in effectiveness which technologies such as Teracent (recently bought by Google for a hefty sum) provide, it all seems very obvious. Never mind the fact that controlling ads on hundreds, even thousands of sites from one dashboard, is inherently more preferable than negotiating and managing ad buys on a site by site basis.

I'm not for a second saying it's the death of the banner - not by a long shot - just the beginning of a change in the way we buy them.

4. Murdoch realises he is wrong:

The king of the print media world, Rupert Murdoch, has been making waves with his ambition to start charging for his online content, particularly through micro payments.

While I think there is a place for this, and easy-to-make micro payments will undoubtedly become an important part of the picture, charging to access daily news content is a fool's game unless you own everything - something the Internet has pretty much ensured will never happen.

If Uncle Rupert does indeed decide to go "walled garden" with his mainstream content (like AOL was before it also realised the Internet doesn't work that way), he will quickly realise his mistake and the plummeting of revenues on those properties will force him to change back.

There is an exception: niche content. While I wouldn't pay for day-to-day news content (Twitter almost covers this for me anyway), I would pay for really good fishing or cricket content. Likewise, I think niche, high quality video has also proven that people are prepared to pay, and if that payment process is mega simple, I do see that market growing substantially.

5. The impact of the Internet on education starts to hit home:

I find it fairly bizarre that this isn't bigger yet. There is increasing proof that digital channels not only make education more accessible, but in many cases the interactive nature of the web makes it more effective.

I think web-based education will have a particular impact for two specific groups of people. First, for life-long learners who want to keep expanding their knowledge, but don't have time to sit in a classroom. Secondly, for those who can't afford face-to-face education, which by its very nature is far less scalable and therefore more expensive. For this second group, I think we will start to see more innovation, particularly in the mobile space as for many of them (think Africa), all the other options are quite simply just not feasible.

Of all my supposed "trends", this is the one I want to see the most. Education is the one thing that can change the world and the more accessible it becomes, the better.

6. Mobile commerce and payments:

Speaking of mobile, this is one area of technology that always hits the trends list and yet there is always this feeling that it never quite reaches its potential. I'm not convinced things will be too different this year, but I do think that we will start to see some real movement in a few areas, both of which involve money.

First, mobile commerce: expected to crack the billion dollar mark in the US this year, it is growing in leaps and bounds. A few years ago, no one really thought people would buy anything more than ringtones and porn on their mobile devices, but it turns out the likes of Amazon are doing a roaring trade. I expect this to continue, especially in Africa where many people will never own a PC, and yet increasingly have the economic means to want to transact.

Of more interest to me as a cash-hating consumer is mobile payments. Once again, Africa is leading the world on this with services such as Kenya's M-Pesa proving to be a resounding success. Over the past year we've seen a number of mobile payment providers pop up their heads, but consumer adoption hasn't taken hold largely due to a lack of readiness by retailers.

Given the obvious convenience of mobile payments, I think 2010 will prove to be a tipping point in this arena. As a consumer, this pleases me. As a conspiracy theorist, this worries me because of course Big Brother will know exactly what you're buying and when, and worse still, will eventually have the power to turn you off...

7. In-game advertising grows in South Africa:

OK, so this is a bit of a local prediction as this is a market that has exploded internationally in recent years, but remained fairly dormant in sunny South Africa. The reason for this local growth in 2010 is that in-game advertising works better with a solid Internet connection - something we have only just started to experience here and are still a long way off from the developed world.

But this is a channel that can be extremely effective, particularly in reaching a younger, digitally savvy audience who don't spend much time in the traditional media channels. Expect to see this popping up as a discussion point in marketing meetings in 2010.

8. UX, analytics and conversion optimisation hit the mainstream:

With the cost of attracting quality web traffic going up every day, marketers are slowly starting to realise that they need to make more of that traffic when it hits their website. The big global ecommerce players realised this years ago and as a result have invested countless hours into those minor site and process tweaks which have a cumulatively enormous effect on conversion rate.

The equation is simple: the difference between a 1% and a 5% conversion rate is five times more revenue with zero extra expense in acquiring traffic. An obvious statement and yet the majority of sites have never even sniffed an A/B or multivariate split test. With increasing demands for performance, and the aforementioned increase in traffic costs, I expect a surge in focus on usability, analytics and conversion optimisation in 2010.

It's also worth looking at the economics of online advertising (which as I stated earlier, is tending towards performance). For example, with paid search click costs rising, a point will be reached where a marketer will be unable to bid more without risking profitability. If, however, their conversion process becomes more efficient, it will allow them to pay more for the click, thus outbidding their competitors and gaining the volume that comes with the number one slot.

9. Online video as a replacement to television:

TV is linear and finite, but with online video the choice is almost limitless - why wouldn't you trend in this direction?

With the world slowly figuring out how to monetise mainstream online video content such as movies and series, platforms such as Hulu, while still in their infancy, are bringing a collective sigh of relief to content owners everywhere. Although piracy will still run rife, improved connectivity combined with easy micro payments will make paying for good quality online video more convenient and leave you feeling less guilt ridden than hitting the torrents would.

If my final prediction below comes to fruition, I think we may even see this happening in SA.

10. 2010, the year the Internet becomes cheap in SA:

I'm not sure if this is a predication as much as it is a wish, but we started to see signs of this toward the end of 2009. For years, SA has been choked when it comes to online access. But with more pipes landing on our shores, the ISP environment is starting to get very competitive and I expect this to heat up even more in 2010. A reduction in shaping and the elimination of bandwidth caps should make 2010 a really exciting one for eMarketers, as our target markets enter the world we've been dying to show them for years.

About Rob Stokes

Rob Stokes is the founder and group CEO of Quirk eMarketing, Africa's largest full service online marketing agency, founded in 1999 towards the end of his marketing honours degree at the University of Cape Town. Today, Rob is the guiding force in an ever-growing agency based in Cape Town, Johannesburg and London. Rob is driven by his love of technology and the constant search for innovative and fresh ideas. A regular local and international speaker, he is also the co-author of the Quirk textbook, eMarketing: the essential guide to online marketing. Contact Rob on +27 (0)21 462 7353, email him at rob.stokes@quirk.biz and follow him on Twitter at @robstokes.



This year heralds the 'Planet of the Apps'

This year will see us become the 'Planet of the Apps', with those addictive little downloads popping up on every screen - including your car dashboard, television and photo frames...

1. 'Apps, apps' everywhere:

Three billion downloaded, heading for a download rate of one billion per month... no question, Apple has kick-started a new modality. Expect to see apps everywhere...

2. Smart TVs:

Suddenly the humble television set is sexy again... and not just for DStv or the SABC. Expect to see television redefined with online content, interactivity and exploration. You know how you are watching a movie and you think, hmm... wonder what the buzz on this is. You pick up your phone or laptop and head over to metacritic.com or imdb.com to see what others think or download some trivia.

Well, you'll now be able to do that on your TV. No phone or computer needed. So, yes, those "apps" will be on your television as well. [I want an Internet-enabled touchscreen TV on my fridge - acting editor]

3. Location, location, location:

Geeks and marketers are going to sound like estate agents. The proliferation of devices kitted out with every sensor imaginable means that our phones are capable of situating us in 3D space. That will allow for the exploration of services and content in a specific geographic location in new and exciting ways.

Augmented reality will also allow for the overlay and merging of cyberspace with the real world... cool!

4. Boxee:

The software set top box that you can install on anything... Derived from the XBMC project, Boxee is a social media content service that merges Internet content, broadcast and info all in one. Install it onto your PC and you can dip into CNN on demand and YouTube etc on your computer or TV screen. Download at www.boxee.tv.

5. Apple:

Expect Apple to be at the 'nexus' of almost every significant development in tech. This stems from its uncanny ability to tune into what consumers actually want (perhaps it has proved the irrelevance of market research; can consumers really know what they want, if they don't know what is possible?).

The other reason is that it has built a foundation for the assembled brainpower of a planet to innovate on. The iPhone is a dream device bristling with every sensor imaginable and a powerful development environment. We're already taking some of this jaw-dropping innovation for granted and there's a ton more coming.

6. Goodbye Nokia, hello Android:

Expect Nokia to ship an Android phone. Its lawsuit against Apple is a last gasp of desperation. It has gazed at the product pipeline and realised that it simply cannot compete. Its friends in the networks are also telling it consumers want one of these new "app" phones.

The problem is there is space for two, maybe three, major players in the new mobile eco-system. Apple is king of the hill with the iTunes Store, digital distribution and the iPhone OS. Google is a worthy competitor, albeit it with a different philosophy to Apple. The last slot has Palm, Motorola and RIM seeing if they can lock it in. But it's too late for Nokia.

The best way to get into the game is to flavour Android (Google's open mobile operating system) to its handsets and offer the networks a phone they can compete with. That's what Motorola did and the 'Droid' is keeping it in the game.

7. Show me your existentialist angst:

People will tweet and blog mundane details of their boring lives in greater and greater detail. How ridiculous is it getting? Well, let me direct you to the growing phenomenon of suicidal thoughts and depression brought on by the 'unobtainium-ness' of them ever living in a world such as Avatar's Pandora. I mean, can't these people get a real life?

8. Mom still won't answer her phone:

Sorry, technology, or as Ali G said, 'techmology' can only go so far. We can get that lump of plastic to emit ear-splitting sounds, but your mother/wife/girlfriend will be just as oblivious.

9. Just because it's digital, doesn't mean it's different:

Maybe 2010 will be the year that the industry realises that it doesn't matter if new media breaks the news. Someone still has to fly the chase helicopter, interview the bystanders etc. Print media in particular must realise it's not in the business of printing and distribution but rather in the business of content creation. The fact that it ends up on silicon instead of wood or plastic is meaningless. Give people what they want and they will pay for quality and convenience.

Proof of this is that my leisure reading volumes rocketed, after I got the Kindle e-book app for iPhone. Why? Because it is quick, easy and convenient. But do I still want to give Stig Larssen my bucks for an awesome Millennium trilogy? You bet I do and I did.

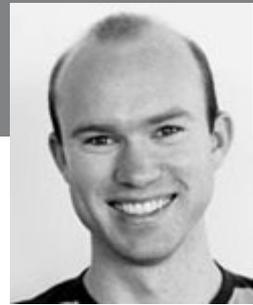
10. "It's a computer, Jim, but not as we know it..."

I have to add my two cents in on what Apple will announce on 27 January 2010. The entire world is waiting to see what Steve has up his sleeve. Is it a Kindle-killer, a netbook killer...?

I believe it is going to be a killer all right, but a killer of our current computing paradigm of PC, screen, keyboard and mouse. Apple is going to shoot a hole in the head of its own industry and introduce a portable device that will redefine computing like the original Macintosh once did. Think small... a tablet, and think big too... a 60" Apple TV running the same OS as the tablet and suddenly all your apps, content and media are on your TV too....

About Anice Hassim

Anice Hassim is the head strategist at Durban-based immedia (www.immedia.co.za), a highly successful digital consultancy. He's currently the key driver behind a suite of real-time tools and platforms that allow traditional broadcasters, including radio stations YFM and Jacaranda, to engage and understand what their audiences are doing on their digital properties. Contact Anice on tel +27 (0)31 566 8000, email him at iphonedev@immedia.co.za and follow him on Twitter at [@anicehassim](https://twitter.com/anicehassim).



Looking into the ORM crystal ball

Having a publically accessible reputation is something just about everybody has come to terms with. In today's highly connected online environment, our friends, family, colleagues and potential clients are just a mouse click away from finding out a great deal about us - both good and bad. This has forever altered the playing field and brands are increasingly being defined by their consumers - no longer by the brand manager.

This change in brand control has opened up Pandora's box. The entire discipline has been shaken and a new set of rules and trends are coming forward.

1. Combating brand diffusion:

One of the most powerful attributes about online is that content consumers are also creators. This means that brands experience so-called generations of PR - which typically starts with an event, moves to social media, goes to online press, moves to offline press and back to social media - and so the cycle continues.

With each generation, the brand is slightly diffused - less about what the brand manager wants said and more about what the consumers believe. From an interaction perspective, I believe we will see more corporates using engagements to correct and realign the brand between PR generations - ultimately providing brand and marketing managers with more control over their messaging.

2. Trust:

At the end of 2008, the Edelman Trust Barometer was released which startlingly showed a 23% decrease in trust for companies (down to just 36% in the US). Thankfully, in its midyear report, it found that trust in companies is up by a whopping 12% in six months.

In terms of online engagement, this certainly bodes well, but the trend is not without its reservations. Brands can increasingly expect to earn the trust of their stakeholders and those which successfully build relationships with their consumers will flourish from a new-found trust - ultimately providing a higher success rates with communication activities.

3. Social media lockdown:

I'm sure you know more than a couple of people who have had their Twitter and Facebook accounts banned at work and I believe the situation will get worse before it gets better. This year we will see more companies either banning social media sites altogether or putting very stringent rules in place.

While social media protocols are considered online reputation management (ORM) best practice, I believe companies are yet to develop their understanding of social media to a level where they appreciate that their staff are useful marketing machines themselves.

4. Transparently transparent:

As more of a company's confidential information finds its way online, brands are going to be forced to either spend their resources routing out and dealing with outbreaks or embracing the trend and providing more information online.

This has a number of benefits (if you can stomach this very bold move). These include stakeholders taking an active role in the brand through wisdom of the crowds and crowdsourcing, and, secondly, through the growth of trust through transparency.

5. Filling the information vacuum:

All too often we find that - while brands provide a great deal of information about themselves - they often talk at their target market, not with them. Consequently, consumers are left with a knowledge vacuum - the gap between what consumers know about a brand and what the brand says about itself.

As brands spend more time understanding their consumers' needs, by using ORM tools, the model for PR and communication online will change to fill the vacuum and empower communicators to perpetuate the conversation more effectively.

6. Social media measurement (SMM):

SMM is the current holy grail of digital. With the dramatic shift from the impression (traditional media) and engagement (digital media) paradigms, there currently exists no standard means of measuring the value of online activity and PR.

That said, online marketing and PR agencies are increasingly under pressure to demonstrate the value of their activities (something which digital typically does very well) and I believe that this need will be sufficient to garner the necessary R&D for a global solution to be found - I believe 2010 will be the year we find a solution.

7. Legal responsibilities:

In 2009 the King III Report was released, which included a full chapter (chapter 8) on stakeholder reputation management. From past experience, we know that changes in the King Reports take some time to filter into big business, but as the value of reputation becomes more apparent, there will be a dramatic shift, only in part because of King III, for corporates to be concerned with their online reputation.

Already we are seeing the most successful brands heavily investing in reputation management and, with the added legal considerations, 2010 is bound to see corporates and individuals taking their reputations far more seriously.

8. Real-time expectation:

With Google's recent addition of real-time results (from Twitter) in its search engine results pages, we will see a dramatic reduction in the acceptable response latency, by consumers, should a crisis hit. Consumers increasingly expect brands to instantly engage them and failure to do so is causing brands to be tarnished.

In 2010, brands which are monitoring the conversation and are nimble in their responses will gain huge favour from their community, not only as a brand which cares, but also as a brand which accepts the role which consumers play in its development.

9. Rise of the champion:

If history is anything to go by, all major reputation crises have been lead by a champion: Dell Hell by Jeff Jarvis, United Airlines Breaks Guitars by Dave Carroll and QVC vs. Blogger by Donn Edwards. In all cases, the champion became the focus person for general unhappiness towards the brand. As we understand more of how social norms are established online, I believe that brands which are, correctly, monitoring (and engaging) the conversation online will be able to resolve many of these problems before a champion is able to come forward.

That said, identifying possible champions and sincerely resolving their problems will begin to provide substantial returns, compared to the downside where brands lose millions through reputation crises.

10. That special touch:

If you are planning to engage, there are some key considerations which you need to be aware of. Primarily, your engagements need to focus not only on the marketing and communications needs, but also on branding needs.

Engagement is ultimately another touch point, one which is truly one-to-one, and adding a little something special to the conversation (be it a voucher or thought leadership) can certainly help with the perception of a brand. As brand managers, marketing managers and communications professionals get a better grip on this digital landscape, we can expect to see some very cunning brand engagements in 2010 and beyond.

ORM is an ever-changing approach to marketing, communications and branding. Focusing on the intersection between consumers' and business needs provides a way to empower strategic decision-making at all levels within a business.

2010 is going to be a very exciting year, thanks to the tremendous global media attention with the 2010 FIFA World Cup coming to our shores, and as the digital environment takes off even further. May the conversation be with you!

About Tim Shier

Tim Shier, formerly the marketing manager of Quirk eMarketing, is the MD of sister company BrandsEye (www.brandseye.com, [@brandseye](https://twitter.com/brandseye)), a world-class online reputation management company based in Cape Town, with offices in Johannesburg and London. With a degree in computer science and psychology, Tim has unique experiences with both technology and human behaviour - the perfect blend for top notch eMarketing and ORM cunning. Contact Tim on tim.shier@brandseye.com or tel +27 (0)21 462 7353. Follow him on Twitter at [@timshier](https://twitter.com/timshier).



Likely brand developments this year

2009 was a dramatic year - the global recession dominated and had a powerful impact on business, locally and globally. So let's look at likely brand developments in 2010.

1. The global recession and good corporate citizenship:

Are we in the middle of a U-shaped recession? Or is it more of a W? Or, are we headed down a dark staircase of uncertain length? Even if a recovery is finally happening, the brand fallout will last a long time.

One of the key fallout points from the crash is resentment from the man on the street towards corporations in general, and financial corporations specifically - which are perceived to not only have caused the current crisis but also to be cashing in on the resulting bailouts.

Outsurance retains its position as South Africa's good citizenship leader, and don't expect any local brands to seriously challenge the massive hearts and minds impact achieved by its community presence in 2010. Conversely, expect the rest of the pack to work very hard to prove their good intentions to consumers.

2. Green gets gritty:

After many years of eco-hype, the world is coming face to face with dwindling resources and environmental degradation.

On the global political front, we can expect ongoing tussles between major nations in 2010 as to how to go about defining emissions reduction targets, as well as disputes between 'the West and the Rest' in terms of who cuts back on emissions and according to what schedule.

There is going to be a lot of eco-street fighting going on in 2010, which will bring the eco-crisis fully and finally into popular global consciousness.

3. Green brand clutter grows:

As a result, more and more brand new, powerful eco-products are going to hit the shelves. The isol - an intelligent solar power source - is sure to be a big hit, offering liberation for households from reliance on Eskom.

The focus on proactive 'green branding' will also accelerate. As it does, however, having a green identity will offer diminishing returns for brands, which will be forced to explore how they differentiate themselves further within the general eco space.

4. The people brand boom:

People brands have taken new shape in troubled times, with former economic moguls putting serious weight behind the development of an altruistic identity. George Soros, Bill Gates and Warren Buffet lead the pack internationally. The South African pick for 2010 has to be Tokyo Sexwale. A public commitment to flying economy class aside, his high visibility as minister of public settlements is only getting higher as he leads the destruction of low-standard public housing.

With millions in his personal bank account and a powerful economic and political track record behind him, watch out for the rise and rise of the Sexwale brand in 2010, and beyond.

5. It's about (far) more than networking now:

Twitter's presence expanded daily in South Africa over 2009, and many brands have caught onto this phenomenal marketing tool which allows consumers, fans and brands to come far closer to each other, while remaining at an oddly comfortable Internet distance.

One of the most significant shifts currently occurring is the expansion of personal networks into the desktop context. Skype is a key player here, connecting people as they log onto their desktop, meaning that social networks no longer rely on a specific website or portal as a communal meeting point. Today, people are connected as soon as they power up their machines (be they cellphones or computers).

Google's ongoing roll-out of free and innovative web applications is also important to note - the trend of web-based software (cloud computing) is likely to continue strongly in 2010.

6. Value value value:

One of the key strategic issues facing most brands is the ability to develop a strong yet nuanced interpretation of global society's recession-orientated quest for value.

In just one example, South African Internet service providers (ISPs) look set to go head to head in a price vs value cat-fight. Newcomer Screamer.co.za has shaken the industry with the offer of unlimited bandwidth for a flat fee, pulling the rug out from under established providers. Some ISPs, especially those lacking strong customer service credentials, could be obliterated in a bandwidth price war.

7. Brand saturation: is PR the new advertising?

Media saturation has forced brands to move into unknown territories, and to create new campaigns and new ways of communicating with the target market. Local trend guru Dion Chang, along with his trend agency, Flux, cites research by American company Millward Brown that shows that "43% of US companies are planning to use word of mouth as a key component of their marketing strategies."

Traditional advertising, while always attractive as a mass market awareness builder, is still losing its sheen and its ability to influence trends and purchase decision making. Taking up the slack is a morphing form of viral public relations. From here on out, in other words, expect the unexpected.

8. Social customer service:

Within the clutter, companies across the board are grappling with customer service and interaction within the social networking space. Each company will need to develop its own approach, developed within the context of its internal culture and its ability to take social networking support to scale.

For example, financial services brand Wells Fargo uses a set of "Social Concierges" who tweet on the "Ask_Wells Fargo" account. The Wells Fargo Concierges set expectations around hours of service and are up-front about the fact that they cannot disclose account information. Many other brands are operating in the same way, and it's only a matter of time before local players follow suit.

9. New branding:

Sonic branding is just one example of the emergence of new branding mechanisms. Here, brands are following the path set by Microsoft and musician/composer Brian Eno (who famously composed the three-second Windows 95 startup tune) and are developing sound-sets that reinforce, augment or clarify brand identity. BlackBerry, for example, uses a set of distinctive sounds in its TV and radio advertising that ensures consumers identify with the brand on an auditory level.

10. We want it now!

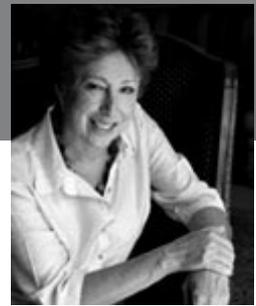
Trendwatching.com calls it Nowism, and it influences most facets of modern life. Traffic directions are on demand using GPS navigation systems, banking occurs in real time and sports results are accessed instantly via cellphones.

Johannesburg recently held the first South African version of the famous TED public speaking events, and, of course, the function was covered live by Twitterers and bloggers alike, including high profile journalists.

Expect Nowism to be the 'meta driving force' of the year in 2010. Brands that are successful in meeting the Nowism gauntlet thrown down by consumers will thrive.

About Janice Spark

Janice Spark is a director and managing partner at advertising and PR agency Idea Engineers (www.ideaengineers.co.za). Janice, a founding member of Idea Engineers, has directed the marketing efforts of leading global organisations for over 20 years. Contact her on tel +27 (0)11 803 0030, email her at janice@ideaengineers.co.za and follow her on Twitter at [@janicespark](https://twitter.com/janicespark).



Media, social media more intertwined than ever

When I was asked to compile this column, I thought I had to be particularly careful not to overlap with other forecasters by talking about the interaction between social networking and media - but it's impossible. Social networking has impacted onto every form of communication, especially media. With just a cellphone you can be aware of what's happening anywhere in the world - virtually as it's happening...

1. Social media:

The impact of social media is increasing daily. Whenever people turn on their computers, they're likely to receive a message that could change their thinking on a particular issue or make them aware of a new product. In other words, a blurring of the lines between public relations, advertising and straightforward news and editorial.

Does this make it easier for PR people to reach their markets? Just one slot on YouTube can turn a life around - look at Susan Boyle! But do enough people in communication know how to take advantage of social networking? That's another story...

2. Citizen journalism:

What was seen as an annoying idea and something to be looked down on by traditional media is coming of age - big time. As stories break in the news, sometimes even before, someone is tweeting, blogging on the topic or sounding off on a website.

3. Blogging:

You're not blogging? Apart from us journalists taking advantage of this way of writing without an editor looking over our shoulder, everyone and her aunty has taken to this way of disseminating material. Again - a new communication vehicle and one that is definitely impacting the way people are receiving both hard and soft news.

3. Quality of writing:

Ask most people what they think of the standard of journalism today and you'll notice their face contort before they open their mouths. Well, as someone who trains within the media, I can totally understand this.

I have to say the material we have to work with today in terms of journalism graduates, in the main, leaves a lot to be desired. Blame it on bad schooling, SMS language, whatever - English language standards have definitely deteriorated. Media houses are aware of this and many are concentrating on improving their staffs' skills so hopefully we'll see an improvement here.

4. Increase in sensationalist journalism:

Which are the only magazines and newspapers whose figures are increasing? The sensationalist press. Why? Because South Africans, like their European and American counterparts, love "skandaal". This explains why the Joostgate story went on and on and poor old Tiger suddenly found himself in publications he never expected to see himself in.

These stories boost media circulation which is why we, the media, actually love and adore characters such as Julius Malema - his name on the front page sells papers. Don't be surprised to see a 'Daily Sun' aimed at a paler market appear this year.

5. Less tolerance of mediocre content:

Having said people lap up sensational stories, at the same time they do think harder what they'll spend their hard-earned cash on. Gone are the days when people will simply purchase the same magazine every month. Today, the quality of content has to meet the consumer's needs and the days of stories on 'how to get over your divorce' or 'three women's stories on how they changed their lives' is getting more than stale. The discerning reader wants a story that tells them something 'they don't already know' and which will add value to their life.

6. Electronic versus paper:

There's been much speculation over the last decade as to whether the print media will survive in South Africa. Luckily for the print media, not every consumer in this country has access to the Internet so, although the effect of electronic media has been felt and is growing daily, it hasn't replaced print in any significant way.

7. Economics and the media:

Hopefully, 2010 will bring much needed revenue flooding into South Africa, spilling over into the media by way of ad spend. All media houses, electronic and print have felt the effect of tight advertising budgets and everyone is holding their breath waiting to see if the 2010 FIFA World Cup will in fact change this. 2009 will be remembered by many journalists as the year they were either laid off, forced to go part time or cover three peoples' work.

8. Multimedia journalism:

To make it today as a journo, you have to be flexible and able to go from print to electronic and Internet with ease. If you can't, you're not much use in the world of new media [and according to Koos Bekker, if you're over 35, you're over the hill... - acting editor]

9. Freelancing:

With so many media people losing their full-time jobs, this area has really grown (see www.safrea.co.za and www.freelancentral.co.za), forcing many top professional journalists, editors, photographers and associated professions to 'fly solo'.

The good news for anyone in the communications world is that they can now dip into this rich pool and find a specialist journalist or editor to advise and help them spread their message in a professional manner.

On the flip side of this, many publications, having cut back on full-time staff, rely on freelancers to feed them stories - although paying them the same (or worse) rate they paid 10 or even 20 years ago!

About Marion Scher

Marion Scher (www.mediamentors.co.za) is an award-winning journalist, lecturer, media trainer and consultant with 20 years experience in the industry. For more of her writing, go to her Bizcommunity blog or to www.marionschat.blogspot.com.



A Google memo on the year ahead

This year is an exciting one for Google, both in South Africa and across the continent, and not just because of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Things move at speed in the technology world and, despite the global slowdown of 2009, a number of areas accelerated markedly to pave the way into 2010. In South Africa, I think some of the most significant developments and opportunities are going to be in the geo and mobile space, which online marketers need to follow closely.

In a nutshell, these are my eight areas to watch:

1. More people online:

The Internet is becoming more and more of an integral part of life in South Africa. According to World Wide Worx, Internet usage has increased by 15% in the past year. This is excellent news.

Access, affordability and content creation are all important for growth in the online space, which in turn creates value not only for consumers but for businesses, which need to closely follow the new behaviours of their customers.

2. Online marketing:

South Africa is officially out of the recession but, as with the other developed economies, recovery will be slow. What's clear, though, is that the winners in the recession were those businesses which put digital at the heart of their strategies.

We're now operating in a world where there is no room for guesswork in marketing, and business decisions can be based on cold, hard numbers. Ecommerce players now understand online marketing is a truly measurable medium, and that by constantly testing and improving their landing pages, they can see real return on investment (ROI) and get increasing value from search traffic.

South African businesses of all sizes still have almost six months to make the most of online marketing in the run-up to the world cup.

3. Mobile:

Mobile is booming across Africa and is an area that businesses can not afford to miss out on. There were +90 million new subscribers on the continent in 2009, and a projected +350 million new subscriptions in the next four years.

Mobile internet access in South Africa has already surpassed laptop and desktop access, and will be a key feature of the world cup and beyond - as both visitors and local search for information while on the move.

Globally, Android-powered and similar handsets are showing how consumer behaviour changes with the right device, and we expect to see interesting new trends emerge as new devices take root to aid a better, more innovative web.

4. Maps:

More accurate, representative local information can really improve the breadth of information available about a given area and, in turn, can bolster tourism and business investment. Whether you're looking for a restaurant in Sandton, a concert venue in Soweto, or a car dealership in Bryanston, geo products (such as Google Maps and Maps for Mobile) can help you find the info you need in a visual context.

Already we've seen thousands of South African businesses sign up for our free Local Business Centre, and we're expecting many more in the coming months to take advantage of free advertising, to users who are searching for them by activity or geography. We'll see more and more businesses, especially SMEs, raising their profiles by making information about their services easily accessible.

5. Street View:

Street View is on the way to South Africa and I expect to see a lot of excitement about this, as South Africans check out all their favourite places, whether it's the Cape coastal routes, Kruger or Newtown.

It's not only about consumers, though. It's yet another online functionality for marketers.

Any business can add an interactive Map or Street View panorama to their business website, making it an even more compelling destination for customers or clients. A property agent, for example, can use the Google Street View API to display all of his or her "for-sale" properties on Google Street View, within his own website, to make his service more attractive to prospective buyers.

6. Online video:

Online video has reached scale. YouTube is now streaming over a billion videos a day, including long-form content, further blurring the boundaries between TV viewing and Internet activity. There are also increasingly innovative uses of video within marketing campaigns. Video is a very compelling and effective way to deliver a message, and you never know what will become a viral hit.

7. Search:

Today, the web grows by several billion pages each day--pages that are ever-more complex, dynamic, and interactive. Whilst organising this information becomes more challenging, users' expectations only rise: today people expect the right answer immediately, and in the first result.

At Google, we think we're just scratching the surface of what search engines will be able to do in terms of providing customised, personalised, and relevant results. We are not alone in the quest to organise the web and many other constructive approaches are appearing, such as Bing and Wolfram Alpha.

One of the areas which I think has a lot of promise is search personalisation. The perfect search engine will understand what you meant, not simply what you typed.

8. News and publishing

Just as there's no single cause for the news industry's current struggles, there's no single solution. News publishers are already experimenting on a number of fronts, working to find new ways to drive more traffic and revenue.

Google is partnering with dozens of publishers to assist in this process: we've recently launched experiments such as Living Stories, which collects coverage of an event on one dynamic page, and Google Fast Flip, to provide online news consumers with a "magazine-like" experience. Google is also exploring technology solutions to make paid content systems more seamless for publishers and users, such as subscription services and billing platforms.

In 2010, I expect to see Google's continued commitment to working with news publishers to ensure that journalism thrives online.

About Stephen Newton

Formerly the Google head of analytics and commerce for Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), Stephen Newton is the new country manager for Google South Africa. Stephen is an accomplished business leader who has spent nearly a decade working in the online space, where he has been responsible for growing and leading top on-line companies. Before joining Google, Newton was VP of Double Click's Ad Exchange and GM of Hitwise UK. For more, email press@google.com.



Online keeps maturing

As we move into 2010, we can look forward to robust growth for the online advertising industry as bandwidth prices keep falling, more consumers join the broadband world, and more companies embrace the benefits of digital.

We can also expect to see not only more use of the online channel by advertisers and marketers, but more sophisticated use of online to drive real business benefit.

Here are my predictions for the year ahead:

1. Richer content and media:

More heated competition in the South African telecommunications market - particularly in the international undersea cable space - has helped to drive bandwidth costs down. We can expect to see per-gig costs for data to keep falling, which means that South Africans will be more able to afford the costs of consuming rich media such as podcasts and streaming video.

As a result, media owners are expected to offer more multimedia content on their sites and advertisers will also start integrating more rich media ads into their campaigns.

2. Social media:

During 2009, many SA brands hopped onto the social networking bandwagon by setting up presences in channels such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. This year, we'll see them leveraging social media in a more strategic manner using online reputation management tools. They'll also start to understand that social media is about humanising their brands, rather than hard-selling.

Clever marketers will develop relationships and engage with customers using social media. Of course, not everyone will understand the importance of social media, nor how to use it correctly, since it requires a massive mind shift. We can expect to see some interesting and innovative campaigns in the social networking space this year.

3. Moving beyond the click:

As we've said time and again, one of the key benefits of the online environment is the way that it allows marketers to track and measure the effectiveness of their ads and campaigns.

Although the real impact a campaign has on business and the bottom line can be monitored and analysed using a number of powerful tools that have been around for a while, most marketers are still just looking at clickthroughs and impressions. This could be the year we see marketers start to look at more meaningful measures that allow them to ascertain the real impact their campaigns are having.

4. The gap widens:

I believe that the gap between the early adopters and the latecomers to the digital space will widen dramatically during 2010. Those businesses with a fairly mature digital presence have developed online models based around true ROI and will keep reinvesting in online. They will be demanding new solutions and methods from agencies and media as they seek to maximise their returns.

Businesses that have yet to enter this space, or have only started testing the water, will still be awed by the most basic offerings and won't yet be ready to adopt the full range of solutions that digital has to offer.

As an industry, we need to tailor solutions and approaches for clients in both camps.

5. An increase in the amount of network buys:

We're expecting to see interest in network buys pick up in 2010 for a number of reasons. One of the most important of these lies in the fact that media owners will want to maximise their investments in their online space.

One way to achieve this is by offering unsold inventory through networks. Online ad networks allow advertisers to broaden their reach cost-effectively and efficiently, making them attractive when budgets are still under pressure.

6. Adoption of behavioural targeting:

SA marketers have lagged behind their international counterparts in their use of behavioural targeting, which uses information collected about a user's web-browsing behaviour (for example, pages visited or searches conducted) to choose advertisements to display to him or her.

The reason for this is that up until now, the SA web environment was thought to be too small to support effective behavioural marketing because its concept works best where there is a big pool of users and websites.

Growing Internet penetration means that the concept is finally becoming viable for SA online marketers. The tools and technologies that enable this type of targeting are quickly becoming available and are being adopted by marketers who understand the need to cleverly reach their target audience in a mass environment.

7. Mobile heats up:

At the beginning of every new year, industry observers tell the market to expect it to be the year that mobile will "take off". But in 2010, we can really expect to see mobile gather momentum as a channel for marketing and advertising.

One of the key reasons for this is the role that mobile plays in social networking, where Facebook and Twitter are wildly popular on mobile phones. Though there are massive opportunities in mobile for marketers, it is a challenging space that requires a mind shift from media owners and advertisers alike.

8. Listening becomes key:

With the rise of social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, forums, blogs and many other channels, it is becoming critical for companies to listen to what consumers, employees, and thought leaders are saying about them.

We expect to see many companies embrace online reputation management tools and strategies to monitor and analyse what people are saying about them online. These tools allow businesses to take control of their online reputations and defend and enhance them.

9. I'll Facebook you:

People are increasingly using social networking spaces like Twitter and Facebook for some of the interactions with friends and colleagues that used to be carried out on email - such as inviting guests to a party or sharing holiday photos. Just as 'Google' became a verb, we're seeing more and more people saying things like "I'll Tweet you the details" or "I'll Facebook you to stay in touch."

10. 2010 to spur online activity:

Finally, given the global nature of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, we can expect to see it spur a great deal of online activity in South Africa. Many clients are using online to market themselves to world cup tourists, and this will continue until the last visitors have left the country at the conclusion of the tournament. The world cup will also boost use of online news sites and social media channels in South Africa. During 2010, we will also see advertisers and agencies targeting users across multiple channels using non-traditional digital methods such as hypertargeting (customisable and personalised targeting to the audience based on metrics like inferred or declared interests).

We will also begin to see a shift within budget allocations which corrects the disparity between the approximately 78% of LSM 8-10 that is digitally connected and the fact that only 2% of adspend is allocated to online.

About Diane Charton

Diane Charton is MD of Acceleration Media (www.accelerationmedia.co.za), a strategic digital media consultancy solely focused on helping agencies and marketers make the most of the digital marketing channels. Diane oversees the growth of South Africa's leading online media strategy, planning and buying company, and helps clients to maximise their use of the Internet. Contact Diane on tel +27 (0)21 487 1008 or email her at dcharton@accelerationmedia.co.za.



Media, audience are content co-creators

It's not just professionals making content anymore, but rather professionals working with their audiences to create content.

1. Multiple revenue streams and innovative business models:

Media businesses will increasingly look to create new payment gateways and find opportunities to get someone to pay for what they create, beyond just advertisers. In Germany there is a media company that makes more money from selling branded T-shirts than from advertisements.

Rupert Murdoch has been threatening to find a way to prevent Google from crawling and searching the content of his titles without any meaningful benefit for his brands. Advertising revenue just will not cut it. He needs to find new ways to monetise the access.

There is a conversation happening with Microsoft to see whether making the sites searchable by the engine, that's willing to pay for the privilege, is workable. Media companies know that they can't sustain themselves on a 'free' model. Expect lots of change and innovation in this space.

2. The Attention Economy:

The business of media is either in major blockbusters, heavily marketed that capture the imagination of the general populace and become a key point of confluence and conversation, or in specialised niches. Media audiences will give their time and attention to value. If you're providing something that can't be found somewhere else at an irresistible price (free?) and in a way that is convenient to me, I'll try it. Just don't waste my time!!

3. Trusting the 'tribe':

Everyone's trying to sell you something. When you enter a search phrase on Google - you get so much information, you're not sure who to trust.

Human beings want to hear about the experiences of others. It's been this way since we emerged from the trees. There was a time when the view of one 'trusted' expert source was enough. Today, we're happier when hundreds of humans have a similar view allowing us to have the confidence to make a decision. Technology has made it possible for us to glean a truly global view on everything.

Media companies that give their audiences a platform to express themselves will continue to benefit as these communities sustain themselves and become places where 'like minded' people gather to share their experiences and passions.

4. Circus Maximus

Some things are still worth paying for and scheduling our lives around.

Despite being able to watch what we want, when we want it and where, people still want to congregate around certain time-specific activities with all the hassle of parking, traffic and inconvenience. Consumers will download Cold Play music without paying for it but will still pay to go out and watch them in concert.

Technology can't substitute these live events and the basic human desire to commune. I think that it's coded into our genes. Humans want in-the-flesh communal experiences, whether at places of worship, sports events or rock concerts.

5. Radio stations will focus on what can't be substituted:

Radio stations know that they must exploit iPod and MP3 device weaknesses. Programming that you can't get anywhere else is the key to radio's survival. John Vlismas uncensored, weekly on Mondays at 10pm on Jacaranda 94.2, at no charge, anyone?

About Omar Essack

Omar Essack has been executive director: broadcasting at Kagiso Media (www.kagisomedia.com) since 2004 and began his career in commercial radio in 1990. Omar is a member of the University of the Witwatersrand Journalism Advisory Board, executive committee member of the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF), a trainer in broadcast management in South East Asia with the Deutsche Welle Academy and was a panel member at the European Radio Awards in 2007. Contact Omar on tel +27 (0)11 537 0600 or email him at omar@kagisomedia.co.za.



Media law a necessity, not a luxury

Most industries have felt the effects of the global recession and with these come a general desire to act more responsibly and to be particularly strategic in any marketing and planning. Companies have adopted a more conservative “wait-and-see” outlook and are, instead, giving considerable thought to what is important and what will keep them afloat in a still uncertain market.

This level of awareness has resulted in a need to ‘protect and preserve’ that has certainly been seen by those in the legal marketing sector, with clients showing an increased interest in understanding, for example, how important it is to register a trademark, the effects of the Consumer Protection Act, the right advice when it comes to retrenching employees, etc.

1. Encouragement:

I believe in the year ahead South Africa will continue to be an attractive option for both foreign and local film production.

The ongoing support and encouragement from the Department of Trade & Industry (the dti), such as offering financial rebates on expenditure for film and television production in South Africa, serves to encourage local and foreign film producers to use film companies and their related services here. With the global recession affecting filmmakers worldwide, South Africa, with its natural beauty and potential, will hopefully continue to be a highly sought-after option.

2. Intellectual property:

It has never been more vital to protect your intellectual property and I predict 2010 will see a greater awareness of this as more and more companies realise the importance of, for example, registering their trademarks. A lack of intellectual property protection can be extremely costly versus the initial cost of making sure your rights, logos, company name, etc are yours alone.

In addition, more and more advertising agencies, marketing companies and website designers will become aware of the dangers of their clients not protecting their rights and will use this as a marketing opportunity for themselves by offering advice, through the expertise of a law firm, as an added service.

3. Quality, not quantity:

With tough economic times, 2010 will continue to see more conservative, yet perhaps wiser, choices made when it comes to company marketing and advertising spend. In the legal sector, now more than ever, law firms need to strategically plan their budgets with a focus on helping people by offering useful information as opposed to random spending on, say, corporate gifts.

There is a place for gifts as well but, in an economic downturn, people become more serious about their personal legal needs and offering information, which helps them, has far more value.

This shift began in 2009 and will continue throughout the year ahead.

4. Service delivery:

With more strategically orientated plans in place, service levels need to aspire to be exceptional. Competition is rife and often the only thing setting one business apart from another is the level of service offered.

Service, or very often the lack thereof, in South Africa is an ongoing bone of contention for many and I predict that in 2010, businesses will need to further raise their levels to satisfy clients' needs.

With more and more advertising agencies and marketing companies striving to offer their clients an all-round service (including intellectual property, contracts, etc.), media lawyers will need to deliver high levels of expertise to help agencies satisfy their clients' needs.

5. Contracts are a good thing:

Seriously. Again, in troubled economic times, people tend to take a more serious look at what measures or safety nets they have in place and I predict more consideration will be given to legal protection.

Contractual agreements are vital in media, advertising, marketing and related industries, whether between business and client, or employees and service providers. Having appropriate and exceptional contracts might seem costly and a bind initially but the peace of mind it offers is never more appreciated than when faced with a working relationship that has, for whatever reason, gone sour.

6. Events:

Larger law firms, as in most other sectors, have always enjoyed client events throughout the year, although 2009 saw a definite drop in the budget spend allocated for what becomes a luxury during tougher times.

Events calendars are more strategic than ever and this year, which has started with a more positive outlook, will see a change from the previous "large spend" (prior to 2009) to more thought been given to each and every event and the potential benefit it can bring.

7. Lawyers need to join the electronic revolution:

I believe that innovative law firms will see and understand the need to consider that their clients are often technologically advanced. Blogging, interactive websites, cellphones and other such marketing tools are the norm for most international law firms and yet many law firms here have a long way to go to be as competitive.

For example, websites need to be informative, engaging and interactive, not simply a bland tool put together out of necessity. 2010 will see leading law firms focus on raising their digital marketing strategies to match international standards.

8. Opportunities in Africa:

Africa continues to offer ample opportunity; however, South Africa is still an obvious gateway to doing business in other countries on the continent. 2009 saw more law firms focus on Africa and much foreign interest from large law firms in, particularly, the UK.

2010 will see Africa continue to be more and more attractive to those firms seeking exciting and viable opportunities in a less competitive (for now!) environment.

9. Going green:

With 2009 bringing so much often negative and difficult change (unemployment, retrenchments, financial difficulties, etc.) many are looking at leading more quality-filled lives and excess is no longer considered attractive. The environment has been of growing importance over recent years and 2010 will see an even stronger drive to more consideration towards our planet and the damage we do to it.

It affects all sectors and it has been refreshing to see some law firms consider this and adapt their thinking to make sufficient changes in their working lives, from considering their carbon footprint to educating employees on the way each and every one of us can make a difference.

I foresee (and hope!) this will be even more common in the legal sector throughout the year ahead.

10. Social responsibility:

The legal sector has long been compelled to consider social responsibility, given the Law Society's requirement that each law firm perform a stipulated amount of pro bono hours per annum.

However, some law firms are doing more than is required and I believe 2010 will see a commitment to further increase their efforts. With government's focus on 'access to justice' many previously disadvantaged members of our communities will have access to the legal system, thanks to the ongoing support law firms offer.

About Rachelle Bricout

Rachelle Bricout is the owner of Create-A-Stir (www.create-a-stir.co.za), a niche marketing agency with a special focus on law. Rachelle has extensive experience both locally and internationally, with clients varying from small law firms to the largest full-service law firm in Africa. Create-A-Stir offers a full marketing, advertising and media service, as well as legal marketing training. Contact Rachelle on email at rachelle@create-a-stir.co.za.



Hard times leading to healthy transformation

Despite the challenges of a post-recession environment, the industry is uniquely positioned to make 2010 a year of vigorous transformation.

Having survived a tumultuous 2009, the advertising and communications industry has entered the New Year with new energy, passion and commitment to raise the profile of the profession in boardrooms across the country. The industry is more determined than ever to change perceptions about the profession and regain its space on the corporate ladder.

Budget attrition

As clients negotiate the post-recession hangover, budget attrition is to be expected and, for that which is spent - accountability and a return on investment is paramount. Campaigns can no longer be executed without sound measurement and tracking in place.

While these necessities may pose a formidable challenge to some agencies, it certainly will encourage a higher quality of service delivery and a renewed attention to the business of communications. In addition, the sharpened focus on profitability will promote and drive a more balanced and mutually beneficial relationship between agencies and their clients.

Over the years, there has been a notable lack of confidence in the industry's ability to deliver a tangible, measurable return on investment. However, as client-agency relationships are becoming more transparent, discussions over budget are becoming less one-sided, making it easier for both parties to reach a workable agreement.

More discerning

The industry is also becoming notably more discerning about taking on new business, with agencies devoting extensive time on background research before pitching for new accounts, as remuneration models are changing from the old retainer system to that of commission and project-based remuneration.

Instead of pitching on anything and everything, agencies are starting to ask the tough questions upfront because the realisation has hit home that dropping everything - including existing clients - to pitch on that so-called monster account, might just not make financial sense in the long term.

This renewed attention to quality over quantity is also being extended to human capital - fresh, new, young talent is widely sought. A culture of mentorship is being adopted within the industry, and leadership succession planning, as well as transformation, is a priority - this, to in order to attract talent and develop a new generation of leaders within the profession. Institutions such as the AAA School of Advertising are supported and regularly engaged with by industry.

New media platforms

The industry is embracing new media platforms such as social media and the upcoming digital terrestrial television (DTT) platform that will change the TV landscape quite dramatically. The use of new and alternative media platforms is more frequent because of the demand to integrate communications, break through clutter and engage the consumer using relevant media, as opposed to mass media.

Finally, the debate about alcohol advertising continues and will continue until well after the upcoming 2010 FIFA World Cup. Workgroups and co-regulation are being proposed to Government in an effort to a total ban on the advertising of alcohol products and the consequent adverse economic repercussions.

About Odette Roper

Odette Roper has been CEO of the Association of Communications and Advertising (ACA) (www.acasa.co.za) since October 2007. Prior to that, she headed up Sentech's advertising, events and sponsorship portfolios. She has worked for African Technology Holdings, the South African Post Office, Siemens, BP Southern Africa and Rent Works. For each of these companies Odette held managerial positions in marketing, business development and strategy. Contact Odette on tel +27 (0)11 781 2772, email ceo@aaald.co.za and follow her on Twitter at [@odette_roper](https://twitter.com/odette_roper).



Don't get too caught up in FIFA fever

Why is everybody so infatuated about 2010? In reality, it's another year just like any other. Yes, we do have the 2010 FIFA World Cup taking place in June/July, but this is only two months of a 12-month period. Here are the 10 trends that I believe will be seen during 2010.

1. Ninety five percent of clients' advertising budgets will remain the same or decline in real terms. The 5% that will increase will be those that are associated with the world cup. This will be a continuation of the last two years.
2. Media owners are going to have to become more creative in how they sell their product. Repeat business is not going to be guaranteed and new business is going to be awarded based on what the offer is. Ads24.co.za has just announced its 2010 rate increases and that it will be adopting a sliding scale, dictated by advertising demand, much the same as how TV rates are set.
3. "Show us the added value/discount" is going to become the norm. Clients and agencies alike are not going to just "accept" the rate increases that are thrown on the table, nor will we make commitments to media owners without ensuring that we get the best "bang for our buck" on behalf of our clients.
4. Media owners are going to have to package advertising airtime/space to ensure budgets are met. Media owners who have a couple of titles and/or stations to offer will do well to package these. Not only will this generate a higher percentage of the overall budget, but it will fill up space.
5. Mid-May through to mid-August are going to be very lean months for the majority of media owners. The general thought and recommendation is that if you don't need to fight for awareness or impact, then stay out of the media. The old saying "if you can't beat them, join them" will change to "if you can't beat them, stay away!"
6. Selling off entities and merging of others is going to become a regular news headline as media owners revert to their core lines of business. The strong will survive, the meek will cease, irrespective of how many people like that specific title/station. It is going to be a financial decision, not a "no advertising support therefore closure" decision.
7. Clients will become more demanding to ensure that their budgets are being spent most effectively. Every deal will have to be the best deal; every deal thereafter will have to improve as well. The good old "normal" offerings are not going to crack it.
8. Agencies - creative and media alike - will be doing more work, for less money and quicker turnaround times, to stay ahead of competitors. From a creative perspective, it will boil down to who can turn around a campaign which is to the brief, the quickest, for the least money.
9. If all goes well, hopefully we will see an upturn in the economy in the third quarter of 2010. No looking glass will ever be able to give us an exact end date to these tough times, however we live in hope. Is 2010 not the one year that we can all live in hope all the time?
10. Last but not least, October-to-mid-December will see an increase in advertising activity as it always has over a number of years. This activity, however, may not only be restricted to traditional media. Social media, ensuring reach of a number of new target markets such as the youth and the previous technophobes and a number of other markets, will all help increase the advertising spend.

Most importantly, 2010 should not be seen as a "negative" year, but rather as one of possible huge change with massive opportunities!

About Trish Guilford

Trish Guilford joined The MediaShop (www.mediashop.co.za) in 2001 as associate media director on the Absa account. She now has Pro Sano, Accpac, Scorpion Legal Protection, Wine Direct, Coega, Lilly and Ram Couriers, to name a few, tucked neatly under her belt. Prior to joining The MediaShop, Trish held the post of media strategist at The Jupiter Drawing Room and has been group media head planning at Ogilvy & Mather, media planner at Saatchi & Saatchi and media buyer at Hunt Lascaris/Eurospace (now OMD) and JWT. Contact Trish at trish.guilford@mediashop.co.za.



Freelancing and outsourced marketing

Freelancing is not for sissies - particularly not at the moment, where the market is awash with creatives who became involuntary freelancers following last year's redundancies. In 2010, the fittest WILL survive - and thrive - and clients can take their pick from a seriously talented pool of creatives who will be upping their games to get an edge over the competition.

1. There will be plenty of work:

2009 was a wonderful year for some freelancers, and a terrible year for others. Those who had more work than they know what to do were generally those with online skills: web design, development, online content generation and writing. This reflects the global move away from printed marketing materials to more measurable, affordable online media.

In 2010, as the economy recovers and as South Africa in particular gets a huge boost from the 2010 FIFA World Cup, I expect that companies will relook at print media, and graphic designers, DTP operators, etc. will find there's more work out there again. But they should still consider diversifying...

2. Freelancers will learn new skills - or team up:

Having said that traditional media will make a bit of a comeback, it's likely that freelancers who had a lean year in 2010 will likely retrain, adding an online element to their skillsets. Already I've seen graphic designers learn Flash or basic web development; and some writers have been swotting up on what makes good online copy.

Without becoming jacks of all trades, savvy freelancers will assess how they can add an online element to their existing range of services - or they'll find a fellow freelancer who offers complementary skills and team up to secure more projects.

3. Better bandwidth will enable better remote working:

While many freelancers already work with clients whom they've never met in person, as South Africa's bandwidth improves and prices fall, remote working will become easier and more popular.

In my business, conference calls are always held on Skype (have you seen what Telkom charges for one?!) and we often use it to share and transfer files too.

South African clients are still a little apprehensive about working remotely with freelancers, but international clients are generally quite used to it - and better connectivity can only mean more opportunities for SA freelancers, nationally and globally.

4. OMM will become a real alternative to the agency/freelancer choice:

In 2009 we saw something new start to emerge - an alternative to using an agency or a freelancer: outsourced marketing management (OMM). Under this model, clients contract in a senior marketing strategist, who becomes their virtual marketing manager. That person then subcontracts to their network of freelancers or small companies to help roll out the marketing strategy - eg designers, writers, web developers, SEO consultants, etc.

Freelancers need to know who these strategists are in order to get referred work. The client wins with this model as it's more affordable and flexible than retaining an agency; and they don't need to hunt for, brief and manage the freelancers (many clients wouldn't know where to start).

Driven by demand for this service, my own company has just launched a new division, Peppermint Source, to provide this sort of service to clients who don't have in-house marketing managers - and all signs indicate that OMM will become a very popular offering in 2010 and beyond.

5. Freelancers will get tough:

Sadly, many freelancers were left high and dry, with invoices overdue or unpaid, as their clients went under in 2009. In 2010, it's likely that we'll see freelancers toughening up about payment terms to ensure they're not left exposed.

I expect to see freelancers becoming more professional in how they estimate, invoice and contract with clients - even investing in financial management courses to help them get a better handle on their cash flows. They'll be more firm about up-front deposits and milestone-based payments, reducing risk by ensuring that the last stage payment for a project is a small one.

6. Measurement will give you an edge:

Clients are still spending on marketing, but they're much more prudent about it and want to see results. So, to get ahead in 2010, freelancers need to add metrics and useful reports to their services. Clients want to know whether their investment is working, so freelancers who come up with innovative ways of measuring this will find themselves very popular.

7. Freelancers will use social media socially, not professionally:

Sure, having an online profile is important as it helps a freelancer's credibility - but using it as a tool to find clients? Hmm. There's a huge pool of potential clients out there who think that tweeting is something birds do, so savvy freelancers will be building their reputations on a variety of media, not just Twitter and Facebook.

While social media can be great for combating freelancer loneliness and connecting with other freelancers, it can be very distracting. In 2010, I expect that freelancers will rein in their social media usage to increase productivity, limiting their use of it to the purely social, with a little peer networking thrown in.

8. Excellent service, top talent and professionalism are keys to survival:

As the economy improves, many people who were forced into freelancing last year will happily return to the safety of a monthly salary, but some will stick with the freedoms that freelance life offers.

With a large number of freelancers to choose from, clients can be picky, and demanding.

Those who survive - and flourish - will be the ones who offer superior talent, professionalism and, importantly, customer service. Be a pleasure to deal with, do a great job, and communicate well - and you will already be streaks ahead of the crowd.

About Jo Duxbury

Jo Duxbury has been providing a platform for marketers to find over 4500 industry freelancers since she launched her company, www.freelancecentral.co.za, in early 2006. In January 2010 she launched Peppermint Source, which offers a full outsourced marketing management service to companies who don't have the time, skills or staff to do their marketing themselves. Follow Jo's blog or her tweets on Twitter.



Climbing on the brandwagon

For today's brands to survive in tomorrow's world, a revolution of marketing strategy thought is required. What worked yesterday simply won't cut it tomorrow. The risk for brands in today's cluttered market is not that they won't be heard; it is that they will be met with indifference. It is my opinion that the following two trends will cause a cataclysmic change in the market place:

Lighthouse branding:

Brands are ruthlessly competing for the light and it is those who have soul that end up in the spotlight. Having a specific sense of what their soul looks like and stands for, and being able to communicate that in everything they do, is what successful brands do best.

These brands wear their soul on their sleeve and it translates and is carried throughout every fiber of their expression. It is evident in the staff they hire, the way they answer the phone, and how they greet you at the check-out counter.

Brand messaging should consistently illuminate your brand. It is far more than just consistency of CI or omnipresence - it is about consistency of expression. This is not a new thought; it was coined by Eat Big Fish, the UK-based challenger brand strategy firm. It was just years ahead of its time.

Consumers are so critical these days that any inconsistency in your brand expression will alienate them. If the car that you have aspired to, and now drive, fails to deliver on after sales service you simply won't tolerate it.

Watch this space : shortly 'brand managers' titles will change to 'expression managers'.

Loyalty generators:

Loyalty is the lifeblood of any brand. It is generated by being relevant and keeping in constant dialogue with consumers. This proposal sets out a plan on how to maintain dialogue with consumers by leveraging digital, social and mobile media.

Guiding principals

- Brands are sustained by the loyalty of a core group of consumers. The larger the base of loyal consumers, the more sustainable the brand.
- Brands generate loyalty by remaining relevant through effective positioning, communication, event activation, and packaging - essentially the P's of marketing; and by maintaining dialogue (interactive communication with consumers). Most dialogue is actually a monologue - it is one-way communication through media such as advertising, activation and promotion; however, through research, sometimes brands receive a lag response from consumers

The challenge

Significant marketing resources are spent in an attempt to generate loyalty, yet so little of it is spent on generating genuine, interactive dialogue. In an attempt to grow brands, marketers overlook the fundamental principle that there can be no real relationship without authentic dialogue.

This is not to say that all resources should be spent on conversing with consumers such that they can dictate what the brand should do; on the contrary, brands should not only reflect consumers need states but also their aspirations. Brands should navigate consumers and not the other way round.

The solution

There has been significant innovation and adoption of technology, more so social networking technology, which allows brands to dialogue with consumers more frequently, across multiple media, and it's now cheaper than ever before.

The core of the solution is to invest in a dialogue platform that leverages advancements in social networking technology to open up communication channels with consumers. This dialogue platform sits in-between a brand's communication platforms, such as promotions, advertising and experiential activation, and the consumer. It's a space or nexus where interaction is planned, information is shared, insights gained and loyalty is generated.

These two macro trends will become the brand drivers of tomorrow; the trajectory of consumers today, and society as a whole, makes their prevalence inevitable. Ignore them at your peril or engage with them for success.

A word of caution though: the rules change, the media of influence lose their power, and the thought leaders of today will have no idea tomorrow. The people who understand have been on the fringes for years and they are planning a massive welcome party. Reminds me of Polokwane in 2007.

About Abey Mokgwatsane

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