

# Correlate Digital, the business-centric problem solver

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Having worked in advertising and marketing for years, Alex Wright and Jake Rubinstein, cofounders of Correlate Digital, felt that the agency transition from traditional to digital has not yet unlocked the huge potential that digital channels afford businesses to grow. The duo, therefore, saw the need for providing a different model: offering far higher value with a determination to make marketing sweat for business.



Alex Wright and Jake Rubinstein, cofounders of Correlate Digital

## ▣ *Can you tell us a bit about Correlate Digital?*

**Alex Wright:** We pride ourselves on delivering marketing outcomes centred around business value in both the e-commerce and business-to-business (B2B) sectors. Our ethos is always to go beyond the cookie-cutter approach and build real, measurable and effective strategies that are birthed from deep research.

Correlate Digital wants to help you solve your business problems. That's our mission statement.

## ▣ *When, how and why did you get started?*

**Jake Rubinstein:** We started in September 2017. Alex and I had been colleagues at Aqua Online (now Wunderman South Africa) and connected a few years after he'd left the company to pursue other interests. It was serendipitous as I was also thinking "where to next?".

After meeting, we got chatting and realised we shared a goal to really harness the power of digital technology to drive results for businesses. We both have keen interests in brands, psychology and technology and thought there was something here - an opportunity to unearth real potential by truly wrapping marketing around the heart of a business.

So we made it our goal to wake up every day excited by the types of challenges that we need to tackle and build an amazing future-focused team, and that's what has become our reality.

### ▣ ***What is the core function of Correlate Digital?***

**Rubinstein:** We develop and execute bespoke digital marketing solutions to maximise revenue growth for our clients, whether locally in South Africa, intra-Africa, or abroad.

### ▣ ***What services do you offer?***

**Wright:** For e-commerce, we offer a tried and tested, "shelf-to-server" brick and mortar successful transition to online.

For B2B clients, we ultimately deliver qualified leads through a holistically strategic digital content marketing and lead nurturing cycle.

Correlate Digital functions as a very competitive e-commerce scaling agent as well as a viable springboard into African, Middle-Eastern and United States markets.

Our services fit the general spectrum of a typical digital agency, but, we believe through our track record, our research and data-centric strategic work sets us apart. The goal is always to tailor to the specific needs of each of the individual businesses we partner with. Once we have gained a deep and nuanced understanding of our clients, their customer, products or service, and also have context of the competitive marketplace, we embark on a content-rich, paid media supported execution that is always measured and defined by critical goals.

We are also hyper-aware of our clients' interaction with us and we focus a lot on streamlining communication and are always improving processes to ensure that delivery and client relationships are the best that they can be.

### ▣ ***What are some of the obstacles you've had to overcome since starting out?***

**Rubinstein:** Just through running a business of our own, there are obstacles to overcome every single day and so it is through this lens we can build a compassionate approach to the nature of our clients' problems; there is no shortage in the need to problem solve, daily.

The biggest challenge has been finding the right talent who aligns with our ethos or way of thinking and has the skills and desire to do something different and be a part of the next generation of digital agencies. We've tried to solve this by creating a pretty rigid hiring process.

Other challenges involve marketing's general historic landscape that often ends up scarring clients and making them a bit hesitant to fully embrace the value of digital marketing because another agency has burnt them before. But that's fine with us, we work at your pace.

That's why we are so focused on the business. It's the best way to align and hit the ground running.

### ▣ ***Could you name some of your clients?***

Sure, some of our clients are:

- Caribshopper (US)
- The Zero Proof (US)

- North West Copper (CA)
- Bed Bath Home (Continental Linen/Whitehouse) (SA)
- Seiko Boutique (SA)
- Just Like Papa (SA)
- Bella Luna (SA)
- Access Bank (SA)
- Mahindra New Business Development South Africa (SA)
- Cherry Melon (SA)
- Caracal Engineering (SA)

### ▣ ***Tell us about your most successful project***

**Wright:** We're proud and lucky to have been part of many successful projects. Whether it be the millions of rands in revenue growth for our e-commerce clients, to being a part of a capital raise that generated hundreds of millions of rands, to successfully selling millions of rands construction equipment online.

Each project has its wins in its own way. We love the challenge of taking something on with specific goals in mind.

### ▣ ***When it comes to marketing and advertising, what can companies no longer ignore?***

**Rubinstein:** The hyper-competitive business landscape has only become more so as digital commerce grows. The shift in consumer behaviour towards more general purchasing digital literacy at every age bracket cannot be ignored.

Success boils down to truly knowing your customer and how what you provide either solves their problem or connects with them at a very real, valuable level - herein lies the real challenge and unlocking this is the key to success.

### ▣ ***As the shift to digital continues, what advice do you have for companies still in the transition phase?***

**Wright:** Treat digital with the care, focus and investment as you would any other core part of your business or operation. It is also important to identify what 'digital' actually means in your context and make sure you arm yourself with the intelligence and expertise to roll out your digital strategy.

But don't wait too long. Competition is steep and like any other facet of life, digital marketing takes time to mature - but this drive has to come from the inside out. There is much opportunity out there, but it's up to you to grab it (and us to help operate the hand).

### ▣ ***What are some marketing trends we can see in 2022?***

**Wright:** The "Death of cookie" (which inhibits advertisers ability to track and target people online) and privacy challenges that will make proper strategic endeavours and a deeper, more refined approach to measurement pivotal to gauge successful marketing.

A pivot back to brand marketing from pure ad blasting, by encouraging meaningful, authentic and honest relationships with customers. This works hand-in-hand with e-commerce executions that don't solely rely on discount propositions.

Change of behaviours to be more likely to purchase everything online. We're seeing this more and more in the United States with things like e-grocery purchasing and social commerce on the rise.

A definite continuation in growth of the digital space, increasing competition but also the need for better marketers. This excites us.

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