





Connect the unconnected

South African internet penetration is expected to reach 40% in 2017 after the SA internet user population passed the 20 million mark for the first time in 2016, reaching 21 million users. We are expected to reach 22.5 million users this year, according to Arthur Goldstuck's World Wide Worx.

The report also reveals that the main use of the internet among South African adults is communication, (31%), then social networking (24.9%) and information (23.7%), and entertainment (22.1%).

Given that access to the internet is viewed as a basic human right in most quarters, South Africa needs to concentrate on providing access to all corners of the country. The high cost of data is a huge barrier to access for the majority of the population, creating an economic digital divide that is criminal. World Wide Worx reports that internet penetration is below 30% for those earning under R2500 per month, compared to that of 82.4% for those earning more than R30 000 per month.

If South Africa wants to be a leader in the knowledge economy on the continent, we need to roll out affordable data and free wi-fi zones across the country to connect the unconnected.



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Bizcommunity.com will be producing a range of trend reports focussing on industry subjects and issues each month over the next year on the website; as well as in special free downloadable reports and ebooks. To be a sponsor or to appear in any of these special focus reports, please contact: louise@bizcommunity.com or call us on +27 (0) 860 812 000.

Louise Marsland | Contributing Editor: Bizcommunity.com





Digital trends in 2017

From artificial intelligence to rising data intelligence and brand safety, the IAB South Africa council heads have alerted the industry to the latest digital marketing trends for this year.

IAB SOUTH AFRICA



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Turning mobile video into a marketing star for your business

Mobile is one of biggest revolutions to come to marketing in recent years, rivaled only by digital video. Bring the two together, and you have one of the most compelling engagement tools available to businesses of all sizes.

NUNU NTSHINGILA



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Mid-year online asset checklist for digital marketing excellence

At the beginning of the year we as marketers set goals of what we want to achieve professionally and personally. This bucket list, if you will, contains new initiatives we want to tackle or plans we didn't quite get to the year before.

AMANDA ADAM



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The attributes of a successful digital marketing strategy

Companies should allocate budget to researching their customers' needs and wants and digital behaviour before developing a digital marketing strategy, advises digital communications consultant, Sue Disler, in this Q&A with Bizcommunity.com.

LOUISE MARSLAND



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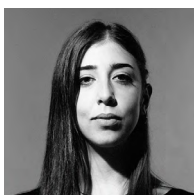
The shift to performance

The biggest trend in digital marketing gaining momentum in the local market is the shift to performance, says Stijn Smolders, CEO of Sprout Performance Media Partners and a sponsor of Bizcommunity.com's Focus on Digital Marketing 2017.

STIJN SMOLDERS, SPROUT PERFORMANCE MEDIA PARTNERS



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AI and machine learning

Platinum Seed recently appointed Ally Behr as design director, as part of its strategy to expand its service offering and leadership team. Behr is responsible for the conceptualisation and execution of digital touch points for clients.

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The binary business case for marketing automation

2017 is set to be the year of wholesale adoption of marketing automation technology as consumer budgets constrict and the battle for share of wallet intensifies. Locally, economic pressures triggered by a ratings downgrade and reduced consumer spending is likely.

NICK ORTON, GRAPEVINE



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The only constant is change - and the customer

Just when you've mastered the interminable functionality of your new smartphone or taught mom how to upload holiday snaps to the latest photo-sharing platform, the virtual rug is ripped out from under you and once-cool new tech is given the switcheroo.

DESIREE GULLAN



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National Positions SA rebrands as NP Digital

NP Digital, formerly known as National Positions SA, have rebranded and expanded their services and products to address the ever-evolving needs of their clients. Joint CEOs Maon Seidel and Richard Fyffe have built a full-service digital agency.

NP DIGITAL



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Digital trends in 2017

BY: IAB SOUTH AFRICA

From artificial intelligence to rising data intelligence and brand safety, the IAB South Africa council heads have alerted the industry to the latest digital marketing trends for this year.

With 2017 well into its second half here is a list of trends that have been preoccupying the minds of the IAB councils. The trends were curated by the IAB South Africa from its council heads, including: IAB head of marketing council - Anna Vulina, head of customer experience, Showmax; IAB CEO, Josephine Buys; IAB head of publisher council - Marc du Plessis, joint CEO, Spark Media; IAB head of media innovation council - Mike Carter, special projects director, Maxaxion; head of IAB agency council - Paula Hulley, head of digital and innovation, Ogilvy CT; head of measurement council - Ryan Smit, chief strategy officer, Silverstone Group; and IAB regulatory affairs council - Pria Chetty, director, Endcode.

1. Artificial intelligence and machine learning

Artificial intelligence or AI is the 'big data' buzzword of 2017. Everyone is talking about it but very few businesses are actually doing



anything with AI in the South African space. We're seeing the big internet companies using AI to assist in many of the operational tasks such as recommendations and cross selling, with South African companies following suit. There have been many severe warnings from the likes of Elon Musk about the progression of AI and this is a hot topic for all, from marketers to CTOs and data managers. This is closely followed by machine learning to understand how best improve customer understanding.

2. The rise and rise of growth teams

Globally, over the past couple of years, the notion of growth teams has risen - a mixture of marketers, engineers and analytics to organise themselves in either direct or virtual teams responsible for growth in a company. A lot of the digital companies have figured out the best way to take this forward and how to bring technology and marketers closer together.

3. Moving creative closer to the business

More corporates and brands are beginning to move creative in house. This gives brands the opportunity to make creative part of the problem solving and thinking, and closer to the business. The days of Mad Men are gone. Creative needs to be as accountable for the ROI as digital marketing.

4. Getting personal with CRM

Every customer is an individual and should be treated as such. Brands are taking the opportunity to connect with customers through one-on-one messaging and smart market segmentation. Businesses also realise that customers are discerning and can be lost in seconds with an ineffective customer journey. The trend underpinning all these developments is the need to present to customers at the right time using the right channels.

5. Overlapping target markets

With rising data intelligence, customers can be found at the places where certain non-competitive brands intersect. For example, a luxury car brand and a luxury watch brand may combine their digital assets to capture their audiences for retargeting purposes, but could also then trade their audiences between themselves in order to cross sell each other's products.

6. The digital economy needs to be nurtured to survive

While digital seems to be a booming segment that doesn't seem to need any help to grow, regulatory institutions need to fight for its sustainability and fair use. Members of the digital media need to actively participate in tech law and policy setting to prevent stifling regulation. Securing freedom of speech online, access to information and reasonable privacy regulation will continue to dominate the agenda of the Regulatory Affairs Council within the IAB SA. Practical copyright law and continued promotion of the need for self-regulation of digital sectors will remain important regulatory pursuits.

7. Programmatic ad spend in overdrive

Despite the bad press received this year, programmatic continues to go into overdrive. Tighter control over the programmatic landscape is all part of a maturing industry, hence the rise of technology to analyse the value of digital advertising placements, coupled with the rise of the [private marketplaces](#) and direct buys almost doubling in media spend in the last year in response to the open exchanges' seeming lack of transparency.

Agencies accessing these deals via [SSPs](#) and taking advantage of data rich audiences traversing across multiple devices and platforms, with [AI](#) stringing together complex algorithms to help us learn about our consumer and their habits and hopefully deliver something of value.

[Spotify](#) now has full suite programmatic offerings, from display, video to most recently, audio. [Outfront Media's](#) is taking outdoor



programmatic: inventory includes subway ads, bus ads, as well as static and digital billboards; and TV looks already set with those digital channels that are geared for this type of media transaction, allowing targeting across very specific customer segments.

8. Context is king

While content (AKA video!) might always be king, context is the key to the castle. In our customer-centric digital landscape, understanding the context your consumer is key. Trying to adjust our communication without listening to the customer is like talking to a friend after they have put down the phone and then expecting a reply.

We are already automating our delivery of profile centered communication; deepening our learning to better understand who the customer is; enabling a more meaningful conversation; and delivering a better experience, utility, product or benefit. Coupled with an ongoing understanding of a customer's context, we will be able to deliver that message, solution or benefit at the right place, at the right time, in the right format, on the right device, in an even more meaningful and remarkable way.

9. Defending brand integrity

From a publisher perspective, brand safety is a critical contributor to a healthy digital eco-system. While countering fake news is a challenge, the IAB believes this also presents an opportunity. The introduction of ad filters will effectively counter the rise of fake news and fraudulent websites that are giving digital advertising a bad name, and defrauding unsuspecting advertisers of their ad budgets.

IAB publisher members spend a tremendous amount of time and money generating high quality, brand safe content, coupled with responsible advertising options that do not annoy users, giving advertisers quality, brand safe environments within which to place their brands. The quality of ad space needs to come to the forefront over quantity of ad space.

In summary, digital is becoming more personal, specialised and reactive to customer needs than ever before. If we work to keep digital platforms fair and communicate with the customers we serve, we will continue to create an inspiring, innovative digital advertising industry.

ABOUT IAB SOUTH AFRICA

The IAB South Africa is a member-driven organisation that promotes digital growth. We are an independent, voluntary, non-profit association focused on growing and sustaining a vibrant and profitable digital industry within South Africa. The IAB SA currently represents more than 200 members including online publishers, brands and educational institutions, as well as creative, media and digital agencies. Our aim is to provide our members with a platform where they can engage and interact with each other and address digital issues of common interest, thereby stimulating learning and growth within the South African digital space. The IAB SA represents the South African digital industry to all sectors, including the marketing community, the media, the South African government and the public.





Turning mobile video into a marketing star for your business

BY: NUNU NTSHINGILA

Mobile is one of the biggest revolutions to come to marketing in recent years, rivaled only by digital video. Bring the two together, and you have one of the most compelling engagement tools available to businesses of all sizes. Today, people can and do watch video wherever they are - and advertisers can take advantage of this trend by making interesting content that rewards them for their time.

With more than 14 million South Africans a month coming to Facebook on mobile, this is a golden opportunity for businesses to engage with their customers and prospects. Researchers at Facebook and beyond have found that mobile activity is strikingly frequent and fast:

- People scroll through mobile news feed 41% faster than desktop news feed.
- People can remember what they see on mobile after only a quarter of a second or less.

If advertisers want to reach people, however, [they need to earn their attention](#). Here are some ways that you can make mobile video work harder for your business and engage with your community.

Capture attention quickly.

People make speedy decisions about what they want to watch, and this is especially true in mobile feeds. The faster you capture attention in video adverts, the better.



- Consider delivering your message in 15 seconds or less. By matching people's attention on mobile, you can increase how often your video adverts are watched all the way through.
- Start with your most captivating elements. Hook people right away with great thumbnails, vivid backgrounds and stunning product shots.
- Incorporate your brand message and identity early. If your brand is tied to a recognisable celebrity, character or symbol, let people know right away. Put your hero front and centre.
- Use engaging post copy. Strengthen your visuals with funny, provocative or surprising copy.

Build for sound off. Delight with sound on.

People often consume video on their mobile in public with no sound, so design your video accordingly. Your video adverts should communicate clearly without sound, but get better or funnier with sound on.

- Tell your story visually. Sight and motion are the heart of feed, so make the most of them.
- Use text and graphics. Words and symbols can make your message easier to understand when someone is watching without sound.
- Add captions. Internal tests showed that adding captions to video adverts increased video view duration by an average of 12%.
- Include a sound file. People expect to hear audio when they turn on their volume.

Frame your visual story.

TVs and desktops may use horizontal frames, but industry research suggests that mobile phones are used in portrait mode 98% of the time. As people spend more and more time on mobile, how do you make the most of a smaller, vertical frame?

- Use vertical video. Most people hold their phones vertically, so horizontal videos don't maximise the screen space. Try using taller videos with 4:5 or 9:16 ratios.
- Highlight the key elements. Keep your product front and centre and visually emphasise the qualities that make your brand valuable.
- Create visual surprises. Even in a small frame, what optical illusions or unexpected events can you include?

Test, iterate and learn.

Where traditional brand advertisers used to test just a few pieces of creative, today's best-performing video advertisers use thousands of video variants and test them on a much more frequent basis. Facebook VP of Core Adverts, Mark Rabkin, recommends [testing and measuring adverts on a weekly cycle](#) rather than the former standard of every six months. The more you know about your audience, the better work you'll create.

Be playful and curious

There's no one-size-fits-all way to make great mobile video adverts – different audiences respond to different things. That's why we recommend an approach of curiosity and playfulness.

- Experiment to learn. Try out different video styles and fresh copy, and see what works.
- Tell your story as quickly as you can while still getting your core message across. On mobile, you can do so much in less than 15 seconds.
- Different forms of video can attract people's attention – like Canvas, our full-screen experience that serves fast-loading, microsite-like experiences. Don't be afraid to try something new.



ABOUT NUNU NTSHINGILA

Nunu Ntshingila is the Head of Facebook Africa. She is also the Chief Executive Officer of Ogilvy South Africa. She previously worked as a Communications Director of Nike South Africa.



or variations of keywords. You should ideally commit to keywords for at least six months and evaluate their performance regularly.

2. Website audit

Remember that your website is your first and sometimes only chance to make a good impression. People who do not know your company need to find current content that can help them with what they're looking for, and those that do know you should be able to find valuable information to convince them to invest in more of what you have to offer.

A thorough website audit is necessary to determine if your website is functioning optimally and doing what it is supposed to do, which is inform, convince and convert. Ask yourself whether your website requires new content or can content just be updated. What about images and videos? Take a look at where changes can be made and evaluate if they have a marked improvement on the performance of your site.

3. Content marketing strategy

Take a look at your online content assets, such as your newsletters, blog articles, white papers, press releases, online advertising, videos and web copy. Where are the gaps? What content do you need to develop to engage your target audience and achieve your goal of increasing brand awareness and sales. How can you make the content shareable to attract customers?

Content should be valuable and meaningful. Provide sufficient information so that your audience can find what they need and come to a decision.

4. Social media marketing strategy

Determine how you can improve your social media strategy by analysing the performance of your assets. Should you expand your social footprint with a new platform or do you need to create new content to up the engagement and attract new followers? For example, using short videos instead of text and images may improve your audience engagement.

These are just some of the adjustments you can make to your online assets mid-year. Updating and tweaking on a regular basis is vital to optimise your digital marketing strategy for continued success. Here's to the next six months.



ABOUT AMANDA ADAM

Amanda Adam is account director at DUO Marketing + Communications. Adam has 16 years' PR agency experience. She is passionate about implementing and analysing digital campaigns for B2B tech clients, growing and cultivating client and media relationships, crafting stories for different channels and ensuring key message penetration. Amanda is an avid mentor who enjoys transferring her knowledge and skills. She holds a master's degree in Public Relations Management from the Tshwane University of Technology.



The attributes of a successful digital marketing strategy

BY: LOUISE MARSLAND

Companies should allocate budget to researching their customers' needs and wants and digital behaviour before developing a digital marketing strategy, advises digital communications consultant, Sue Disler, in this Q&A with Bizcommunity.com.

What is your prediction for the key trends in digital marketing, currently?

I always hate that question! AI, Chatbots, IoT, Mobile, Wearables – all of the above! So many things happening in all areas – but to give you one observation I have made recently... I have been following LinkedIn activity quite closely and have noticed that more and more brands have started posting articles and even spending money on advertising too.

It's an extremely effective environment for B2B marketing and is rather underutilised at present, so those that are there now are ahead of the curve. We have seen a considerable growth on this channel compared to other social channels in the past year in SA



and if I had to predict a trend right now, I would say that we are about to see a lot of business brands start finding ways to utilise this channel as the other social channels are way too cluttered.

What are the key attributes for a successful digital marketing strategy?

Research, research, research!! Most strategies are based on extremely little research and the stats that we do have access to, are largely out-dated unfortunately. It would be great if companies could allocate budget to researching their customers' needs and wants and digital behaviour before developing the strat as this will help define a much clearer objective going forward.

And because consumer and user's physical and digital habits (and channel engagement) is constantly changing, the strategy will need to adapt and be agile too. So having the means to capture and analyse data on a regular basis, will allow you to accommodate an iterative strategy.

If you are not reviewing the data regularly you might lose sight of meeting your objectives. At present most of us focus on immediate ROI in terms of data – i.e., clicks and conversions as that's all we have access to, we need to adopt a more long-term view by tracking user behaviour holistically and gleaning insights beyond the click. This will also help in terms of research.

What is the problem with integrated campaigns in digital marketing?

The biggest problem I find is that most campaigns are just that – a campaign. Once it's done, it's over and we move onto the next... The content that gets produced for the various channels and the resultant content that is generated from the campaign invariably never lives or is designed to live beyond that campaign. Plus the data that's generated is also not really put to use. This seems like such a waste... content and data should be put to use after the fact.

What is the fundamental change in the marketplace today that is impacting on digital marketing strategies?

Brands are starting to realise that creating digital experiences does not necessarily have to rely on high production value and new, innovative and fancy tech in order to have impact. These brands are also confident in sharing the stage too... a great example of this is Mercedes-Benz's and New24's partnership with [Beautiful News](#), which is all about helping to "find and power the spirit of positivity from around South Africa and Africa". This very real content naturally pulls at the heart strings of every South African – it's so simple and clever – they can use the content on all channels now and in the future – so cost effective too.

What is the cornerstone of your digital marketing success?

An innate curiosity and need to understand human behaviour, coupled with the ability to interrogate (and appreciate) the tech that surrounds us every day.

Additional relevant stats showing current trends:

LinkedIn South Africa Stats

- 2015: 4.7 million active users*
- 2016: 5.5 million active users*
- 20 July 2017: 6+ million estimated target audience**

Sources:

* *Social Media Landscape report* - <http://www.2oceansvibe.com/2016/09/20/this-how-social-media-is-being-used-by-south-africans/>

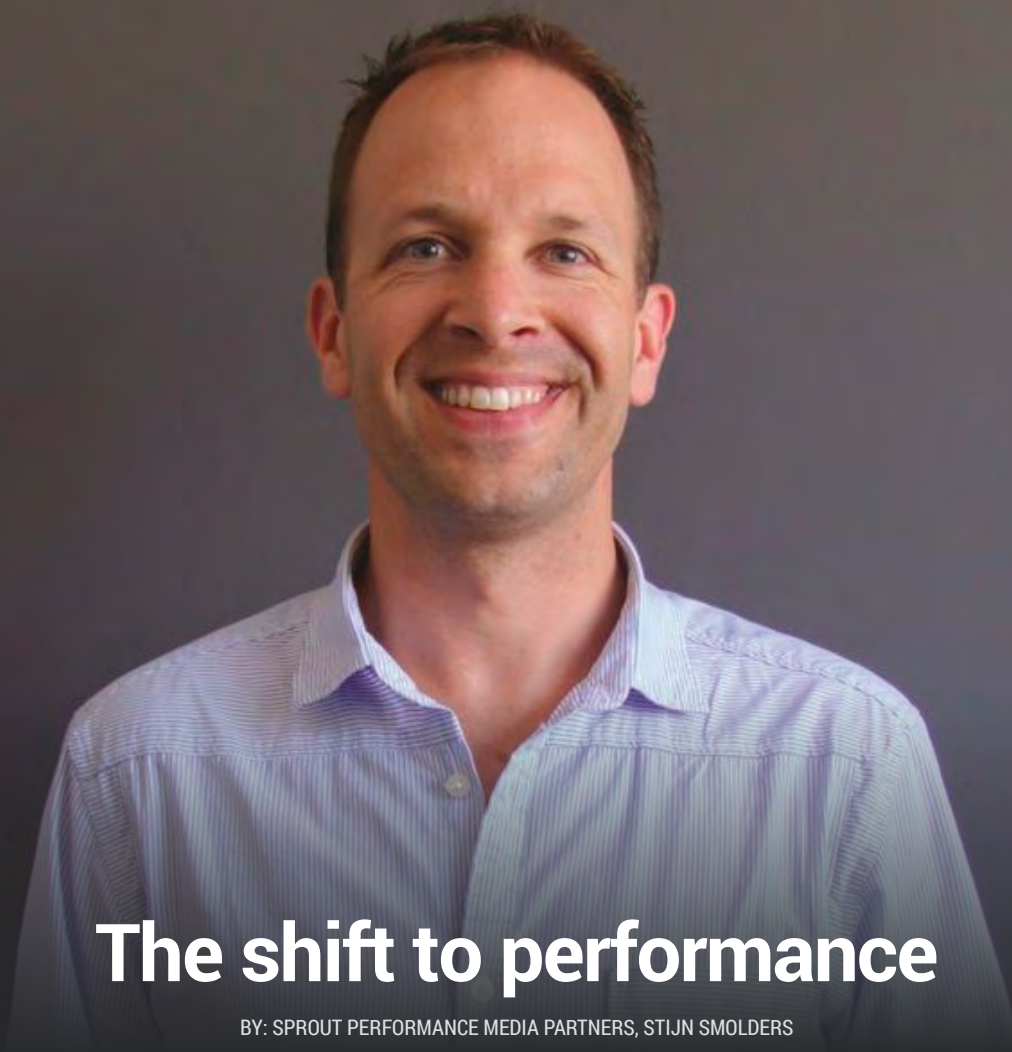
** *LinkedIn Campaign Manager*



ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Marsland is currently Africa Editor: [Bizcommunity.com](#); a Content Strategist and Trainer; and Trend Curator for [Bizcommunity.com](#) and her own [TRENDAFRICA.co.za](#). She has been writing about the media, marketing and advertising communications industry in South Africa for over 20 years, notably, as the previous Editor of [Bizcommunity.com](#) Media & Marketing; Editor-in-Chief [AdVantage](#) magazine; Editor [Marketing Mix](#) magazine; Editor [Progressive Retailing](#) magazine; Editor [usiness Brief](#) magazine and Editor [FMCG Files](#) ezine.t





The shift to performance

BY: SPROUT PERFORMANCE MEDIA PARTNERS, STIJN SMOLDERS

The biggest trend in digital marketing gaining momentum in the local market is the shift to performance, says Stijn Smolders, CEO of [Sprout Performance Media Partners](#) and a sponsor of Bizcommunity.com's Focus on Digital Marketing 2017.

What is your prediction for the biggest trend in digital marketing, currently?

Programmatic media buying* has changed digital marketing for good. Globally, programmatic spend has doubled in three years and already in the US, display is outdoing search. I believe that the biggest trend in digital marketing gaining momentum in the local market is the shift to performance. Marketers are increasingly obsessed with return on investment, and programmatic is the obvious approach to meeting business objectives online, while affording marketers greater transparency with regards to fees and cost structures.

Furthermore, programmatic allows marketers to access data immediately, and the real time reporting ensures that current campaigns can be optimised, reducing any potential wastage (of spend).

**Programmatic is display media bought through an automated process that allows marketers to target online browsers, early on in the customer journey, in order to drive awareness in an effort to optimise the campaign towards a digital conversion (sale/lead). It allows marketers to buy an impression while targeting the right audience, at the right time, with the right message at the right cost.*

What are the key attributes for a successful digital marketing strategy?

As a media buying agency, Sprout's services only come in after the digital marketing strategy has been developed. That said, context is a key attribute. Marketers need to start by understanding the different roles that digital media channels play. For instance, is the campaign objective to drive brand awareness or convert a lead into a sale? By understanding the customer journey, and tracking consumer intent moments, marketers are able to deliver relevant and personalised messages.



What is the fundamental change in the marketplace today that is impacting on digital marketing strategies, that you have observed?

Historically, online marketing campaigns were only either used as a brand building exercise or to drive leads/sales. These days, more and more marketers are becoming aware of the potential of digital and its ability, when integrated, to deliver measurable and effective campaigns across both objectives.

What is the cornerstone of your digital marketing success?

There are three cornerstones that we build successful digital marketing campaigns on; people, data and technology. By employing smart people/talent to mine and interpret data correctly, through the understanding of technology, we can target consumers at any given time, optimising towards the most cost-efficient placement, with the right message, at the right time, for the right price.

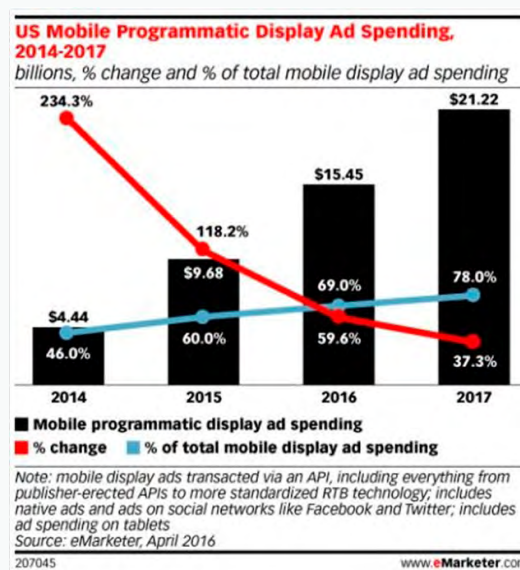
Please provide any additional relevant stats or facts to show current trends...

According to Popimedia, which just released the 2017 Digital Influence in SA Report, "65% of people shop online and 40% use their mobile to do so". In that same report, it reveals the following internet trends:

- 26% of Facebook users who click on ads make a purchase.
- 60% of people say that "easier access to online support channels" would improve customer service.
- There has been a 23% rise in Google Product Listing Ads driving clicks to websites.

Furthermore, brands only have about three seconds to engage and this is why context and relevance are so important. The campaign creative should surprise and delight. The process for Lead generation on social media should be seamless.

Internationally, according to: <https://www.emarketer.com/Article/More-Than-Two-Thirds-of-US-Digital-Display-Ad-Spending-Programmatic/1013789>: "Mobile is driving programmatic growth. In 2017, programmatic mobile video ad spending will reach \$3.89 billion, representing 51.0% of total programmatic ad spending in the US. By comparison, programmatic desktop-based video ad spending will reach \$3.73 billion, dropping to 49.0% of total programmatic digital display ad spending in the US."



ABOUT STIJN SMOLDERS

Stijn Smolders is CEO of Sprout Performance Partners, digital media performance company. The Cape Town based company was founded in 2013, and is an offshoot from customer engagement agency, iKineo. Previously Smolders held the position of Director of Commercial and Client Services at the company. He has more than 15 years of international experience in both traditional and digital landscapes. Originally from The Netherlands, Smolders has been in South Africa since 2008.

AI and machine learning

BY: LOUISE MARSLAND

Platinum Seed recently appointed Ally Behr as design director, as part of its strategy to expand its service offering and leadership team. Behr is responsible for the conceptualisation and execution of digital touch points for clients. She has worked on a multitude of international brands in a variety of environments, from conceptualising through-the-line campaigns, to operating within specialised teams that built complex products.

Prior to joining Platinum Seed, Behr was an art director at Ogilvy & Mather, senior creative and user experience designer at Gloop. Here, Behr talks digital marketing trends with Bizcommunity.com and how artificial intelligence is dominating conversations in digital marketing.



What is the biggest trend in digital marketing currently?

Artificial intelligence and machine learning is definitely the trend everyone is talking about, even though it's been a part of our daily lives for years, from predictive text to chat bots. The possibilities are endless for marketers: if harnessed effectively, the ability to analyse massive data sets and derive meaning from them could be transformational. Beyond the tech, it's just interesting to watch our reaction to AI as a species; while people find it intriguing, it's also fundamentally scary when AI gets something right.

What are the key attributes for a successful digital marketing strategy?

We are all aiming for that sweet spot: delivering precisely the right message, at the right time, to the right customer. Rich insights and customer-centric thinking is crucial in order to achieve this, which is always easier said than done, as there are so many factors which can derail this. Keeping the customer at the centre of the experience needs to become an everyday mantra for all stakeholders, in order to deliver something of value. Beyond the strategy, a mark of true success is when one is able to deliver on these learnings with great creative thinking and problem solving.

What is the fundamental change in the marketplace today that is impacting on digital marketing strategies?

It is so obvious, but it's still overlooked - people just have less patience, tolerance and time for poor advertising. Usage of the world's most popular ad blocking tool, Adblock, grew 30% globally last year, installed on almost 700 million devices. That's a rude statistic for the industry, and the implications stretch far beyond simply PPC campaigns. There's such an overload of information that if you are not delivering satisfying content it will be sought somewhere else. The internet has (to some extent) democratised the access to information, and we are competing on a global stage. To remain relevant, you have to provide something of value.

What will your new role at Platinum Seed encompass and how will you achieve this?

My role as design director is to ensure that the conceptualisation and execution of work across all digital touch points drives the strategic needs of our client portfolio. I'm working with a talented, tight-knit team of interaction designers and developers, on a wide range of work from digital experiences, to service and product design for brands and international start-ups. Operating largely in an agile environment, we have the ability for ideas to be rapidly prototyped and implemented, allowing us to get really hands-on with the business, brand and customer. Beautifully crafted solutions are key to creating a memorable experience, so we are pushing to create work that showcases the value and power of functional, great design.

What are your key learnings from your career in digital media and design - tips you can give clients?

Take more risks! Put humans before brands. Invest in great creative. The power of digital and technology is far beyond just being used for advertising purposes, and tech-enabled businesses are becoming more and more prominent - but you still find some brands unaware of how tech can solve their other business challenges.



ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Marsland is currently Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; a Content Strategist and Trainer; and Trend Curator for Bizcommunity.com and her own [TRENDAFRICA.co.za](https://www.trendafrica.co.za). She has been writing about the media, marketing and advertising communications industry in South Africa for over 20 years, notably, as the previous Editor of Bizcommunity.com Media & Marketing; Editor-in-Chief AdVantage magazine; Editor Marketing Mix magazine; Editor Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor usiness Brief magazine and Editor FMCG Files ezine.



A portrait of a man with short, light brown hair, smiling slightly, wearing a black turtleneck sweater. The background is a solid orange color.

The binary business case for marketing automation

BY: GRAPEVINE, NICK ORTON

2017 is set to be the year of wholesale adoption of marketing automation technology as consumer budgets constrict and the battle for share of wallet intensifies. Locally, economic pressures triggered by a ratings downgrade and reduced consumer spending is likely to create fierce competition among local brands and business providers.

At a global scale, the job of marketing is more challenging than ever: following a failed takeover bid by Kraft Heinz, Unilever's CEO Paul Polman, said he'd be putting pressure on the company's marketing divisions – who command some of the largest marketing budgets in the world - to improve return on marketing investment in the coming months.

In [Allocadia's 2017 Marketing Performance Maturity Benchmark Survey](#), only 21% of marketers could measure revenue contribution. Part of the problem is the prevalence of organisational siloes: only 8% of organisations have marketing, sales, and finance data in one consolidated data warehouse that represents the 'single source of truth'.

Rethinking marketing ROI

In a time when machine learning and automation technologies are more powerful and accessible than ever, and the prevalence of data greater than at any time in history, using antiquated tools to track and measure marketing activities not only limits marketers'



effectiveness but actively undermines their success.

The *Harvard Business Review* found that companies spend 6.7% of their marketing technology budgets on analytics, but expect this to grow to 11.1% over the next three years. For marketing departments wishing to secure additional budget to build their analytics capabilities, being able to prove ROI is essential: a 2016 survey found that marketing departments that are able to prove ROI are 1.6 times as likely to receive higher budgets. Warnings from the likes of Elon Musk about the progression of AI and this is a hot topic for all, from marketers to CTOs and data managers. This is closely followed by machine learning to understand how best improve customer understanding.

The marketing automation investment imperative

Marketing automation technology enables marketers to effectively integrate all the elements required to prove ROI – real-time campaign spend and acquisition, customer behavioural analytics, broader organisational and revenue objectives, and constant feedback on the effectiveness of certain activities, campaigns, and types of content – through a single platform.

Instead of fussing over spreadsheets or trying to make sense of profit-and-loss reports, marketing teams can simply open the automation program to pull out the data required, including campaign investment, number of leads generated, sales conversion statistics and average sale values.

More importantly, 80% of companies in a [VentureBeat Insights study](#) increased their leads – and 77% increased their conversions – as a result of using marketing automation technology. A separate [study by Nucleus Research](#) revealed that sales productivity increased by 14.5% when automation software is used, while reducing marketing overheads by an average of 12.2%.

And with the global shift away from capex to opex, there's some good news: not only is the business case self-evident but, with the advent of secure cloud services, companies can access marketing technology on an opex, pay-as-you-go basis for at least 80% of the services.

The power of automation

Marketing automation has become such an integral part of the marketing and sales mix that a [Gartner study](#) found that 71% of companies with annual revenue of more than \$500m now have a 'chief marketing technologist' role. In light of the growing importance of omni-channel communications in reaching an increasingly fragmented consumer base, the role of the chief marketing technologist will become essential to an organisation's sales and marketing success.


When marketing automation is combined with omnichannel communication, marketers can close the loop by connecting the dots in the customer journey, from promotion right through to purchase. By including a call-to-action in other promotional activities – such as a billboard, print ad or radio campaign – marketers can track the success of each promotional activity and adjust their budget to serve the highest-performing activities.

Add to this the ability to prove ROI across the marketing value chain, and marketers have a powerful tool to prove their worth to the company's bottom line. Little wonder then that Fortune 500 companies who use marketing automation tools such as conversion rate optimisation [show an average ROI of 223.7%](#).



ABOUT NICK ORTON

Nick Orton is CEO of Grapevine, an enterprise-grade cloud-based marketing automation service provider focused on the South African market. As a founding member of Grapevine, Nick has spent the past 16 years at the intersection between business and technology, combining his strong technical roots with business and entrepreneurial skills. He is avid about mobile and its power to add value across the customer lifecycle, and finds great fulfilment in mentoring and inspiring people to do their best work. Grapevine is a sponsor of Bizcommunity.com's Focus on Digital Marketing 2017.

A portrait of a woman with long, straight blonde hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a white collared shirt. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting with light-colored walls and a window with blinds on the left.

The only constant is change - and the customer

BY: DESIREE GULLAN

Just when you've mastered the interminable functionality of your new smartphone or taught mom how to upload holiday snaps to the latest photo-sharing platform, the virtual rug is ripped out from under you and once-cool new tech is given the switcheroo for something way cooler and newer.

As digital marketers grappling to get ROI on the fleeting digital environment, my recommendation is to identify and leverage the constant at the core of our changing digital world: the customer. The customer will never disappear. How customers get what they want, or how we show them what they want will be new and dynamic – but what they want is relatively consistent.

As much as digital feels like the removal of the human element, if anything it allows us to draw closer, understand deeper and target sharper. These digital trends suggest that as much as we become digital and adopt increasingly automated marketing techniques,



customers remain at the centre of our universe.

Programmatic buying

At its core is the customer experience. With insights into movement, behaviour, affinities and profanities, programmatic media buying gives us the ability to more accurately pin-point and target potential customers. It may be rooted in algorithms and rely on big data, but that's purely auxiliary – there's nothing anonymous or robotic about it: it's deeply human.

It's estimated that by 2018, programmatic buying will have grown from 28% to 80% of marketing spend (State of Digital, 2017). The efficiency of programmatic buying gives more bang for an ever-shrinking buck, and marketers should give it consideration to aggressively grow market share.

Rich and rewarding experiences

The explosion of digital video reflects the importance of the human experience within the digital experience. Facebook's 360° and live videos are perfect examples of getting close to the experience of another. Users love video because it's a more human representation of reality than something static.

The rising consumption of video content reflects a move back to an immersive and human experience – either intimate storytelling or even a point-of-view understanding. Digital video consumption increased by 53% in 2016, with digital video on mobile seeing staggering growth of 145% (IAB).

Hyper-personalised social media platforms that give real-time updates of user's experience as they happen – then self-destruct – are nothing if not a more life-like imitation of the real thing. Moments pass in real life, just like they do on SnapChat. The efficiency of programmatic buying gives more bang for an ever-shrinking buck, and marketers should give it consideration to aggressively grow market share.

Service on demand

Chat-bots and always-on digital support for customers are indicative of the human need for attention. We all want to be noticed, wanted and served (whether we'll admit or not). If you can offer value-added services and support that require minimum work for the customer and maximum reward, you're speaking to that human need that's endlessly self-serving.

This also means your clients are likely going to be offering enhanced services to customers who previously didn't have access. The bottom end of the pyramid, for example, who might be given service and support via mobile access. So ensure you have the technology and marketing tools in place to support the shift.

How to remain relevant in a digital world that seeks to exclude the out-of-touch as quickly as it innovates? Remember your customer and you'll stay abreast of the tech. For now, that means the three big movers – programmatic buying, rich and rewarding experiences and enhanced services. All of which reaffirm what you should already know: the customer is key.



ABOUT DESIREE GULLAN

Desiree Gullan is [Gullan & Gullan](#) (G&G) digital executive creative director.



National Positions SA rebrands as NP Digital

BY: NP DIGITAL

NP Digital, formerly known as National Positions SA, have rebranded and expanded their services and products to address the ever-evolving needs of their clients. Renowned for their expertise in all facets of search marketing, joint CEOs Maon Seidel and Richard Fyffe have geared up and built a full-service digital agency while no one was watching.

Boasting over 10 years' experience, 31 Unilever brands, as well as SAA, Miway Insurance, African Bank and PG Group to name a few, NP Digital has developed a reputation of being the go-to-people when looking for creative and technical online marketing solutions.

"It was inevitable for us to progress into a more strategic space, we already advise our clients on a variety of practical and technical issues regarding their online presence, so it's a natural step for us to formalise what we already do. We know we don't operate in a vacuum. SEO is an essential part of a much bigger picture and we're ideally positioned to help businesses elevate their brand in a digital space," says Seidel.

The agency's model now includes services like digital strategic consults and audits, access to a full suite of creative and content development resources as well as a host of new products which they are confident will continue to deliver exceptional results.

"We operate in the fields of search, performance and data and great content is at the heart of everything we do. If an idea is good, well executed and consistently implemented, the sky is the limit with what we can achieve online," says technical specialist, Fyffe.

But the team is practical and has a firm can-do, no BS policy. According to Seidel, "It's about understanding the art of the possible and being transparent with our clients. Our industry had developed a bad reputation over the last couple of years, but the fact that we're a consistently growing business is a testament to the quality of our relationships and the commitment of our team. That takes trust and time."

NP Digital is also a preferred SA partner for several game-changing technologies and platforms which drastically change how campaigns are implemented, managed and measured – music to any marketer's ears.

It seems the future is now.



ABOUT NP DIGITAL

NP Digital (formerly known as National Positions SA) is a sponsor of the Bizcommunity.com Digital Marketing Focus 2017. NP Digital is a Google Premier Partner and specialist digital agency that specialises in delivering a qualified digital audience through mastering the art and science of search, performance and data. To add digital rocket fuel to any of your campaigns, call Maon Seidel on 011 022 9830.



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