

Brands vs Publishers

 By [Melissa Attree](#)

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"Smart brands are starting to work with publishers."

We need to start making better long-term decisions when it comes to building communities with real social business and CRM strategies.

Buy or rent?

There's a concern that brands are building large communities on islands that don't belong to them. Brands are renting space but I feel that we need to supplement this with our own dedicated spaces. I do believe that platforms like Twitter and Facebook are necessary in the marketing mix - I just don't feel that we should be placing all our faith and community-building efforts in them. What happens if they decide to close those platforms? Where do all those customers go?

Distribution gains importance

It's not enough to just create good content - we need to pay attention to how that content is packaged, repurposed and, most importantly, distributed, to ensure that it really adds value and builds an audience in the long-term.

Brand as (vs) publisher

We need to accept that brands are no longer just competing with other brands, but rather competing with publishers (the smart brands are starting to work with publishers to understand what content consumers want and how to develop that.) This links to another trend of 'brand as publisher'; by trying to adopt an integrated approach to communications it means that more brands than before are trying to extend their typical campaign thinking by publishing content that customers choose to spend time with.

Native advertising (advertorial)

In the interests of #savingyouasearch, let's call this 'advertorial'. The trend for brands to adopt paid-for content that seamlessly blends with editorial is a big one in the digital space (it's something we've seen in print for many years so it seems odd to call it a trend, BUT I do think that the *New York Times* and brands like General Electric, in particular, have changed how we present paid-for content and have it blend seamlessly with editorial content.

Watch this!

Taking its lead from the 'snackable' trend, like Danny de Vito, the most successful videos are short and funny, like [#untoOldNavy](#), starring Amy Poehler and now Julia Louis-Dreyfus; BUT we have also seen a move towards longer, more film-like, beautifully shot and produced commercials, like the [Johnnie Walker Blue Label](#) campaign starring Jude Law.

Location-specific storytelling

It's been spoken about previously as a trend, but 2015 I do believe will see us using geo-targeting to categorise and tag content to deliver very specific added-value messages in specific locations. The layered content opportunities in this space are exciting, where we can deliver personalised 'click and choose' stories.

Understanding dark social

A lot of the best content is shared via platforms that analytics typically cannot track, think about how much content you share via email, SMS or instant messaging apps. This massive use of 'dark social' is not going unnoticed by the big publishers and BuzzFeed has even started to hire people whose job it is to focus on how to best distribute media through direct messaging apps.

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ABOUT MELISSA ATTREE

Melissa Attree, director: content strategy, Ogilvy & Mather Cape Town, is a creative digital and marketing consultant who has worked on many major brands, including ABSA, Adidas, Big Blue, MasterCard, Nando's, Nedbank, SAA, SAB, Toyota, Vodacom and Woolworths. Attree began her career as a copy writer, before managing the local strategic transformation of the Kérastase brand for L'Oréal and then providing the social media strategy for 5FM for four years.

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