

Native VML's new journey: Conducting the orchestra

By  Danette Breitenbach

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As Native VML moves into a new era, the changes in the agency are not only organic; it is about a new business model that adds value and brings the customer into the brand's ecosystem. It is a new form of integration.



Beth Wade, VML Global CMO.

"We are looking at a new agency model; one that is very collaborative, one that is across the connected consumer experience, and our heritage as a digitally led agency has allowed us to have that collaboration between technology and creativity, so it is natural for us and that helps us to create these amazing ideas for brands going forward, that is entertaining or useful or compelling," says Beth Wade, VML Global CMO.



Native VML's new journey: The 3,000

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She adds: "Globally we know that for us to be relevant we need to speak to consumers where they are connecting, where their point of inspiration is and where they commit to products."

Media landscape fragmented

Ryan McManus, who is taking on the role of CCO, says the media landscape is so fragmented that if as an agency they are not able to orchestrate across all the different properties of a brand, then the brand experience becomes fragmented.



The producers' wrap: Ryan McManus of Native VML

Leigh Andrews 23 May 2017



"You see it when a R20m TVC launches on YouTube, but the only comments are about the high cost of the service

provided. No one mentions the beautiful TVC. A customer's call centre experience has to match the beautiful TVC."

The ability to orchestrate across all the various touchpoints for the brands allows them to create compelling and entertaining work or things that are useful. "If not creating entertainment for people, or utility-based, or adding value in a useful way, or if we are not creating something that is compelling and inspiring action, then we should not really be creating it at all."

He adds that from a very practical sense as well it is mad that we have amazing platforms and the democratisation of the media and people can choose what they want to watch, but our solution is to make a TVC. "It's mad and we want to get out of the pre-roll and into the stuff people are choosing to watch. That's where brands should be existing, adding value at every point, and when people start choosing to spend time with those brands, it completely changes the relationship. It is not one that is interrupting people."

Merging creativity and technology

Making improvements to people's lives is what innovation is about, adds McManus. "Merging creativity and technology forces you to think in a different way, and that really changes the way we start a project and get to a solution. When you coming at it from both angles, and not treating it as separate siloed ideas and bring the two closer, it allows us to create really unique types of thinking and having that deep technological knowledge, and deep human insights and creative thinking leads to the creation of an ecosystem around that."

Wade calls what they do connected consumer experiences. "This is the ability to take technology and creativity and fuse them together to something that is engaging."

An example of this is VML's recent Tennessee Tourism's fall campaign. The campaign was to get people who cannot see colour (who are colour blind) to experience the fall colours of the Tennessee autumn mountains. This was achieved through an activation using viewfinders that allowed colour blind people to see these colours.

Spirit of optimism and idealism

"By seamlessly bringing technology and creativity together, we could celebrate the beauty of Tennessee, that received great PR and social engagement. It was so successful that the viewfinders were put up in all the other parts of the state and other tourism organisations have asked for the technology," she says.

Jarred Cinman, who will be taking over as CEO of VML South Africa, weighs in here. "What is amazing about that – and this is central to how we are building our business here – is, firstly that it is not really advertising, it's a utility."



Breaking our attachment to traditional advertising

Jarred Cinman, IAB South Africa 1 Jul 2016



Secondly, he continues, there is a real spirit of wanting to make the world a better place in there. “It is amazing that a global advertising group still has this type of idealism inside it, but it is like that. “The best work I see coming out of VML around the world has an amazing spirit of optimism and idealism in it. That’s important. Clients have a lot of money and if we can use that money to make the world a little bit better, it can make a real difference.”

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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