

Ours is an industry defined by creativity and technology

By [Abey Mbkqwatsane](#)

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It's that time of the year again, the moment when the key global creative awards season comes to an end and the South African creative awards season begins. With the advertising industry now being defined by creativity and technology, we are making giant leaps into the future and the media landscape is evolving faster than ever before.

In the past, one giant leap, like the arrival of commercial television in the United States in the 1940s or the harnessing of the internet in the 1990s, would disrupt the landscape and then re-define the decades which followed, but now we face constant shifts - some seismic, some minor, some in-between - which together change platforms, content and consumer habits everyday.

The image below juxtaposes the crowd in Rome awaiting the announcement of Pope Benedict's appointment in 2005, with that of Pope Francis four months ago. It truly captures these rapidly changing times, and I cannot think of a better image that is the truest reflection of this era.



Data has now become the marketing obsession globally. The question is how do brands effectively use the overwhelming wealth of digital personalised data, which is now available to them in a way that delivers a competitive advantage? It is overwhelming - best estimates are that every second there are 684,478 pieces of content shared on Facebook, two million searches on Google, 48 hours of video uploaded on YouTube and 175,000 tweets sent.

The rapid rise of data in the conversation has sparked another of those distracting binary debates that the advertising industry, frustratingly, specialises in. Supposedly, there is now conflict between being data-driven in your marketing or relying on creativity. This fork in the road is every bit as imaginary as the effectiveness and creativity debate. Creativity has long been proven to drive effectiveness. In his book, *The Case for Creativity*, well-known planner, [James Hurman](#), demonstrates that the company with the most Cannes Awards has outperformed its competitors on the stock market eight out of 10 times in the past decade and the same applies to data.

While agencies now need to up their game in terms of data awareness and analysis, few campaigns will work for brands in this space solely on a blunt volume base.

Impact will only be achieved when the correctly crunched numbers are aligned with an insightful strategy on how best to use them combined with creativity, which produces cut-through work and triggers the desired response.

Here are three campaigns that have leveraged the power of rich social data and hot creative ideas to create truly breakthrough work.

[VW 'Streetquest'](#)

A campaign from Ogilvy & Mather Cape Town and a Bronze Cannes Lion winner this year combines an online and mobile game with Google Street View and Facebook technology. Participants were prompted to find as many VW's as possible on

Google Street View, pin them and share their pins on Facebook. It generated over 400,000 pins and a 700% increase in consumer engagement on VW's Facebook page and has been recognised at the New York One Show, and is featured in Google's Creative Sandbox as a digital case study.

[Oreo 'Daily Twist'](#)

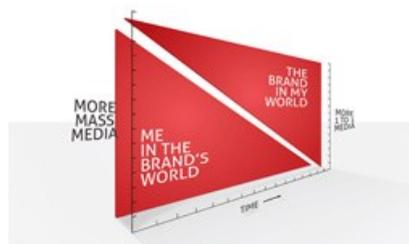
The centenary campaign from Draftfcb in New York which posted quirky daily calendar content onto social media platforms that leveraged real life events through the lens of the iconic Oreo cookie. The entries were then voted on and shared by millions of engaged people.

[Pepsi 'We Inspire'](#)

Campaign from 6FD in New York which facilitated the building of an online community of women around causes they had in common. It leveraged the power of social media and the ability of women to create networks around themselves and amplified it through relevant celebrity endorsement.

A New Model

[Sharon Keith](#) of [Coca-Cola](#) shared the graph below.



[click to enlarge](#)

At one end of the continuum, brands must deliver more mass media broadcast messages about what it is they stand for, a lighthouse identity if you like, and, on the other end of the continuum, more one-to-one engagement. This adds more utility to consumers, who actively engage with them. Be careful not to be exclusively one or the other, brands must engage on both ends in a seamless, coherent way.

This is undeniably an exhilarating time to be in marketing. We are at the forefront of all this change and have to be prepared to learn and unlearn at a rapid pace, and

almost inevitably, make some mistakes along the way.

ABOUT ABEY MOKGWATSANE

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