

The importance of diversity when creating communications strategies

 By [Warren Mbss](#)

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Most marketing and communications strategies are created in a very similar way: a team of trained marketing strategists sit around a table for a few weeks, do their research and then work within a strategic framework, based on what they think will have the most impact in terms of the client's goals. These goals may be telling a story, communicating the brand's values or encouraging a specific action from their target audience, among others.



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However, I would argue that the traditional strategic planning approach to marketing campaigns we see around the world these days is a clear example of why this isn't working. Look at financial services marketing and advertising in South Africa or globally, as an example: if you were to remove the logos and colours in various advertising campaigns, you would find that their messaging was all extremely similar. This shows that the strategic planning approach to all of these brands, even though they come from different marketing agencies, are all very similar.

Deep level diversity

It's becoming commonly known that what's fundamentally missing from the brand strategy process is the diversity of the talent. Not just diversity in race and gender but also diversity in experience, background, vocation and even age. A simple example would be the brand "fail" by [Doritos with their "ladies chip"](#), or H&M with their "jungle" kids' t-shirts - if there had been more diversity among their marketing strategists, perhaps there would have been more debate and discussion among internal creative teams, and these sorts of campaigns would never have been approved in the first place.



'I have H&M clothes I'm going to burn'

Kyle Zeeman 10 Jan 2018



Diversity can mean many things, from gender to race, to age, to experience or background. All these types of diversity have been proven to make teams more creative, but it's worth noting that "[deep-level diversity](#)" is one of the most powerful. This term, mentioned in an article by the [Harvard Business Review](#), refers to the diversity of personality, values and

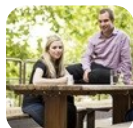
abilities – and it is apparently what matters the most.

So how do you get people with different skills, characters and personalities around that table? At my company when we start the strategic planning process, we bring together participants with deep diversity (example: an anthropologist, an architect, an engineer and a marketing strategist) instead of a team made entirely of marketing strategists. It's truly fascinating to see how differently these team members approach problems. The way that the anthropologist looks at a customer problem is totally different from the viewpoint of the engineer, and so on. The thinking here is that deep diversity in input drives a more robust and pure output.

Anthropology can help tell the deeper stories

Anthropologists are such an important part of what we do, because anthropology is the study of culture and people, observing how they behave and the challenges they face. But it also has many practical applications in a business context, because businesses are about relationships, and about solving people's problems.

Anthropology also delves into the “grey areas” of problems, for example, the fact that the sales cycle of a product may be longer because the purchase is a series of negotiations, decisions and triggers, rather than a yes/no answer. Anthropology can help tell the deeper stories that ultimately resonate with people.



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Leigh Andrews 28 May 2015



So, from a team of diverse thinkers, we'll get extraordinary human insights from the anthropologist, the true resourcefulness of an engineer, the communication skills of a marketing strategist and the design mind of an architect and suddenly: we'll have an elegant and impactful idea that's never been done before. These solutions are typically robust and always more creative than anything achieved the “normal” way.

Why is this important? Well, audiences all across the globe are diverse – so in order to reach and resonate with those diverse audiences, you need a diverse output. And that's impossible if you don't diversify the creative and strategic team that comes up with the campaign in the first place.

It's so simple really: diversify the input to the creative process, and you get a different, completely unique and powerful output. That's why diversity matters in the creative process.

ABOUT WARREN MOSS

Warren Moss is the founder & CEO of Demographica, a full-service specialist agency focusing on Business to Business (B2B) and niche consumer markets. What makes

Demographica unique is the fact that anthropology (the study of human societies and cultures and their development) is at the heart of all of their strategies. Warren and Demographica have been recognised by winning some major business and marketing awards. Warren is also currently the Chairman of the Direct Marketing Association of South Africa.

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