

The rise of live communications and branded everything

 By [Peter Khoury](#)

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When you study the world's most iconic work from recent times, you see patterns that may give you a direction of where everything is headed - at least in the short term. However, the world is extremely complex currently, and nothing is clearly defined, especially in the long term.



Peter Khoury, Creative Circle chairperson and COO of TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris Johannesburg.

Success right now is coming from the brands that are true to their purpose, and experiment with technology through the lens of culture. But this can be expressed in a multitude of ways. There is no formula, but there are countless ways to express this approach. For the purpose of this article, I have focused on two themes that expand on this thinking.

Live communications

Nike's *Breaking2* by Wieden+Kennedy is a great example of what next-level live communications can achieve. The campaign sat at a crossroads between purpose, tech, and culture, and also showed us that experiencing something special, in the moment, is a powerful way to communicate.

Instead of pushing content out, they pulled the audience in. Instead of watching a story, they helped consumers witness a reality. However, no one would have cared if the thing that they did was not of interest to their consumers.

Live communication is an authentic, trustworthy way brands can demonstrate their purpose and values in a more meaningful way. And, as you know, you can't fix live communication in a post, so the complexity of behaving like this at scale, on more than one format, will set brands apart, because a moment is the sum of its journey.

Brands need to find the interest peaks in the lead up, during and after the 'live experience'. How you seed the idea, create interest, and hold that interest, will determine how successful your live communication experience will be, and mobile will play a key role in bringing it all together.

Brand moments become a strategy in this world. Brands need to engage like experiential with the reach of social. If your moments are memorable, you will build your brand. Brand moments are about building memories.

Branded everything

We are moving away from a world of ads and into a world of branded everything. TBWA\Media Arts Lab's Lee Clow said, years ago, "Everything between the brand and the audience is media."

In this world, a brand knows its place in culture and creates compelling, relevant work that can take any shape or form and leverage any media channel in diverse ways. Apple's spot for HomePod, titled *Welcome Home* and directed by Spike Jonze is great example of this.

Was it an ad? Was it a music video? Was it a short film? It was probably a mesh of everything. It was piece of content that busted out the category.

Traditionally, what happens in real-life football determines what's possible in EA Sports, but their campaign 'More Than a Game' flipped the script by creating something that started in game and then impacted the real world at scale.

But this was not an ad, it was an idea that was seeded and curated in culture.

I recently worked on a campaign for Joburg Ballet. Our problem was that most millennials saw ballet as a stale, old-fashioned dance form. We needed to demonstrate that ballet can tell stories about anything, that it can be contemporary and relevant, and that it is certainly no boring relic of the past.

We created *Breaking Ballet*, an ongoing series of bite-size ballets inspired by the biggest stories online. These took the form of short films, which were seeded straight back into trending conversations on social media. The entire process took three to five days, ensuring that the stories were still highly relevant when the films were launched.



#NewCampaign: TBWA, Joburg Ballet launch series of little ballets inspired by big social stories

Jessica Tennant 6 Oct 2017



The rise of the 'Entertainment' category at award shows celebrates creativity that goes beyond branded communications to create authentic entertainment that engages consumers and impacts culture. I think that all advertising will eventually evolve into this space.

And the only way to do this is by doing it and learning lessons as you go. Clients need to be brave with their intentions, and agencies need to be brave with their solutions, even if they don't know exactly how to do it, yet. It can be very exciting for an agency that wants to do a lot of different things, it can also be challenging for an agency that hasn't evolved to do a lot of different things.

My advice to you is to find the white space in an area that your brand is underperforming in, so the appetite for trying

something different is bigger. And it doesn't have to be perfect when you launch it. We need to start learning from software companies. Taking an iterative approach, tweaking and optimising our work as we go – this is how we need to behave in the 21st century.

ABOUT PETER KHOURY

Peter Khoury is the COO of TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris Johannesburg and intends on taking South Africa's most iconic agency to new heights. Khoury has dabbled in the movie business as a creative and marketing consultant on the local film *Stone Cold Jane Austen*, as well as the DSTv series *Ayeye...*
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