

Businesses need to start investing in creatives more than they think

 By [Khangelani Dziba](#)

9 May 2019

The reality is, we all know the economy has not been performing great in the last few years and even more so in the last year, which has ultimately put an extreme amount of pressure on businesses, across small, medium and large enterprises to perform at a level that will continue to showcase value.

The economic downturn has made a major appearance in business and as a result, everyone else around them too (through their suppliers), has had to bite the bullet and hold the bull by its horns in hopes of achieving accelerated business objectives set out by boards that put all stakeholders under pressure to deliver.



Image source: Gallo/Getty

If you are on the marketing and advertising agency side of the spectrum, you have probably loathed the meetings where at the end of a business update, the catastrophic news of budget cuts is made known, which leaves you with very little to work with, if anything at all.

For months I have been mulling over the idea of businesses needing to invest more in creatives as a solve to drive business' bottom-line and deliver unique and reimagined experiences for consumers. Finally, a study that proves my thinking to have been on track comes to our attention.

Titled 'When it comes to advertising effectiveness, what is key?' (Nielsen and Nielsen Catalina Solutions 2017), the study reveals that creative is the largest contributor to the sales uplift from advertising, based on an investigation that was conducted on nearly 500 FMCG brand campaigns over the 2016/2017 period.

It looked at campaigns across television, online digital, video mobile, magazines and radio platforms and found that creative contributed to 47% of the sales uplift. It further highlighted that, "When the quality of creative was strong, sales lift was higher. Conversely, weak quality creative resulted in weak overall sales lift, and media was responsible for more of the sales lift."

For many marketers and brand practitioners like me, this kind of study makes the case for us that perhaps we have long been waiting for. Which says of all the stakeholders feeling the pinch, marketing is where more businesses need to start seeing more value and investing further into creative solves for business needs.

Gone are the days when it was only chartered accountants (CAs) who could demonstrate value through the numbers game and would be the only go-to persons to solve business challenges. If anything, what we are seeing and recognising more and more of is that an integrated approach is needed between the CMO and CEO to come up with creative ways to entice consumers and customers to stay with their brands or even better yet, as a way of acquiring new heads.

Seasoned marketer Katherine Madley, who recently delivered a compelling talk at the Nedbank IMC concurs that "creatives will [in fact] be the new CEOs and board members. What is needed in these roles [in this day and age] is flexibility and [the] willingness to change. Creatives are the only people in businesses that are able to effectively do this," she argues.



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To win in this time of need, we need to be obsessed with not only strategies that will drive mere sales but with fame-driven and award-winning campaigns, for these are the strategies that work and drive impact in the marketplace. We need to be obsessed with making customers turn heads and buy products whilst also making them feel good about their purchases.

This for me could not have been a more compelling argument that makes us think and rethink what the true value of creative marketers is through the kind of value they bring to businesses who are yearning to grow in market share and share of voice.

Can you imagine what this could mean for the world of creatives and ultimately for the growth of businesses? That, my dear friends, is the time I cannot wait to go back to.

ABOUT KHANGELANI DZIBA

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