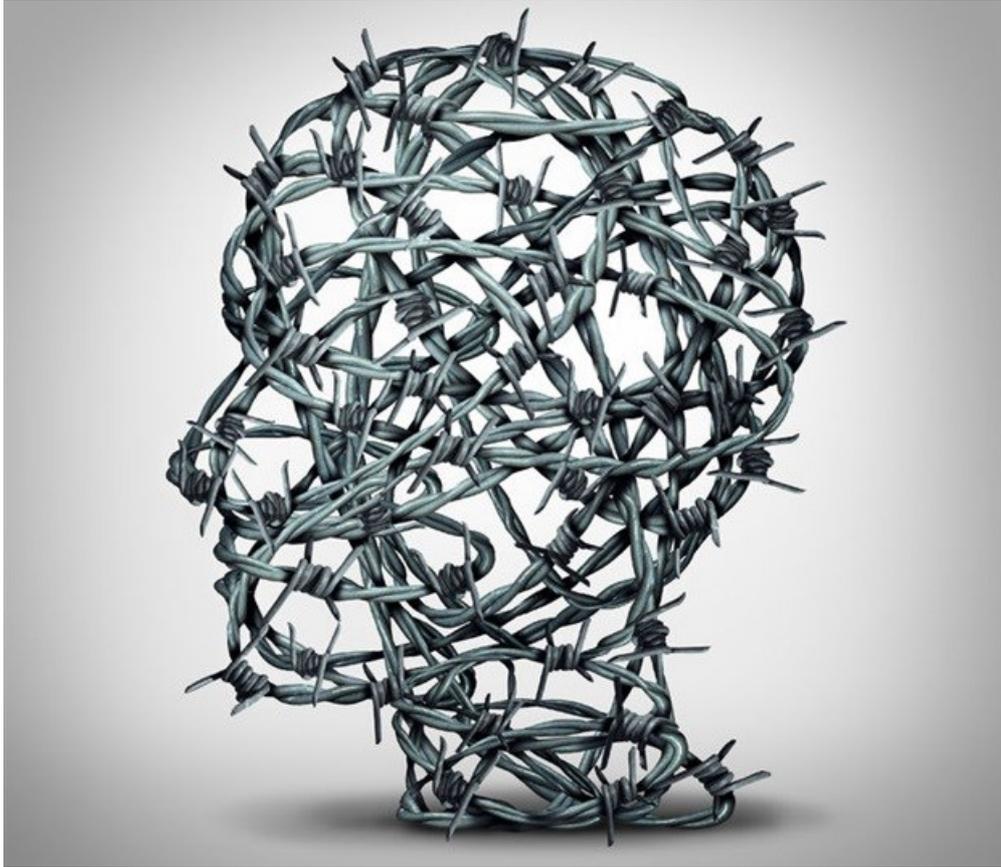


# Maybe I worry too much

 By [Chris Brewer](#)

3 Apr 2017

As we stare down the political abyss brought on by Mr Bumble and wonder what on earth is going to happen next, I began wondering if the advertising industry isn't in a similar position?



Lightwise © – [123RF.com](#)

I mean, we had a good thing going with Saarf and Amps, even if it did have a few warts, but now it's gone and we're still all wondering "what now?"

Well, next up apparently, is a brand new code of practice (written a couple of years ago). It's called "the Marketing, Advertising and Communications code" and will come into force in March next year.

The idea is sound enough but there's an undertone of something quite sinister, in my opinion. The intention of this code is to change the structure of the industry and the way it conducts operations – especially agencies.

It starts off with that tried and untrusted quota argument about race and what colour employees should be. Haven't we seen enough of that in other areas? It's inhuman for starters, it's racist and quite possibly unfair to great talent.

According to this code agencies **must be** at least 45% black-owned. And of that, 15% **must be** black women. This must surely be a regressive step?

Empowerment targets will be put into place ensuring young black people rise up the corporate ladder, which is yet another step backwards. (Note that these are only two points taken from a long and confusing list).

Please don't misunderstand what I'm saying. I have absolutely no problem (none whatsoever) with black people getting their rewards – but surely it must be based on TALENT and not just percentages?

I misguidedly thought the one industry that has risen proudly above the race issue was advertising.

It's a fabulously fascinating (and rewarding) industry for people with *TALENT*. It matters not a damn what colour you are. If you're a great copywriter then, believe me, agencies will come pounding on your door – whether you're black, Indian, coloured, Chinese or white (even Americans and Australians are welcome).

But if you're not a good writer then perhaps you should be trying out for something else?

The problem with these kinds of “laws” is that I'm terribly afraid they will attract mediocrity.

It's not so much about agency ownership – I kind of get that. And after years of repression, it is most definitely time for black people to take their place in the ranks of ownership. BUT, they have to be **good** owners/managers.

Lastly, having carefully read the Marketing, Advertising and Communication (MAC) Sector Code, I can't shake off this feeling that it's a sop – offered up to government as a (very late) reaction to their 2001 insistence that the advertising industry should “transform” itself. Although, to be fair, there was a joint industry statement in 2003 known as “The values statement of the marketing and communication industry”, which was supported, in principle – myself included – by most industry bodies at the time.

Maybe I'm worrying too much. Time will tell and I hope (and trust) that any concerns I have will prove to be unnecessary (fingers crossed).

Jeremy Maggs and David Furlonger will be editing this year's “AdFocus” on 22 November and will be examining the industry a little more closely. It will be worth looking at.

*\*Note that Bizcommunity staff and management do not necessarily share the views of its contributors – the opinions and statements expressed herein are solely those of the author.\**

## ABOUT CHRIS BREWER

Having joined the ad industry in London, Chris Brewer spent most of his career in media analysis and planning - but has performed just about every advertising task from Creative to Research. He's an honorary lifetime member of the Advertising Media Association and regularly advises agencies and clients regarding their media plan costs and strategies. He is also often asked to talk at industry functions. Email: [chris@brewers.co.za](mailto:chris@brewers.co.za). Twitter: [@brewersapps](https://twitter.com/brewersapps). Read his blog: [www.brewersdroop.co.za](http://www.brewersdroop.co.za)

- Welcome to the latest Monty Python fiasco - 21 May 2020
- Is digital advertising worth all the hype? - 4 Dec 2017
- TV we got right - 20 Nov 2017
- Innuendo and the power of the pen - 6 Nov 2017
- When was the sale lost? - 23 Oct 2017

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>