

Narrowing that agency Scope(n) Promise of client satisfaction

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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I caught up with Promise Group CEO James Moffatt to discuss Spanish-based Scopen and the IAS's extensive research and analysis project of the SA marketing and advertising agency community, as well as why client satisfaction and CRM are so important in this current era of consumer power.

Consumer power. Client satisfaction. Customer experience. Call it what you will, businesses that don't have an end user-centric focus just don't have what it takes to succeed in 2017 and beyond. That may sound harsh, but research findings keep making this point.

One of the latest of these is from Scopen 2016, which found that 40.9% of marketers in SA believe the biggest challenge creative agencies are facing is the need to better understand the consumer.

TTL agency Promise Group clearly understands this as it was ranked as one of the top three agencies in SA in the "client satisfaction" category of Scopen's 2016 research.



A view of independent agencies in South Africa

César Vacchiano 4 Apr 2017



Apart from the fact that they simply liked the name, when Promise Group first started, many of their clients didn't understand what needed to be done to assist them to take their brands to greater heights, so they positioned quite simply the fact that every brand is a promise. This dovetailed nicely into their approach to business and the way they can be depended upon to deliver the results each client expects.

Here, Moffatt explains how the agency has leaped from branding a coffee mug more than ten years ago to being a fully integrated agency handling renowned international brands, and how Promise's growth path makes them one of the agencies to watch in future.

 ***Let's kick this off with an overview of Scopen's research findings.***

Scopen and the IAS's *Agency Scope South Africa 2016* comprises a series of analyses from some of the industry's highest-level decision-makers and is published exclusively for marketers and marketing agencies participating in face-to-face interviews.

The marketing and procurement executives that were interviewed are leaders of companies with an average turnover of more than R5.8bn in 2016. The research gives insight into what clients need from agencies, and how agencies service the changing requirements demanded by clients.

Out of all the agencies reviewed in the South African market, Promise was placed in the top three for client satisfaction. This is an achievement we are extremely proud of.

 ***With good reason! Talk us through the power of the consumer and describe the consumer of 2017.***

The consumer we are dealing with in 2017 is highly complex, their needs and motivations their perception of value.

Where there's a will, there's a way – despite tough financial times, consumers are finding ways of getting what they want whether it be through saving, polarised spending or leveraging online channels like social media to open new opportunities to reach their desired goals. It is imperative that in times like these, brands appear to be enablers of the consumer's lifestyle and not just another product on a shelf.

■ ***Good point. Why is client satisfaction and CRM thus so important – to all businesses, but particularly for marketers?***

Marketers need high-performing agency partners. Not just from a business perspective, but also on the softer issues, such as chemistry and partnership.



Promise Group CEO James Moffatt.

The machine needs to be well oiled from both sides. Successful relationships depend on the client team as well, so it's a mutual project.

■ ***How can creatives better meet customers' needs to ensure client satisfaction?***

Certainly there is no single correct answer here, but an increasingly important one is simplicity. I've seen time and time again where great marketers in the industry overcomplicate the offer. This can come from an overcomplicated strategy, an unclear brief or expectation from the client-side or a creative concept that layers the work.

If there was no clutter in communication and we had 100% of consumer attention, simplicity may not be as much of an issue. To truly connect with consumers today requires simple hooks that speak to genuine consumer needs.

■ ***Looking specifically at Promise Group then, explain your biggest triumphs and challenges along the way since you started out as a team of two, over a decade ago.***

There are two mantras I often reflect on as our business develops. The first is "don't drink your own Kool-Aid". The other, "lean into the wind", describes my insistence that myself and the entire agency team should always feel slightly uncomfortable – just enough to ensure that we remain innovative and ahead of the curve. When ECD Marc Watson and I started Promise 12 years ago, we had no founding clients or startup capital.



The Promise Group team

But our partnership and support for each other during the early years resulted in excellent work and organic growth with happy clients. Today, we are a fully integrated agency of 90 staff. Recently, we had two new partners join us in the business.



Promise kept: Stellar growth, prestigious account wins and new data offering

Promise 29 May 2017



We have found the journey to be full of learnings, not least of which was our decision to make digital a priority for us. Today, digital accounts for 40% of our income.

Who else is getting digital creative work right in SA and Africa overall?

In my opinion, Hellocomputer is the current leader in the digital creative sphere in South Africa, followed by Gloo@Ogilvy, although Native VML's use of technology is often the most creative. Similarly, the other African branches of Ogilvy show up well in their respective digital award categories.

Which industry trend are you most looking forward to from 2017?

The trend we are most looking forward to in 2017 is "the rise of the creative consultancy."

The business models of consulting and creative agencies are converging. Agencies must evolve, it is no longer about simply delivering a big idea against a brief.



Release of *Agency Scope*, study of agencies in South Africa

11 Nov 2016



Today, agencies need to evolve to be consultants to the business, and use their insight and creativity as well as an intimate understanding of data to solve real issues beyond communication. Agencies need to go beyond adverts and marketing strategies to deliver tangible results.

Based on their track record, I'd take that as a promise of what to expect as we move further into the client-centric future! [Click here](#) for more on Scopen 2017, [here](#) for more on Promise Group from their press office, and be sure to follow their updates on the following social media handles:

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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