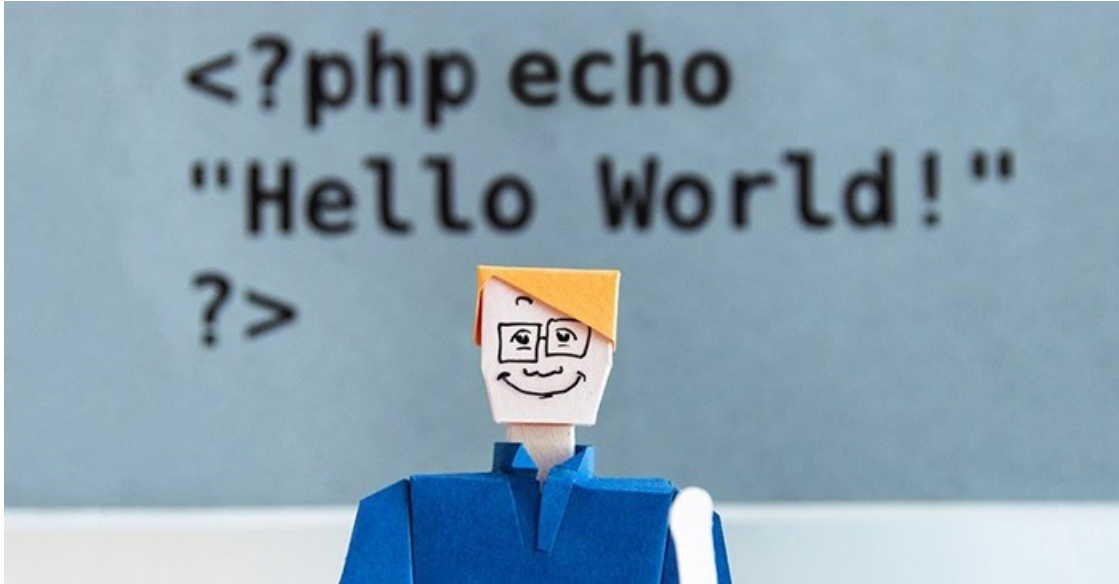


The evolution of branding through the digital agency

 By [Desiree Gullan](#)

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While many marketing professionals consider a brand to be a corporate identity consisting of carefully considered fonts, icons, image guidelines, tone of voice, themes and values, the emphasis in the digital era should be on the experience. Consumers no longer see a difference between their experience of a brand and the brand itself.



Over the past decade, digital agencies have become vital in offering brands the reinvention they crave through the ability to be ever-present (mobile), dynamic (data-driven) and most of all, a joy to use (interaction design), all of which can develop an almost unbreakable bond between brands and consumers. Using these same insights, we are witnessing a disruption of sectors like never before, take Uber and Airbnb as examples.

Before you think of adding another analogue brand to a digital world, here are some factors to consider:

1. Become a digital-first brand

Businesses can no longer afford to spend time, money and effort creating analogue communications. The digital experience has to lead the strategy.

2. Digital is the better brand steward

How often do you first interact with a brand on a digital platform? The answer is probably — always. Despite the age of the brand, its digital presence is pivotal in understanding the consumer and engaging with them.

3. Embrace the tech-brand

While most new brands are born with genetics rooted in technology, legacy brands should embrace technology to stay relevant. Take Glossier as an example, a young brand positioned as a tech company in the make-up business. Sephora, a legacy brand, has embraced the use of augmented reality to evolve their brand experience and reach today's tech-savvy market.

4. Evolve. And evolve fast

Consumers have reached a point where they prefer streaming content to owning it. They see TripAdvisor as the replacement to a traditional travel agency and prefer mobile banking to making a trip to the bank. Brands have to adapt at the speed of digital.

Digital agencies are well poised to offer deep digitalisation strategies and implementation. The age-old truism about first impressions hasn't changed, what has changed is the difficulty for a brand to recover from a bad digital first impression, especially in a time when a consumer just needs to tap, click or swipe to get the instant gratification they desire and to share their opinions.

Your brand's digital interaction with your target market is the most significant branding to consider. Lead with the digital experience and let your other channels play a supporting role.

ABOUT DESIREE GULLAN

Having worked at the 'Big Three' advertising agencies in SA and proving her creative mettle abroad, Desirée has won multiple local and international awards for her work - including Cannes Lions and Clios. She believes in the importance of craftsmanship - that it's not in the designing, but in the redesigning. Not in the writing, but in the rewriting.

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