

Effie Worldwide COO: "If something is not effective it is expensive content"

By  Danette Breitenbach

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The Effie Awards are the pinnacle of recognition for advertising and marketing effectiveness, and effectiveness has come to the fore as companies emphasise business results.



Source: © Effie [Effie](#) COO Effies Worldwide Allison Knapp Womack, "If something is not effective it is expensive content"

The Effie Awards are the pinnacle of recognition for advertising and marketing effectiveness, and effectiveness has come to the fore as companies emphasise business results.

"If something is not effective it is expensive content," says Allison Knapp Womack, chief operating officer Effie Worldwide. Here on her second trip to South Africa, Womack is a speaker at the Nedbank IMC on Friday and will be attending the Effie Awards South Africa in the evening.

Effectiveness for business results

In her capacity as Effie COO, she works with 55 different partnerships that service about 120 countries around the world.

"But wherever you go, Effie stands for the same thing. When we talk about effectiveness, we refer to the Effie framework

that starts with identifying challenge context and objectives, then looks the insights and the strategy, how the strategy is brought to life and lastly, but the one that is weighted most heavily, of course, are results.”

That framework, she explains, applies to Effie globally, and it is the is the kicking off point of what effectiveness looks like today across the marketing and agencies spectrum.



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A complex role driving business results

“There is a recognition that CMO today need to be fluent in business metrics. They must sit with their CFO and really understand financial concepts, such as quarterly cash flow goals.”

Importantly, she says CMOs need to understand that what they do contributes to the company’s success and financial performance.

“The CMO role today is tough. Apart from the financial element, today’s CMO needs to be constantly innovating, seeing around corners and anticipating what’s coming as well as the many other tasks required of the role.”

She says what is not only more important but also more understandable today, is that the CMO and marketing are the drivers of a business.

Connecting to audiences

That she adds is challenging in a world that feels more and more transactional.

“There is a lot of conversation around the top of the funnel and bottom of the funnel metrics. But marketers can optimise at the bottom of the funnel till the end of time, but if the top of the funnel is not being fed with people coming to that brand because it stands for something they believe in and want to engage with, you will optimise yourself out of existence.”

The world is a noisy place and consumers are inundated with messages. “This means what a brand stands for, and how it makes a connection to an audience has become more important.”



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Who is who

“This means that brands need agencies that really understand their business, and can dig in with you,” she says.

This is why Effie does workshops with clients and agencies on effectiveness frameworks.

“This gives the two parties a common language and understanding. A common language is important for the client to understand the agency’s process, and for the agency to understand the client’s business.

“If you can bring the two together then you get very powerful teams, which, in the best case scenario, is that you are in a

meeting and you cannot tell who is the client and who is the agency.”

Local industry stands out

Next year Effie is 55 years old. South Africa only joined the global programme in 2019.

“While South Africa is only a four-year programme, and it started on the cusp of the pandemic, it has made tremendous inroads in establishing a community of people who are committed to not just the organisation, but creating a culture of effectiveness.”

She adds that, despite its late start, the country punches above its weight, “What makes the country’s work so effective is the innovativeness of the industry.

“Reputationally the South African advertising and marketing industry is known globally for innovation. Challenges such as economics, the Covid impact, and load shedding are met head-on by people who are resourceful in finding very creative and exciting brand solutions.”

She uses the country’s own Effie call to entry campaign this year as an example. “The campaign from Mathe Okaba, CEO of the ACA and Effie South Africa, and her team to announce the call for entries, which we see before they launch, is one of best I have seen, and I plan to show it to the Effie world as an example of how to take our brand and adapt it locally.”

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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