

A few 'bone shakers' for media in 2018

By [Graham Deneys](#)

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This year's focus was all on one word that I have come to despise due to the frivolous use of it to describe anything that is slightly different to what is considered the norm. This word is disruption.



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Something rather mundane like making my advert double the standard size is not disruption - it's just different and often just a realisation of what we should have perhaps been doing all along. Many of us even saw the word disruption as a potential way to survive a morphing and unpredictable communications environment.

The word disruption ironically enough became a 'safe-word' of sorts in meetings. Going into 2018, we need to give the word disruption the respect it deserves!

With this said, the media industry is seeing some incredible movement and adjustments. The demise of AMPS and the introduction of the *Establishment Survey*, has led to some major changes in planning and KPI setting. The transition has been tricky but has been managed well with successes and learnings.

Make sure there is data

Keeping to the subject of data, it is no longer good enough to attend a meeting regarding communication and media south of the Sahara, and say that the "data just isn't available". Besides an array of really creative qualitative approaches in-market, Carat has rolled out our own proprietary data called CCS in Nigeria and Ghana, to be followed by Kenya in the next couple of months.

Media channel agnostic creative approach

Another intriguing trend I have noticed, is the subtle shift in approach around the globe that is now infiltrating our sunny African shores. Some call it “media first” and others “agnostic planning”. This approach involves a ruthless focus on achieving numbers (eye-balls) and channel relevance from a media point of view and in turn, from a creative agency point of view, a media channel agnostic creative approach needs to be developed simultaneously.

This approach is aimed at ensuring that a creative concept fits perfectly into channels that we know resonate with consumers, and delivers on Reach and Frequency objectives first and foremost. This approach is born from the insight that consumers, now more than ever, are dictating relevant channels - communication needs to fit seamlessly into their lives or it's out, ignored and dead in the water, no matter how ‘viral’ a concept might have seemed at the time of conception. 2018 will no doubt see an increase in this approach as margins demand performance.

Costs driven down

The above trends have also been influenced heavily by the ‘Men in Suits’, otherwise known as procurement. The focused, procurement driven approach to media has driven down costs at every stage of the process. This isn't an issue, what is an issue, is when this is done to the detriment of great work. Work that might cost a little more, but is going to deliver 10 fold on your investment because the right resources (humans) and technology are being used to forge the best possible outcome.

What needs to be established is the tipping point of where cost saving causes the walls to crumble on an otherwise incredible campaign that would have delivered on business objectives. This year, we should see a focus on this – establishing a happy medium through accountability measures that aren't solely reliant on cost savings as an end result.

Understand what's coming

Finally, one last trend that I am seeing more and more, is what some people refer to as ‘Canary in the Coal-Mine’ approach to competitors. In the past, we have fixated on what our direct competitors are up to. So much so that we miss the charging bull. This year and for years to come, an acute understanding of the global rumblings that might churn out a “competitor” you never dreamed of, is very real and of course vital to survival.

- Netflix was just a small DVD rental service, right?
- Surely a platform that focuses on renting out your spare room to a stranger wouldn't work?

To sum up, I guess what I am trying to put forward, is that 2018 will be about agility and adaptability for media agencies. Cementing our role within a pyroclastic flow of data, costings, relevance and of course the unpredictable humans we call our target audience. Jump on and let's ride!

ABOUT GRAHAM DENEYS

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