

Roan Mackintosh - Overcoming tight budgets and data complexities in 2024



By [Roan Mackintosh](#)

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2024 will be about getting the most out of tight budgets, while new privacy laws will impact how the big tech companies operate in the coming year and, without proper insight, marketing teams could find themselves on the back foot.



Image supplied. Roan Mackintosh, managing director, Africa, Incubeta says tight budgets and data complexities can be overcome in 2024

This will depend on leveraging the power of AI, which in turn will demand accessible, clean data that meets all the compliance requirements. Marketing teams will need to carefully apply themselves to a complex digital environment that will be more demanding.

The brands that will emerge winners in 2024 are those that work closely with specialists who have the required insight, can run a strong test-and-learn environment, and can help build internal support teams to run strong data-driven strategies.

Navigating challenges

Here is some advice for marketing leaders hoping to navigate these and other challenges.

1. Cost saving mistakes that backfire

Digital marketing budgets continued to shrink in 2023 and it was a year of tough money questions.

Many CMOs were interrogating their return on investment and carefully scrutinising the possibility of a more conservative approach.

This may have brought some temporary relief, but many marketing leaders found out the hard way that not feeding the top of the funnel ended up costing them dearly as they struggled to play catch-up after some ill-considered and hasty cuts.



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2. Right sourcing gains momentum

This year also saw several conversations around media right-sourcing. This allows companies all the horizontal exposure and innovation that comes with working with an agency but blends it with a solid in-house team to carry out the day-to-day work.

We see this becoming a larger trend as we move through 2024 and into 2025 and the best solution is to work closely with your agency to ensure delivery and costs are optimised as you restructure your teams.



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3. Consent management becomes crucial in an AI-led world

The sunset of Universal Analytics and the move to GA4 hit many companies a lot harder than anyone expected.

There is still a lot of capturing that is going on and many companies are currently working on a minimum viable product while they get their house in order.

However, brands must be aware that Google has built GA4 with privacy at its heart and as AI grows in importance, consented data becomes more important.

Products like Performance Max, discovery ads and predictive analytics will only work with all the privacy components in place and activated. Privacy and consent management are rapidly growing in importance across the globe.

In the EU, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), has made the website owner responsible for how they collect and process users' personal data.



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However, now the Digital Markets Act (DMA) transfers these responsibilities to big tech companies, making them 'gatekeepers of users' privacy. If big tech companies like Meta and Google fall short, they face enormous fines - up to 10% of their global annual revenue, and 20% for repeat offences.

This could see a shift in how Google ranks sites (giving those that comply with data collection rules preference) and will undoubtedly have an impact on SEO going forward.

Added to this, the rise of voice search is also changing the SEO requirements so shifts in algorithms can be expected. Having a test-and-learn methodology as a standard operating practice is the only way to face these new challenges.

4. Letting the message work harder with dynamic creative

As marketing leaders experience the power of dynamic creative we expect the trend to grow in the coming year. There has been a strong interest in data-driven creative projects especially as budgets tighten.

Having the message work harder and resonate more strongly, all while incurring less waste, is appealing to all marketing leaders and the added backing from Google will amplify the interest.

We have seen the standard TV advertising schedule buckle in the wake of ongoing load shedding. As this continues and Google drives their YouTube usage we can expect video to continue its growth and budgets will follow.

The growth in this format will make dynamic creative all the more attractive and we can see these two trends feeding one another in the months to come.



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5. Retail media picks up as Amazon enters SA

Large retailers are looking to leverage their reach and are selling their inventory to become publishers, offering advertising to the brands whose products they sell. Amazon reported \$37.7bn in ad revenue sales in 2022 and this is expected to grow to \$70bn by 2027.

The challenge (and opportunity) for the industry will be how to work this into their existing 2024/25 strategies as Amazon opens its doors this year.

ABOUT ROAN MACKINTOSH

Managing Director - Africa at Incubeta. Roan joined Incubeta in May 2019 after spending 11 years at WPP's global digital marketing technology and consultancy arm, Acceleration, where he was group business director. Roan's extensive experience as well as his insatiable curiosity have helped hone his skills in digital strategy and mobile advertising, making him a valuable industry commentator.

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