

Digital not replacing traditional marketing - Miles Young



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The great mistake of today's business environment is to believe that digital can fulfil the role of marketing. It will not, Miles Young, global CEO of Ogilvy and Mather Worldwide, said yesterday, Tuesday, 9 March 2010, in Johannesburg.



"Digital has prevailed in the US and the core of our business has lost its sparkle but the sectarian approach of digital has had a profound harm in the US and UK," Young said, adding that the critical lesson here is to integrate digital into one's business strategy but not to look at it as a 'world apart'.

Young is in Johannesburg to meet with local staff and attend a workshop, which he said would constitute a learning experience for him.

Claims of TV's 'death' exaggerated

Since the dawn of the so-called digital revolution, digital marketing has become the talk of the town, with many conference speakers confidently preaching that the end of traditional marketing is near and everyone should convert to the 'digital religion' if he or she wants to remain 'alive'.

"There is a huge propaganda going on against TV," Young said. "But TV is growing and not declining and the myth of its death is sometimes exaggerated.

"Therefore, we have to be very careful when saying that digital can do everything mass media used to do. Digital is simply a way mass media can reinvent itself and remain relevant.

"Digital is not a channel itself because everything has to be digitised. However, it is a complementary component that has broadened and expanded advertising but is not replacing it.

"You can measure digital but you cannot calculate its effectiveness."

Print 'messed up'

He added, "As for print media, they have themselves to blame for messing up and giving away online content for free.

"However, at the end of the day it is all about content and future investments. One of our clients, *The Economist*, is still doing well - people are still buying and reading because they have invested in journalism.

"Look, after all it is not the end of the world for traditional marketing."

Into Africa

Despite a difficult year, Ogilvy SA has scooped some big but hotly contested business wins in 2009, including Cell C, SAA, FIFA, PPC and Coca-Cola. The agency was the top performer at the 2009 Loerie Awards, as well as the 2009 Eagle Awards for print advertising, and was voted Ogilvy Worldwide's best agency at the Cannes International Advertising Awards 2009.

"Joburg is a fantastic office and one of our best because there is so much talent and creativity here, which have produced great results. That is why I came here to learn and not to teach," Young said.

Ogilvy SA CEO Nunu Ntshingila said, "We are looking to grow into Africa and efficiently serve our clients in those markets. We have developing markets in DRC [and] Angola, as well as a fantastic market in Kenya and we are investing more resources in those markets. Going forward, we want to say that we are building a strong capacity in Kenya."

Young added, "We have great ambitions to become the best agency in the planet and Africa is going to be part of our global strategy in the next five years. Our clients have started to talk a lot about sub-Saharan Africa in the last 18 months or so."

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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