

Kantar's Eric Salama discusses the way forward under new owner Bain Capital

By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

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Kantar CEO Eric Salama presented an update on the new ownership structure and the opportunities under, Bain Capital during a press call held on Thursday.

WPP [announced](#) that it sold a 60% majority stake in Kantar to Bain Capital last month, following a \$4bn transaction. Salama noted that Bain saw an industry full of potential when they looked at investing in Kantar. The firm's solid client roster and its clients' growing need to use data and analytics to advance their businesses was what impressed Bain Capital the most.

Kantar uniquely well-placed to deliver "what and why" approach

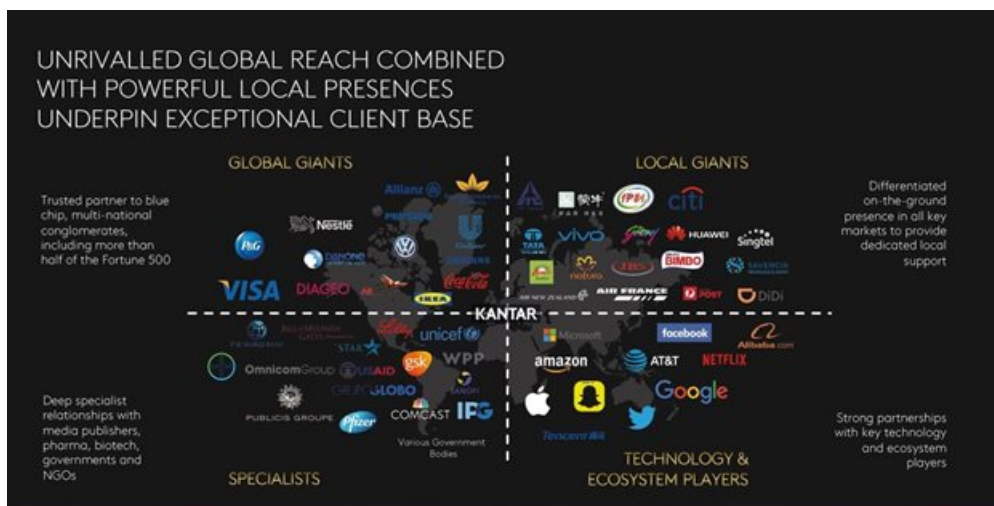
Salama spoke about a more focused understanding around "what and why" and to bring those insights to the forefront to back the facts. He held up traditional marketers like Coca-Cola, which has always been very focused on understanding people and emotion and what would make people come into a new category or switch from a competitive brand.

But the company also saw the "what and why" approach from the likes of Google as well. Google, a company that has, historically, placed a premium on leveraging behavioural data, now really wants to get into some of the "why questions" and the "why understandings", which it can only do through a combination of some of the behavioural data and some of its attitudinal data.

He stated that the "what and why" is very important and said that he thinks that Kantar is generally uniquely well-placed to deliver that. "There is no other company in the world who've really got that ability to understand 'what or why' and bring those things together," he said. Bain Capital saw that at a global level and it discussed its client list, which includes a mix of big global brands.



Kantar CEO, Eric Salama. Image supplied.



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Bain Capital did extensive due diligence with all of these clients. It went out into the market, outside the formal process, to lots of the clients around the world. One of the things that came back from that was a huge amount of trust in Kantar, said Salama. And especially in a post-GDPR world, trust is very, very important.

Delivering greater client impact and scaling differentiated solutions

He said that the company is focused on two things in terms of how it goes forward, one is delivering greater client impact and really scaling some of its differentiated solutions. "We have introduced lots of innovation into the market over the last 18 months. We are now very focused on scaling those innovations globally in all of our major markets and consistently for all of our clients."

To recap, he listed greater client impact by:

- Scaling their newest differentiated solutions faster and to more markets
- Delivering integrated "what and why" understanding through dashboard
- Increasing breadth and depth of talent pool around key specialisms and across media ROI, engineering, analytics and consulting

Faster turnaround, more real-time and predictive offers through:

- Accelerating their investment in AI and machine learning tools
- Self-service platforms, like Kantar Marketplace
- More automation of processes and manual tasks so they can increase the quality

Holistic brand guidance

To demonstrate how they intend to do this he provided a few examples. The first example included holistic brand guidance.


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He said that the best way to think about this is, historically, brand tracking has been and continues to be major tools that it uses to understand everything that it does and the impact that has on the brand. Brand tracking has been too expensive for some clients and too slow. So not reporting in real-time enough and not bringing enough insights.

Holistic brand guidance includes much shorter surveys and the incorporation of automated and modular solutions. It goes

from having brand tracking, which is largely backwards-looking, to being much more real-time and incorporating an understanding across the board – of what happened to my brand and the things that are influencing it.



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Media

The second example is around media.

Salama said that the company's goal is to measure all content on all devices and to deliver cross-media measurement and ROI analytics. They do TV ratings in 50 countries around the world. In some markets like all of Latin America, it provides real-time minute-by-minute ratings. But its aim is to really measure all content and to broaden that content to new platforms.



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Content types measured include:

- Broadcaster live streaming
- Video-on-demand (including broadcaster catch up)
- Free streaming sites (i.e. YouTube)
- Subscription video-on-demand players (i.e. Netflix and Amazon Prime Video)

Kantar Worldpanel Plus

The third example included Worldpanel Plus. Through Wordpanel, Kantar measures shopping behaviour around the world. Through the "what and the why", it measures in a way that is based on the individual.

This is getting retailer data, this is getting individual person data so that it can then help clients understand not just what people are buying but why they switch from one brand to another, what was the impact of a new innovation, what was the impact of new packaging, what was the impact of a promotion, how loyal are people, how much switching do they do, how price-driven are they, all of these type of things.

With Kantar Worldpanel Plus technology, it reads people's receipts. "So people just take a picture of their receipts and using image recognition technology and linking it back to our master files, they capture all of the retail purchases – which means that we are also capturing a whole bunch of other purchase occasions that we didn't before."

In light of its new ownership, Salama said the plan is to roll out this technology to China and to a number of other markets.

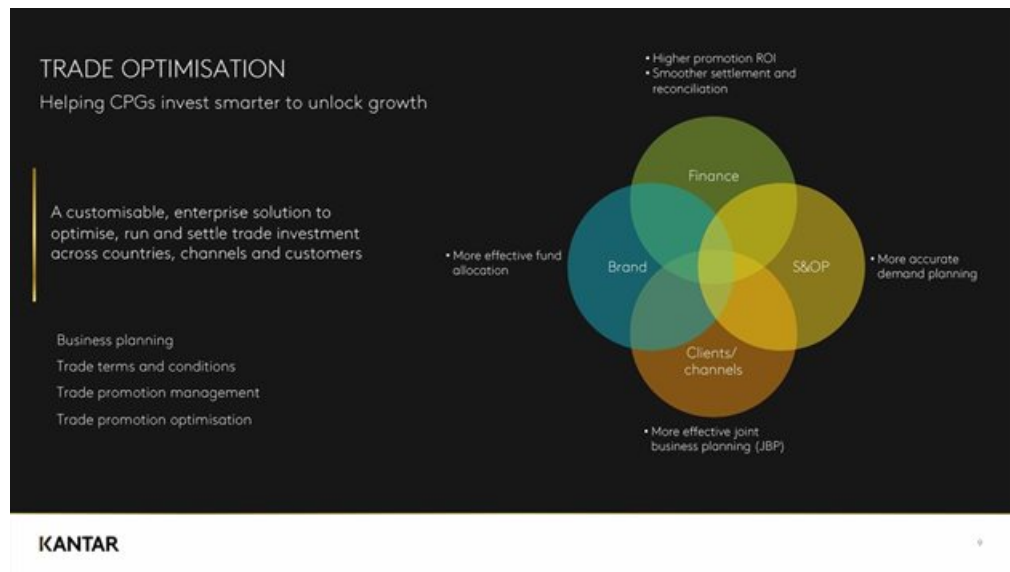
Trade optimisation

The last example was around trade optimisation.

"People who work in the package-goods industry will know that clients spend much more on trace than they do on brands. So clients' trade budgets are often two to three times the size of their brand-building budgets. And it is a huge area which is very, very fragmented," Salama said.

He said that Kantar has one of the top two trade promotion optimisation services in the world. It provides that service to the likes of Nestlé, whose business it has just won in North America across all of its divisions – Mondelez, Kellogg's, Ferrero,

Coca-Cola, etc. "It's a work-flow process allied to some retail expertise which we have that really takes a fragmented approach to trade promotion, which is largely spreadsheet-based. And causes clients to really systematically look at that differently and optimise it and generate some big savings," he said. He added that there was real potential to roll this out to more and more clients.



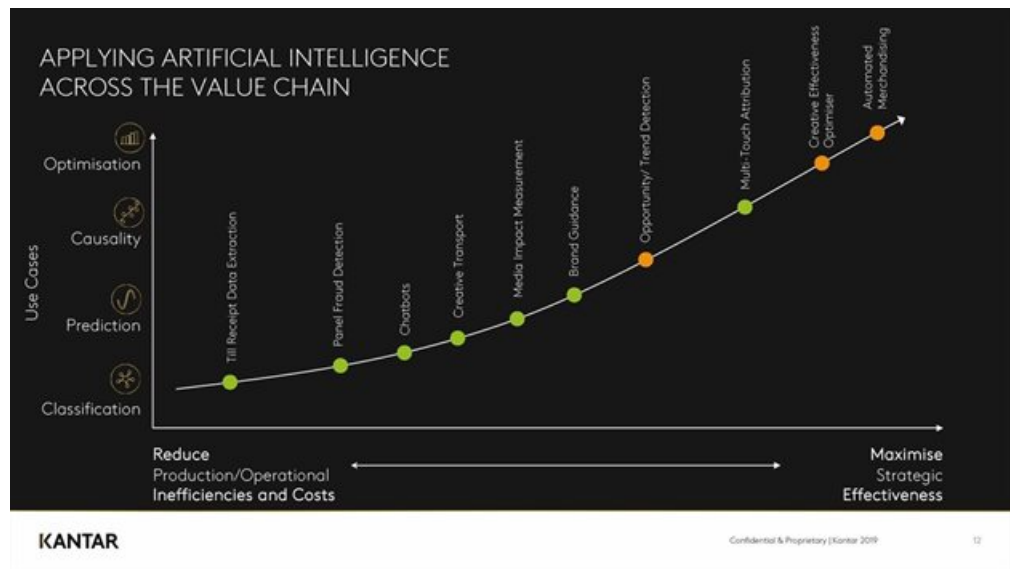
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Examples around speed points

He continued to also give us examples around the speed points. The first one being Kantar Marketplace. A self-service site with a number of solutions that can really benefit clients regarding speed and cost.

The second example included machine learning and AI. He said the company had a number of products out of which some is about capturing what's going on (on social media for example) and also other products that enable clients to predict what will happen.



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Salama said that Bain Capital saw, as it did, an industry that really needs to transform itself. "We are the first to recognise that we have done lots of good things over the last few years, but we need to do more and that having a partner like Bain from a capability and money point of view would be enormously helpful in terms of doing that."

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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