

It takes a village to create a meaningful campaign

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The Havas Village is a model, developed by the Havas Group, which provides clients with a full service ranging from creative to media to PR and more. There are over 69 Havas Villages across the globe that bring together the most talented communication experts from across all communication disciplines to create high impact campaigns. South Africa's Village is the first of its kind on the continent.



Managing directors of media and creative at Havas Johannesburg – Katherine Couzyn and Beverley Jones, respectively – form part of the Havas Village leadership team. The two directors believe that the integration of media and creative is not only the ideal approach which serves clients best in an ever-changing marketing and communications landscape, it is also the future of brand communication.

“The true collaboration between media and creative extends the capability for innovation that clients do not sometimes realise. Creative output relies on media insights to develop effective messages, however in a siloed agency scenario, the lack of collaboration becomes evident in the work produced... Creativity needs to be data driven and data needs to be approached creatively,” says Couzyn.

The two managing directors both agree that South Africa’s advertising industry needs to fast move away from a siloed approach. “You can’t drive innovation in a siloed manner. The greatest disservice that the industry did to itself was to separate media, creative, PR, and all of the other disciplines that complete the creative output cycle. People are no longer working in an integrated fashion and as such, brands suffer,” says Jones.

Havas’s strategy is to cultivate a working environment in which employees work across disciplines and learn transversal skills. “Havas operates on a more networked structure. The beauty of which is the exposure to cross-functionality of the various disciplines that make us more efficient and agile when responding to briefs”, says Jones.

Havas’s talent acquisition approach is to seek out employees that are passionate about disrupting the industry and encourage team members to break out of the rigid moulds placed on them by the various communication disciplines. “I’m

looking for someone with the right attitude and not just someone with the right qualification,” says Jones.

Within the last two years multiple industries, including the communication sector, have seen massive amounts of resignations; a phenomenon referred to as ‘The Great Resignation’. The two directors recognise that resource churn poses a great danger to business growth and have instituted progressive retention strategies to mitigate these losses. “If you constantly need to re-train someone new, that has disastrous effects for the business’ momentum,” says Couzyn. The strategy these MD’s have utilised is to craft a clear growth and succession path for each individual.

Both Jones and Couzyn have learned in their role as directors that employee retention is a critical part of the business model, and this is especially the case for young people, they believe in leadership that supports and nurtures the talent. “When young employees can see a growth path for themselves while doing work they love, they will be loyal to the company,” says Couzyn.

At the end of the day what they both want most is for their teams to become responsible and accountable. The focus becomes a collective team task on business strategy and innovation in the industry. A sure-fire way to create meaningful and impactful work that resonates with consumers.

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