

Why don't clients listen to their PR and ad agencies?

 By [Chris Mberdyk](#)

12 May 2017

It is human nature that clients don't always listen to their PR and ad agencies and it often takes an independent outside "guru" to confirm what they are being told before clients sign off on strategy and campaigns.

It seems quite incredible that the more time goes by the more I am called in by PR and ad agencies to talk to their clients. Sure, quite often when I am briefed by these agencies I suggest alternative strategies that would bring a bit more confidence to their clients but generally speaking I am simply repeating what they tell their clients but because I am doing it in a different voice and giving successful examples and case histories, clients end up a lot happier.

But, there are times when the fault is not entirely with the clients, because their agencies tend to talk to them in "marketing speak" which can be confusing. And because clients are not being given the assurance that the outcome of the proposed strategy is both measureable and offering a visible return on investment.

I have found over the years that two things are happening in South Africa:

1. Many skilled marketers have left the country to take up lucrative positions abroad with the result that those people promoted to decision-making marketing, PR and advertising positions for client companies, lack experience and a basic understanding of what marketing is all about.
2. With the cost of advertising particularly, becoming so expensive due to massive media inflation, client marketers are under tremendous pressure from their companies to account for PR, advertising and general marketing expenditure.

In both cases I have found that the secret lies in wording strategy and budget proposals in the language of the financial director of a client company.

After all, this is the person whose job it is to raise red flags on any spending that cannot be fully justified.

And if the financial director, or MD for that matter, do not understand the basics of marketing then they will undoubtedly pose very difficult questions or create obstacles before signing anything off.

My strategy when talking to a client company about marketing is not to indulge in "marketing speak" but rather to put everything in the context of investment, measurement and the tools available to the financial director in terms of using the marketing process to ensure that every cent spent is being spent for a practical reason and not just on a flight of creative fancy.

Right now R50bn is being wasted on bad marketing decision-making in South Africa and the reason is quite simply that many clients do not understand the insurance value of applying the marketing process and often just send their agencies into the great unknown. The very expensive unknown.

ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK

Apart from being a corporate marketing analyst, advisor and media commentator, Chris Moerdyk is a former chairman of Bizcommunity. He was head of strategic planning and public affairs for BMW South Africa and spent 16 years in the creative and client service departments of ad agencies, ending up as resident director of Lindsay Smithers-FCB in KwaZulu-Natal. Email Chris on moerdykc@gmail.com and follow him on Twitter at [@chrismoerdyk](https://twitter.com/chrismoerdyk).

- Covid-19 boosts trust in traditional mass media - 21 Jul 2020
- Don't listen to the post-corona marketing hysteria - 17 Jun 2020
- Let's talk about marketing after corona - 15 May 2020
- Will the mass media learn anything from Covid-19? - 28 Apr 2020
- Covid-19: Secure online advice, mentoring and workshop facilitating - 23 Mar 2020

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>