

# Great people, culture and partnerships offer the perfect recipe to shine in 2023

 By [Niamh NicLiam](#)

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A renewed focus on performance in the face of uncertain local and global economies will increase as we move into 2023. We can also expect the role of data, across all aspects of the digital marketing industry, to place more pressure on CMOs to attract and retain vital skills.



Niamh NicLiam, director: Growth and Partnerships at Incubeta.

The best and only way for brands to navigate the year ahead will be through a razor-sharp focus on people and organisational management, as well as building stronger, more value-driven partnerships between brands and their agencies.

## Consumers will shift their behaviour and brands must react

No-one has escaped the impacts of the inflationary pressures and the impact on consumer spend will be felt for many

months to come. We can expect consumers to change their buying behaviour and the industry must sit up and take notice.

As part of its 2023 Top Trends, research and consulting firm, Gartner, has said that more than 50% of the 1,999 employees, consumers and B2B buyers it had surveyed during 2022 said it was less important to choose a well-known brand than it was three years ago. The same study showed that 75% of audiences had searched online for information about an unfamiliar brand while they were shopping, and only 15% had indicated that they were committed to their familiar brand.



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This pressure on brands will be exacerbated by the budget cuts they will also be facing in the year ahead. The increased pressure of achieving the same performance, or even more, with less money and in a struggling economy with fearful consumers, is going to provide the backdrop for 2023.

CMOs must be cognisant of the headspace of their consumers. If brands want to win in the coming year, they'll need to tap into consumer sentiment and give them a reason to believe in their brand – whether that be from a practical perspective (offering something the consumer needs to make their lives better) or from a social responsibility perspective, (offering something to make the consumer feel good about themselves or their place in the world).

### **Closer ties between partners holds the answer**

Shrinking budgets have placed a huge focus on performance. And, while delivery excellence should always be what all agencies are striving for, less money and higher expectations will add strain to even the best client / agency relationship in the year ahead.

Agency leaders must get to grips with what is at play both in terms of macro and micro influences. Partnerships and collaboration will help in delivering the success stories that we all want. However, honesty, transparency and trust will play an even more important role in the year ahead and should be the bedrock on which partnerships can grow and flourish in the coming months.

### **Skills will remain a challenge**

Last year we reflected on the challenges of finding the elusive unicorns – those scarce data skills that are snapped up in an instant. Unfortunately, the search continues this year with international companies now actively recruiting in our backyard.

As the role of data grows, and becomes the glue that holds siloed digital touchpoints together in organisations, the urgency

to attract and retain the necessary skills to handle the industry's growing data requirements grows with it.

Global gigs paying higher rates makes attraction and retention a big challenge for homegrown agencies. One way to address this is through graduate programmes and internships. These allow companies to grow and mould talent at a local level and our experience has shown that the effort put into this results in team members who understand the culture of the company, and are far more willing to commit to your organisation long-term.

We've also seen that money isn't the only motivator. People want to believe in where they work, and creating a culture that puts its people first can go a long way to addressing our skills challenge.

Actively protect your teams from the external noise and stress



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News of mass layoffs dominated the news in 2022 and, together with a big rise in the cost of living, teams are dealing with extreme stress. Leaders who are obsessing about how to retain and grow customers often forget that they have internal customers too. Creating a culture and organisational structure that is conducive to making staff feel valued will be a major leadership priority in 2023 and beyond.

Creating a great work environment means setting your teams up for success. Often this requires protecting them from the noise of the industry. We can do this by offering an environment of reassurance that allows them to flourish, despite the pressures of an uncertain external environment.

Finally, great communication is also key. By sharing your business vision and roadmap with your team you can help them understand their role in the organisation and see that they are integral to the journey. We will all be relying on our people to do great work, and think creatively in the year ahead. By offering them the right kind of support from an organisational perspective, we can allow them to play to their strengths and better equip them to deliver on the growing performance expectations we will all be facing.

## ABOUT NIAMH NICLIAM

Niamh NiLiam is the director for growth and partnerships at Incubeta. Niamh joined the Incubeta group in January 2015, and since then she has helped build successful partnerships with many local and global brands.

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