Copyright and Citation Considerations for This Thesis/Dissertation

o Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

o NonCommercial — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

o ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

How to cite this thesis

An Exploration of the Integration Challenges Experienced by Advertising Agencies Between Digital and Traditional Specialist Teams

by

Lara Chatzkelowitz

Minor Masters Dissertation
Coursework Masters

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
in
Strategic Communication

Faculty of Humanities

University of Johannesburg

Supervisor: Professor S.Verwey

Submission: 31 January 2019
Abstract

This qualitative research study set out to discover through a case study approach how a South African advertising agency integrated their digital specialist team with the above the line, traditional team. A body of existing literature was reviewed to better understand the constructs that underpin this phenomenon of agency integration, namely: changes in the macro, industry environment that spur on integration, especially understanding the role of emergent digital technology. McCann Worldgroup Johannesburg was selected as a case study for the purpose of this research. The major findings include a consensus around the failure of the integration initiative for several reasons. The integration initiative lacked substantial investment and leadership decided to pursue avenues that were quicker and easier to implement as opposed to what would have success and longevity. The implications of this approach on the teams were also investigated and the findings indicate that the team members experienced the integration process as emotional and taxing, and feelings of fear, frustration, misunderstanding, inadequacy and irrelevance were reported. The social and cultural dynamic was interrupted and so the work output suffered owing to duplication of resources, non-collaboration and longer turnaround times to deliver on integrated brand strategy.

Key words: Digital specialist teams, traditional above the line teams, digital integration, integration process, advertising agency
# Table of Contents

**CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
1.2. Research Questions and Aims ...................................................................................... 2
1.3. Literature Review and Key Constructs ....................................................................... 3
1.4. Research Methodology ............................................................................................... 6
1.5. Ethical Considerations ............................................................................................... 7
1.6. Structure of the Study ............................................................................................... 8

**CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1. Understanding Change .............................................................................................. 9
2.2. Change Management Models .................................................................................. 9
2.3. Changes Affecting the Advertising Communications Industry ......................... 19
2.4. The Changing Models of Advertising Agencies .................................................... 25
   2.4.1. The Advertising Communications Industry’s Shift Toward Integration ........... 26
   2.4.2. The Relationship Between Consumer Demand, Technology and the Impact on Advertising Agencies .......................................................... 28
   2.4.3. An Omnichannel Approach to Creating Integrated Campaigns ................. 31
   2.4.4. The Impact of Technology on Client Relationships ........................................ 37
   2.4.5. Integrated Brand Strategy ............................................................................... 40
   2.4.6. New Agency Models ....................................................................................... 41
   2.4.7. Obstacles Facing Integration ......................................................................... 42
   2.4.8. Integration Models .......................................................................................... 43
2.5. The Effects of Integration on Advertising Agency Teams ....................................... 45
2.6. The Gap in the Literature .......................................................................................... 50

**CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY**

3.1. Methodology ............................................................................................................ 52
3.2. Research Design ....................................................................................................... 53
3.3. Sampling Strategy .................................................................................................... 53
3.4. Research Methods and Instrument Design .............................................................. 54
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Advertising and media practitioners, as well as the organizations to which they belong, are continually struggling to make sense of the new, emergent challenges that face their discipline, most of which can be attributed to the digital revolution (Lundby, 2008:4). With the emergence of new channels, came the emergence of new content and media formats, as well as the emergence of new professional roles and job specifications to be fulfilled (Holman, 2010:17). Overton-De Klerk and Verwey (2013:364) discuss the paradigmatic shift that agencies should be experiencing as follows: a move away from a modernist, rigid and regulated approach, towards a postmodernist, sustainable and adaptable approach that is less confined by tradition. With that, various new agency models have emerged and are emerging, as leadership across the many organisations attempt to manage change. The ways in which the digital revolution has transformed communication as a whole from consumer behaviour, to the professional organisations that operate commercially within this domain, has been drastic and disruptive (Morgan, n.d.). Mele (2013:1-2) describes the Internet and digital emergence as an insurgent and democratic revolution, bringing “radical connectivity - [the] ability to send vast amounts of data instantly, constantly and globally – [which] has all but transformed politics, business and culture, bringing about the upheaval of traditional, ‘big’, institutions and the empowerment of upstarts and renegades”. What Mele (2013:1-2) describes here has become an evident reality for many communication organisations – traditional agencies are losing favour and business as their client briefs and demands shift to service the new “radically connected” consumer across a host of new channels. The converse is a symptom of this shift – the emergence of new, lean, “artisanal” or specialist agencies – usually digital centric - that are highly post-modernistic, and agile, thereby reflecting the nature of digital as an emergent phenomenon that is continually in flux (Wasserman, 2014; Mele, 2013:2). These new specialist digital agencies are agile in that they boast far less human capital, though each team member “has to wear multiple hats, and [must] wear them well” (Mele, 2013:2; Wasserman, 2014).

Since “digital” as a communication phenomenon is emergent, it is only fitting that this new status quo that has emerged with it (where traditional agencies are becoming irrelevant and unprofitable, while small, start-up, agile, specialist agencies are growing rapidly)
would be disrupted again some years later (Mele, 2013:2; Wasserman, 2014). The emergence of digital communication has not yet rendered traditional communication channels and tactics obsolete, however the consumer and client needs has shifted toward the demand for integrated communication strategies and service (Mele, 2013:2; Morgan, n.d.; Wasserman, 2014;). A symptom of this shift can be understood as the trend toward convergence, whereby traditional and specialist agencies have both understood that in order to future proof their respective businesses, they would be required to offer and deliver holistic communication solutions (Wasserman, 2014). Sanders (n.d.) and Thomas (2010) discuss the difference between digital and traditional agency models and how “integrated” shops fit the mix. Thomas (2010) details the difference as follows: while creative and media have divorced in traditional agencies, the “centre of excellence” offered by digital reconnects media and creative as an integrated solution; traditional agencies do not seem to treat digital channels as part of an integrated solution. Conversely so, treating digital as “pedestrian” may offer excellence but also create silos (Sanders, n.d.; Thomas, 2010;). The solution many agencies then seek to offer the best of both worlds is to become an integrated shop, offering a specialist digital arm under the same roof, accompanying it with the robust general strengths of the traditional agency (Thomas, 2010).

The body of research that follows has been conducted in an effort to better understand where a gap in the knowledge may exist and perhaps even propose a solution to the research problem, namely: South African advertising agencies are struggling to integrate their digital and traditional teams so as to deliver more efficiently on integrated client briefs. To effectively unpack this problem and in so doing, attempt to solve it, several questions are raised and must be answered through the research.

1.2. Research Questions and Aims

The main research question to be answered interrogates: How are South African advertising agencies integrating their digital and traditional teams?

In order to comprehensively answer this main research question, other facets of the problem will need to be unearthed through the following sub-questions:

- Why is the South African advertising industry shifting toward integration?
• How are South African advertising agencies responding to integration?
• How is integration experienced by specialist teams in South African advertising agencies?

Research Aims
To understand how South African advertising agencies are integrating their digital and traditional teams
• To investigate why the industry is shifting toward integration?
• To explore how South African advertising agencies responding to integration?
• To understand how integration is experienced by specialist teams in South African advertising agencies?

1.3. Literature Review and Key Constructs

These research questions expose three constructs, which require further exploration; first it is imperative to investigate the shift toward integration within the communication industry. On a macro level, exploring what are the contributing factors, trends and developments that are affecting advertising as a whole, reshaping established stakeholder relationships between clients, consumers and service providers, as well as augmenting traditional business models and professional practice; in so doing, suddenly rendering established business models unsustainable, and sometimes obsolete. This chapter will discuss the effects of digital emergence on the communication industry as a whole and why it is changing. Following a review of the major or leading change models and theories that exist within academia to date, an exploration around change management tactics and theories, as possible responses to the industry shift toward integration must be reviewed.

Against this context, the second construct to be explored deals with how agencies are responding to these challenges. Especially from a South African context, it is vital to understand what organizational structures are changing within advertising agencies, what elements of change management and ultimately, change leadership are being employed and how the various leaders are adapting their businesses to cope with these new demands to remain financially viable, given this new industry context. If the industry is undergoing transformation and causing agencies to remodel themselves to remain relevant and feasible communication partners to their clients, then one must explore the
next, micro level system affected by the ripples of change, and the final construct to be investigated, namely: the specialist teams who are required to integrate within those changing agency models. The industry changes are affecting practitioner roles, their team dynamics and the organisational structure of the agencies to which they belong and are accustomed to. An investigation into transition psychology and the human factors surrounding change is then necessary for consideration within this study. The silos are then not only erected between agencies within the competitive category, but between teams within full service agencies themselves (Sanders, n.d.; Thomas, 2010).

As established above, the problems or challenges that agencies face when it comes to integrating their teams comes down largely to the people dynamic, especially owing to the emphasis on team structures and the change management processes that are required to execute on a successful operational transition. Thus, the proceeding study is qualitative in nature and makes use of the interpretivist paradigm to conduct the research. Qualitative research methods champion human experience and interaction in understanding “social phenomena”, therefore allowing for the “complexity of communication” to be studied, while being “sensitive to the social construction of meaning” (Keyton, 2010:64). Qualitative research methods do not subject social systems and the engagements within them to processes that would numerically quantify data - like a quantitative study would - instead the depth and insight that is required to understand a problem of this nature is maintained, explored and then interpreted for meaning by a human instrument, instead of being reduced to frequencies and calculations (Keyton, 2010:65). Qualitative research relies on subjectivity and interpretivism, which echoes the key tenets of postmodernism - that is: to reject any absolute or universal truths, because perceived phenomena are relative and socially constructed, and as such, not limited to or confined by objectivity (Keyton, 2010:65). Against this context, it is clear as to why qualitative research must be inductive, as the value derived from this exercise resides in studying a specific context or area so as to make assumptions or generalise certain findings in relation to a broader contextual phenomenon (Keyton, 2010:65-68). A case study approach has been taken to understand the problems of integration, specifically looking at McCann Worldgroup Johannesburg and their pursuit towards an integrated agency offering.

Postmodernism, as a theoretical paradigm, will be employed as a lens throughout the research exercise. Postmodernism champions disorder as a natural state, emphasizing
change, fluctuation, relativity and the social construction of meaning, all the while rejecting objective universality and absolute truths (Elaati, 2016:1-2). Postmodernism as a theoretical paradigm lends itself exceptionally well to the subject matter explored throughout the research, that is, digital emergence and a shift toward integrated teams. As stated earlier, the digital revolution is by nature emergent, which renders modernist absolutism irrelevant (Holman, 2010:17; Lundby, 2008:4; Overton-De Klerk and Verwey, 2013:364). The characteristics of emergent phenomena manifest cyclical and enduring states of flux, and the rejection of traditional approaches - an evident effect on the advertising industry especially when it comes to traditional disciplinary practice and traditional organisational structures (Holman, 2010:17; Lundby, 2008:4; Overton-De Klerk and Verwey, 2013:364). The systems, opportunities and formats of conduct around digital communication are continually changing, and communication practitioners and their agencies are required to continually adapt to remain relevant (Holman, 2010:17; Lundby, 2008:4; Overton-De Klerk and Verwey, 2013:364). Furthermore, as the study intends to unearth qualitative, human-centric phenomena around integration, postmodernism as a vehicle for analysis is well suited. Postmodernism as a theoretical paradigm creates avenues for interpretivism, valorising socially constructed meaning and relativity, as well as accounting for the intricacies that emerge from a system that is being subjected to change management processes, all the while facing opposition that stems from psychologically motivated barriers to change (Elaati, 2016:2-4). The insight that can be interpreted from this qualitative study cannot be approached from a modernist perspective, as through a modernist lens, the findings could not yield the appropriate depth of data required to understand the phenomenon – the value therein lies with the level of subjective detail that it required to understand its context and affects, in lieu of quantifiable, objective facts (Elaati, 2016:2-4). The study will explore the following theoretical perspectives that may contribute to understanding the problems of integration that may exist within advertising agencies: change management versus change leadership (Kotter, 2011), developing a third culture for successful mediation (Aschaiek, 2012), complex systems theory (Rocha, 1999) and the role stress plays during transition (Pogosyan, 2016). In light of this approach, the research will endeavour to explore the manner in which McCann Worldgroup Johannesburg has either managed change or led change and uncover the nature and extent of the problems that exist in the face of successful integration between the above the line or traditional teams and their digital colleagues.
1.4. Research Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature – owing to the required depth of insights from participants and will make use of a case study approach in terms of the research design. Yin (1984:23) defines a case study as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context…when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident…multiple sources of evidence are used”. Owing to the study’s contextual emphasis on postmodernity and critical theory, (since digital is emergent and affects social systems) the interpretive paradigm will be employed in making sense of the findings. Interpretivism lends itself well to socially constructed realities – like a creative agency – and will allow for the application and testing of solutions and ideas (Yin, 1984:24). Though case studies are critiqued for their limited sample size, researcher involvement and ability to translate universally, careful consideration has been given to the structure and outputs of the research design to mitigate irrelevance owing to bias and sample size. Non-probability sampling, or rather purposive sampling will be used to select participants who can yield insights ranging from the business leads laterally placed across the agency’s service offerings, as well as key agents responsible for integration in the business.

McCann Worldgroup is a global agency, boasting over 23 000 employees across 120 countries (McCann Worldgroup, 2016). The group employs a hub and spoke model, centralising their African arm from their base in Johannesburg (McCann Worldgroup, 2016). The group prides itself on integration and the collaboration of various communication disciplines. Within the Johannesburg office, McCann’s offering consists of: Universal McCann (media), specialist client teams e.g. Beauty Team, Commonwealth and McCann Health, Reprise and Cadreon (media), Weber Shandwick (Public Relations), Craft (quick turnaround studio) and lays claim to access the other global satellite offerings from the group (McCann, 2016). Since Africa is a leading mobile region, successful communication organisations would be strategic in their digital offering to service this social phenomenon and consumer need.

Interviews will be conducted with the business leads and others who may be driving integration: the chief executive officer, the chief creative officer, the chief digital officer etc. Interviews will also be conducted with line managers who work with creative teams.
and clients: client service leads, creative directors etc. It is imperative that data is collected in casual, free-to-speak settings that prompt broad and deep insight, and allows for conversation to lead to further questioning and/or discussion. Research questions will be open ended and conducted in semi-structured interviews, asking the participants to describe their efforts, plans, experiences and so forth. Their oral responses will be recorded on tape and transcribed. The data will be analysed through thematic identification and then formulated into concepts and/or social phenomena to extrapolate meaning.

Permission from the CEO of McCann Johannesburg has been obtained in order to interview staff members. The study will be explained in detail in terms of process, and eventual desired outcomes, as well as basic temporal requirements in order to obtain written permission and garner support and buy in from primary leadership. Interviews will be conducted at McCann in either the participant’s office or a boardroom. The participants will be informed that the study will not impact their standing within the organisation and their contributions are anonymous, though will be recorded for transcription purposes and analysed. Thematic analyses will be employed to make sense of the data, to identify and explore patterns and analyse the results for meaning (University of Auckland, n.d.). In terms of quality assurance and trustworthiness, the researcher will commit to prolonged engagement with the participants in an immersive sense – conducting several interviews with the chosen interviewees, continue with persistent observations of participants within the agency environment, and lastly triangulation of data and responses to ensure consistency across responses.

1.5. Ethical Considerations

Participants will be issued written consent forms that introduce the study contextually, explain the desired outcome in conducting the study, and guarantee their anonymity and safety in participation (Smith, 2003). The consent forms express that participation is also voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at will. These forms are to be individually signed prior to the interview. The CEO Fraser Lamb will be issued with and required to sign a “request for permission” form prior to the research taking place, issued by the university, however Mr Lamb has agreed to the study being conducted on McCann and extended his full support to the researcher via email. The researcher’s professional relationship to the participants must be clearly considered and the rules of engagement
clearly delineated to ensure each participant's level of comfort and understanding prior to the discussion. It is imperative to assure participants at all costs their confidentiality is a priority (Smith, 2003). Participants will be assigned initial based identification and understood in context of their broad role in the organisation.

1.6. Structure of the Study

Chapter 1
Introduction: the primary research question is stated and briefly discussed against the context or background of the study. The sub-questions are explored and the desired outcome of the research is stated. The motivation for why the study is necessary and how it contributes to, and benefits the industry is stated. The approach and theoretical framework is discussed.

Chapter 2
Literature review: a discussion of the available literature regarding new agency struggles, the move toward integration or the need to integrate, the digital revolution and social phenomena. Studies that explore similar areas to this research will be explored.

Chapter 3
Methodology and analysis of findings: the research design will be detailed, which participants were selected and why, the reason McCann was chosen as a case study, the reason for interpretivist, post modern lenses of analysis, and the process of thematic analysis conducted in interpreting findings.

Chapter 4
Interpretation of the data: discussion of the major findings and detailed thematic analyses thereof to conclude meaning and make sense of the data collected.

Chapter 5
Conclusion and recommendation: the major findings are restated and a way forward is proposed to tackle the challenges of integration. So concludes the study.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Understanding Change

Change is an inevitable force that permeates every aspect of human life, usually owing to our fundamental need to advance and progress. As time passes, society develops new needs that are to be met and solved with new ideas, innovations and processes. Change never occurs in isolation, it has far reaching effects beyond the individual. This body of literature will review the various change management models that exist, the types of change that have impacted the advertising communications industry as a whole, how these then impact advertising agencies that operate within the industry and of course the individuals within those agency teams that are subsequently affected by change.

2.2 Change Management Models

There are various change management models that have been developed, and for the sake of this research, it is imperative to understand some of those models in context. Normandin (2012) discusses the contrasts, benefits and disadvantages of three leading organisational change management models: Lewin’s Three Step Change Management Model, McKinsey’s 7S Model and Kotter’s Eight Step Change Model. Lewin’s model recognises that people tend to avoid change, owing to the safety and comfort that familiarity provides (Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012;). Lewin’s theory, grounded in social science, explains that human behaviour around change is made up of binary forces that operationally resist each other – usually with management attempting to guide or influence new behaviours that will instigate change, and employees opposing behaviour that attempts to restore the status quo or normative balance (Kritsonis, 2004:1-2; Normandin, 2012;). The three steps within the process that Lewin has developed to generate and manage change are in fact stages that he has deemed: unfreezing, movement or change, and refreezing (Kritsonis, 2004:2; Lock, n.d.; Normandin, 2012;). Lock (n.d.) draws an analogy between Lewin’s model and ice: if one is presented with a cube of ice, but the desired state of this ice has been identified so as to resemble a cone, the first step toward changing the ice’s form is to unfreeze it, and it will relinquish its current state and become malleable (Lock, n.d.). The next step is movement or change, taking what is now a liquid form of that ice and pouring it into a new mould that is cone shaped (Lock, n.d.). Lastly, for the ice to retain its new form, it must refreeze in the new
mould (Lock, n.d.). Lock (n.d.) discusses Lewin’s conditions that are to be considered in the pursuit of change: firstly, change should always be for the better – the organisation’s leaders and change agents will only succeed to implement the change if the desired outcome for the change was derived with good intentions to improve a situation, to change for worse circumstances means the system or organisation will keep changing until there is resolve (Lock, n.d.).

Secondly, change should be well thought out with careful planning, and it should be gradual, never “sporadic or sudden” (Lock, n.d.). A laissez-faire approach to implementing change that lacks structure, processes, objectives and planning will yield limited success for a business, creating opportunities for miscommunication, lack of accountability, and a fragmented or confused end vision to interfere with progress (Cherry, 2017; Lock, n.d.). Cherry (2017) highlights the following issues when it comes to laissez-faire change management planning: a deficit in leadership when it comes to championing the process, which is coupled with the opportunity for those who are supposed to be led to instigate and promote their own agenda that is often counter-intuitive to the vision. The lack of planning around change then also limits the availability of the “tools and resources” that are necessary to implement the change, as there would have been little premeditated or anticipatory planning that could have pre-empted and prepared for any difficulties along the journey to the desired state – ultimately bestowing the responsibility of problem solving upon the stakeholders who are not tasked with leading the change, but are then implementing it on the ground level (Cherry, 2017). Failure to plan for change and adopting a laissez-faire approach to change then creates what Cherry (2017) calls “passivity and avoidance” – which echoes Lewin’s concern around change opposition, and what Kritsonis (2004:2) and Normandin (2012) discuss as a need to maintain the normative state or status quo during the change process. Lastly, Cherry (2017) raises the “lack of role awareness” as a major concern when leadership fail to plan around the change process. When change happens within a loose, undefined and unstructured system, many team members are faced with ambiguity around their role within the greater system and the roles of their leaders, subordinates and peers (Cherry, 2017). Without proper planning and guidance from management or leadership, employees truly find themselves out of their element and out of their comfort zones when it comes to deliverables and duties, which then helps perpetuate the lack of accountability, hindering productivity and damaging employee morale (Cherry, 2017).
Lewin’s second condition for consideration when it comes to pursuing change was two-fold, and having dealt with the importance of planning, one must now understand the importance of gradual change over “sudden or sporadic” change (Lock, n.d.). Morin (2014) explains that there are five stages that one must experience while in the process of changing, they are gradual and build on each other, and this process is slow, not rapid. Morin (2014) uses these five stages to evaluate a person’s readiness to change, as if he or she is not ready to change, change cannot be forced on him/her, and success will again be limited. The first phase within this gradual change process is called pre-contemplation, whereby the subject doesn’t acknowledge the need for change at all, and so it is necessary for the change agents to create awareness of the need for change and educate him/her around the benefits that change could yield, and the repercussions that may occur if no change is made (Morin, 2014).

The success of the change agents in educating stakeholders around the need for change will help propel them into the second phase of gradual change, which is known as contemplation (Morin, 2014). Contemplation, or phase two in the gradual change process, is achieved when the stakeholder is aware of the need to implement change, however he or she is not totally persuaded by the benefits that change would yield and considers whether the repercussions of an unchanged system may outweigh those gains (Morin, 2014). A successful migration into the third phase of gradual change depends on the change agents’ ability to persuade the stakeholders that the foreseen change actions are risk averse and the benefits are worth the effort and discomfort - the stakeholders that are required to change have to be primed, ready and willing to go through with the change, they have to buy into the vision (Morin, 2014). Phase three is known as preparation, or the planning phase. Like Cherry (2017), Morin (2014) stresses the importance of thorough planning, cautioning against those who may disregard this important step and proceed directly into executing change within the organisation – it is reckless and rarely successful. Without a well-considered plan, implementing the tactics required to make the change can become somewhat ad-hoc and haphazard, which doesn’t contribute to constructive, effective and seamless transition. The success of phase four, the action phase, will be determined by the effort made in the preparation and planning phase, whereby an executional plan with steps, objectives, structures, processes and deliverables has been formulated and can now be communicated to the broader stakeholder group and then carried out with clarity of the shared vision and what measures need to be taken to achieve it – it is only in this fourth phase where any actual
change can start to happen (Morin, 2014). Lastly, building on to the action phase, is the fifth stage that deals with maintenance, post action. The maintenance phase is critically important to the success of the change process and requires continuous monitoring and optimisation to understand the progress that has been (Morin, 2014). This stage requires even further planning and preparation to ensure that the changes that have been executed are sustainable and enduring, while solving for the many obstacles that may emerge into the future, threatening the new system or dynamic (Morin, 2014).

Having explored the importance of why the motivation for change has to stem from a desire to better the circumstances or the situation within an organisation or system, and the necessity for change to be exceptionally well planned out and gradually implemented, one must now consider the last of Lewin’s change considerations, namely, the stakeholder groups that will be affected by the change are required to contribute to the planning thereof (Lock, n.d.). In an ideal world, the stakeholders that are required to be consulted or engaged in an agency context may include the clients – the brand custodians that are in business with the agency, agency/industry partners who collaborate on specific outputs e.g. PR, media, events, the consumers who have become the catalyst for changing agency models in a digital world, and most importantly, the agency staff members – the communication professionals that work within the organisation that are about to undergo change. The symbiotic, binary relationship between digital technology and consumer behaviour has triggered a reactive demand in the agency’s clients – whether the agency has engaged these stakeholder groups directly and actively is yet to be determined. Lewin’s considerations for change require stakeholder engagement to be carried out in the planning phase for change, with emphasis on the inclusion of the stakeholder group directly affected and taking part in the change – ideally the agency’s employees first and foremost (Lock, n.d.). Deloitte (2008) define stakeholders as collectives of people who “affect and/or could be affected by an organisation’s activities, products or services and associated performance… [Stakeholders may differ in terms of their] levels of involvement, and often with diverse and sometimes conflicting interests and concerns”

Lewin’s first step towards change, known as unfreezing, requires leadership to unhinge the normative state, or as Kritsonis (2004:2) and Normandin (2012) put it, “unfreeze the status quo…the status quo is considered the equilibrium state”. Unfreezing first identifies the forces at play, evaluates their influence and then either disarms or amplifies them –
this is Lewin’s Force Field Model (Lock, n.d.). Often, there will exist both singular and group-based influence that maintains and perpetuates the resistant forces and secures the normative state, refocusing these forces to serve the agenda of change can be exceptionally powerful and effective (Lock, n.d.; Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012). Kritsonis (2004:2-3) identifies that there are three methods of unfreezing, the first being a substantial amplification of the leadership team’s change driving forces, the second being the active reduction in counter-change behaviour found in spheres of influence within the organisation, and the third approach is a combination of the first two methods. Successful unfreezing by amplifying change forces and reducing resistant forces really comes down to leadership’s successful communication with their subordinates (Lock, n.d.; Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012). Communicating efficiently around why change is necessary and beneficial will help reduce resistance toward change and conversely, in fact, increase the might of pro-change forces in volume and influence – it’s a matter of winning over employees by having them buy into a vision. The motivation for change must be established first and foremost, and it is the leadership team’s role as change agents to help the various stakeholders relook their established belief systems that may be causing resistance (Lock, n.d.). Kritsonis (2004:2) elaborates on further means of unfreezing successfully, from preparing stakeholders for the change in advance, to building trust in leadership and the shared goal they are working towards and including and acknowledging stakeholders in problem solving forums. Simply put, the unfreezing phase is about identifying the forces of influence and then focusing on motivation before the change (Lock, n.d.; Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012).

Once the normative state has been unhinged, the stakeholders are now motivated and the forces of influence that have been identified are either reduced or heightened, the unfrozen, fluid and malleable social dynamic must be reshaped. This next phase is called movement, transition or change (Lock, n.d.; Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012). The movement or transition phase is very much focussed on the future state that will be achieved through the proposed change (Lock, n.d.; Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012). In this phase, the problems are explored as a collective, and the goals are developed and outlined as a group – participation from the affected stakeholder groups is imperative to drive change (Lock, n.d.; Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012). The organisation’s leadership or change agents are tasked with implementing new structures and systems, all the while championing open lines of communication that allow for feedback from the stakeholders (Lock, n.d.; Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012). Normandin (2012)
presses the point around exemplary leadership in the transition/movement/change phase, attributing the success of failure of change management to the strength and support that leadership provides across the organisation during this period. The last stage of Lewin’s change model is refreezing, or as Kritsonis (2004:2) describes it, “it is the actual integration of the new values into the [original] community’s values and traditions”. Refreezing is the stage following the transition period, when change has been implemented across the organisation (Lock, n.d.; Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012). Refreezing demands that the new operational systems and stakeholder attitudes and behaviours be “institutionalised” so as to avoid regressing into previous states of resistance (Lock, n.d.; Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012). Formalising the change through regulation and operational systems establishes the change as a new normative state for the organisation (Lock, n.d.; Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012).

Lewin’s three step model for organisational change is considered by many scholars to be the founding theory or basis from which many other change management models have emerged (Cummings, Bridgman & Brown, 2016:33-34). In spite of this, many have come to critique Lewin’s model for its overly simplified approach to change, it’s failure to acknowledge and account for irrational and emotional influences within an organisation, and a failure to consider alternative leadership styles beyond the top-down approach (Cummings et al., 2016:34; Management Study Guide, n.d.). Lewin relied on states of equilibrium within an organisation, where the normative state is consistent, established, and stable (Kritsonis, 2004:2; Normandin, 2012). Sharma (n.d.) discusses the stimuli that may instigate change within an organisation, be it anticipatory and active or reactive. Some of those stimuli that instigate or force an organisation to change include technological advancements that impact the nature or delivery of work, internal politics across different levels within key stakeholder groups of the organisation, cultural and social issues that exist within the organisation’s human capital and even economic considerations and implications on the organisation’s work output and management thereof (Sharma, n.d.). The many forces of change exist as complex phenomena in their own right. Politics, social issues, technological change and economics, to name a few, are exceptionally intricate and complex systems that require in depth analysis to understand, and plan for their repercussions (Sharma, n.d.). Not only is the need for change born from exceptionally complex circumstances that are not operating in isolation but there is also varying circumstances under which change must be pursued – proactively or reactively which impacts the change management process (Sharma, n.d.).
Lewin’s three step change model assumes that there are states of equilibrium that must be unfrozen, changed, and then refrozen, however, in understanding the complexity of the forces that instigate change, it is unrealistic to view these states as constant and stable – usually change is needed to address these instabilities of the economy, politics, social issues or changing technology (Cummings et al. 2016: 34-42; Sharma, n.d.). Lewin’s model for change management can be criticised for trivialising or even neglecting the unstable current state of an organisation, and the unstable future state of the organisation once changes have been made to its structure (Sharma, n.d.). Critics of Lewin’s model find it exceptionally difficult to apply this theory of change management practically, especially when change is radical and has the potential to transform an organisation in its entirety (Cummings et al. 2016: 34-42; Management Study Guide, n.d.). Furthermore, Lewin’s model comes under criticism for ignoring human emotions and experiences, even though a major tenet of the model advocates for employee involvement and buy in at all levels (Lock, n.d.; Morin, 2014; Sharma, n.d.). Lastly, critics raise the issue that Lewin’s model relies on top-down organisational leadership, given the nature of change agents and their role to educate the vision for change to other stakeholders within the organisation – it leaves little leeway for change management to be addressed as a response to non-management stakeholders, or even non-employee stakeholders (e.g. customers, competitors or government etc.) instigating change via the pressure they apply indirectly or directly implementing change within the organisation (Cummings et al. 2016: 34-42; Lock, n.d.; Morin, 2014; Normandin, 2012; Sharma, n.d.).

The source and or need for change is then a major factor in the approach taken so as to manage change (Cummings et al. 2016: 34-42; Lock, n.d.; Morin, 2014; Normandin, 2012; Sharma, n.d.).

Mckinsey developed the 7S Model for change management that demands that an organisation is to first be analysed according to seven tenets and reviewed holistically – never in isolation (Jurevicius, 2013). McKinsey’s 7S model (Figure 1) is interconnected, advocating that change in one facet will force change or requires change across all facets (Jurevicius, 2013; Status, n.d.). First one may address the “hard S” tenets: an organisation’s Strategy is the overall plan for competitive success, a vision shared throughout the organisation around long term growth and viability – however, echoing the theory of this model, an organisation’s strategy cannot be analysed or understood in isolation of the other six areas (Jurevicius, 2013). The next “hard S” addresses an organisation’s Structure - the living organigram that reflects business units, teams or
divisions and how the reporting line flows throughout them (Jurevicius, 2013; Status, n.d.). The last of the “hard S’s” addresses the organisational Systems, the daily operational and business processes for creating revenue and making decisions within the organisation (Jurevicius, 2013). The model then reviews the “soft S” facets of an organisation: Skills, meaning the “capabilities and competencies” of the employees within the organisation, the level at which they perform them and which of these skills are necessary or redundant when addressing the coming change (Jurevicius, 2013). Following skills, the model seeks to understand the Staff or human capital element within the organisation, how many resources are within employ, how to upskill, motivate and retain them (Jurevicius, 2013). Style is the next area within the model to be analysed, and style refers predominantly to management style, the top-down structures and how they operate and lead within the business (Jurevicius, 2013; Status, n.d. Vuodatus, 2014). Lastly, the model calls for review and analysis of the organisation’s Shared Values that is the nucleus of the model and the organisation’s essence - its “central beliefs and attitudes” a reason for being or purpose for existing (Jurevicius, 2013, Status, n.d.). The McKinsey 7S model’s strength lies in identifying the gaps and incongruencies across a business by analysing the whole collective of facets in working relation to each other (Jurevicius, 2013; Status, n.d. Vuodatus, 2014).

Similarly to Lewin’s change model, the McKinsey 7S model makes leadership within the organisation directly accountable for change, however the strength and weakness of the 7S model lies in the systematic interconnectedness of the divisions within the organisation that are up for deeper analysis (Status, n.d.).

![Figure 1: McKinsey's 7S model, McKinsey & Company](image)

Figure 1: McKinsey’s 7S model, McKinsey & Company
Kotter’s eight step model is fundamentally different from Lewin’s and McKinsey’s 7S models in that Kotter centralises the change model around the people affected by change (Status, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014). Kotter’s eight steps consist of eight overlapping or interleading steps that can be understood in three phases (Webster & Webster, n.d.). Phase one of Kotter’s change model fosters the correct climate for change to occur; within creating a climate for change, the steps around creating urgency, building a core guiding team and aligning the organisational vision take place (Status, n.d.; Webster & Webster, n.d.). Kotter’s model then delivers phase two which deals with “enabling and engaging” the business, and within this phase steps are taken to communicate with the stakeholders to ensure buy-in, empower or inspire action and lastly develop short term successes or wins for the business overall (Status, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014; Webster & Webster, n.d.). The last phase in Kotter’s model deemed “implementing and sustaining change” deals with the perseverance and endurance required at all levels to see the change through (Status, n.d.; Webster & Webster, n.d.).

Kotter’s first step around creating a sense of urgency needs to be delivered across all the stakeholders within the business, fostering the correct environment for change requires all employees to understand the macro and micro realities that the business faces, and help input their ideas or concerns to endeavour for better (EBA, n.d.; Status, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014; Webster & Webster, n.d.). When it comes to step two, building a key steerco or guiding team to lead change throughout the organisation, it is imperative that these key leaders are not solely made up of management staff, but the onus and agency is given to key employees at varying levels to advocate and help guide change (EBA, n.d.; Status, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014; Webster & Webster, n.d.). Step three concerns itself with cementing the overall vision, having assessed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the business faced previously, with input or feedback from all layers and tasking a core team to help lead the transition, clearly defining the organisation’s vision or goals for all stakeholders is imperative (EBA, n.d.; Status, n.d.; Webster & Webster, n.d.). Step four may then commence, whereby the organisation can communicate the new vision to all stakeholders clearly, receive feedback from them and address concerns (EBA, n.d.; Status, n.d.; Webster & Webster, n.d.). As strategies begin developing to implement change, and agents are tasked to lead the other stakeholders toward the common goal, the next (fifth) step in Kotter’s model may be taken, i.e. mobilising the vision by inspiring and empowering action (EBA, n.d.; Status, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014; Webster & Webster, n.d.). Current systems and processes that exist
within the organisation are required to be reviewed within step five to ensure that they do not hinder the momentum building toward change (EBA, n.d.; Status, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014; Webster & Webster, n.d.). Step six orientates itself around short term wins – measuring, encouraging and rewarding successful efforts toward change and optimising any areas or stakeholders that are lagging or require assistance or attention (EBA, n.d.; Status, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014; Webster & Webster, n.d.). Step seven deals with “not letting up” or the perseverance to continue with the implementation of change management even when the urgency created in step one starts to dissipate. Step seven requires revision of the current change management structures and leaders in play and encourages leaders to promote stakeholders who help see the vision to fruition and alter systems that are proving to be a hinderance to change. Supporting and encouraging employees is imperative to keep the momentum going during change management (EBA, n.d.; Status, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014). Step eight deals with endurance to “make change stick” within an organisation. Leaders are required to imbed the new change philosophy and vision at the core of the organisation’s culture to ensure its success and ability to endure in the future (EBA, n.d.; Status, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014; Webster & Webster, n.d.).

Kotter’s model’s strength is that it centres around the people within the organisation and deals with their ability to cope and embrace change as opposed to focussing on the phenomenon of change itself (EBA, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014). Kotter’s model is closer to addressing the human elements affecting and being affected by change, however it still doesn’t provide guidelines to alleviating the emotional toll that change takes on employees (Vuodatus, 2014). Kotter’s model, like Lewin’s and McKinsey’s still primarily relies on top down leadership to pursue and drive change which isn’t always successful in the long term as participation and buy in is mandated and not fully owned or embraced within other levels of the organisation (EBA, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014).

In summary, certain themes or learnings consistently emerged in reviewing these three key change management models. In order to successfully lead and manage change within an organisation, leaders need to understand the macro and micro influences that instigate change and then communicate them clearly and successfully across the business to all employees on every level. There then needs to be compelling reasons to believe in and want to pursue change actively from all employees, they need to buy into
the reasons for change and the new future focussed vision of the organisation. Adequate structures and strategies need to be designed, explained and implemented to incrementally support and sustain change for the better. Along the journey toward change, employees need to be empowered, included, motivated, supported and rewarded for their activities toward change, coupled with open lines of communication for feedback along the way. Accountability of the designated change agents resides mostly within upper management which consistently appears to be problematic, and there is a major deficit in literature when it comes to models addressing the emotional, human layer that is affected by and hinders change. The following chapter addresses the current climate within the advertising communication industry and what forces or changes are at play in the macro environment that are applying pressure to advertising agencies to pursue organisational change to remain a viable industry subset.

2.3. Changes Affecting the Advertising Communication Industry

There is a systemic relationship between the advertising communication industry, the advertising agencies that commercially operate within it and the teams operating within those agencies. This systemic relationship is overt, binary and symbiotic. None of these constructs can exist in isolation of each other, however, they are individual systems ranging in scale that interplay and overlap and affect one another. If the constructs are in fact systems, then it is valuable to conduct the research within the guidelines of a theoretical framework that will underpin this phenomenon; the best suited theoretical framework being complex systems theory. Complex systems can be understood as various systems that have interacting parts; be it functions or operations, organisms or other articles, they constantly interact and affect each other and cannot be understood from a linear perspective (Rocha, 1999). Furthermore, Rocha (1999) adds that complex systems “[exhibit] hierarchical self-organization under selective pressures”. The following chapters will explore what pressures are reshaping the industry norms and expectations, and how those pressures from the shifts within the industry are reshaping agency business models; then finally assessing how the pressure within the agency from leaders to transform, integrate and adapt to the new business models is affecting the practitioners and teams within the agency.

Digital technology and its exponential rate of development have impacted heavily on macro forces that shape social systems, affecting several stakeholder relationships
including clients, agencies, practitioners and consumer audiences (Torrance, 2017). Across the industry at large, there has been a shift in power plays and roles. We have witnessed the democratization of creative and strategic resources in that many practitioners can secure freelance work in lieu of a formal agency (Torrance, 2017). While agencies are losing great talent to enticing and more commercially viable freelance opportunities, many communication practitioners are finding employment opportunities on the commercial or client side of the spectrum, in turn disenfranchising agencies in that many brands are tackling their creative and strategic outputs through an in-house team (Torrance, 2017). Digital technology and the advances it brought to communication as a whole has had an exceptionally empowering effect on the consumer audience and their ability to dictate to brands and agencies, as well as holding them accountable for their actions which was previously unprecedented but now an expected behaviour (Torrance, 2017).

Ultimately, this has had the propensity to jeopardize client-agency relationships (Gibbons, 2013; Torrance, 2017) and advertising agencies are continually struggling to position themselves still as a creative and strategic partner. With new digital channels, came new advertising and content formats, and consumer expectations and tastes began to shift – as put by Houghteling (2015), “the future is content, not ads”. Gomez (2017) sums up one aspect of this audience-agency dynamic by focusing on technology, attributing its role to “[changing] how, when, and where users consume media which consequently requires media companies to change the way they produce and distribute their content”.

Gomez (2017) refers to the “how, when and where” variables of media consumption today; to expand on this it is important to understand the nature of the post-digital consumer. As Clift (2014:2) explains, “consumers want to know what [a brand’s] purpose is and they will find out via touchpoints [that we as marketers] can't control” – for example the abyss that is the unregulated online world. As disruptive as digital technology has become for advertising agencies and potentially their clients, the greatest benefactor of change has become the end user, the consumer audience (Clift, 2014:2). Consumers have become the primary authors of the online world, as well as the editors and moderators – brands are merely trespassing. Goldsmith (2016) discusses the move toward “consumer led marketing”, but similarly to Gomez (2017), they both reiterate the absolute vitality of putting consumers or audiences first and building marketing initiatives around them. Consumers tailor their own content consumption. They will leave webpages
that disinterest them, they will ignore banners purely due to mistrust or overlook them owing to creative fatigue, they will close windows on videos that don’t appeal to them, and they will scroll past or “unfollow” any content or account that doesn’t catch their attention immediately (Clift, 2014: 1-3; OgilvyRed, 2017). In conjunction to their own deliberate curation of media and content, the algorithms developed for these online platforms are helping to curate the content that they see automatically, furthering the need for marketing to be interesting, relevant, instant and served to them in a space where they are most comfortable with viewing it, a consideration for marketers as they have to be mindful of an array of devices, as well as the channels that will be accessed through those devices (Gomez, 2017; Goldsmith, 2016). Hipperson (2010:1) redefines the role of communication practitioners and brand specialists as no longer having to execute creative campaigns, but rather stimulate and curate digital experiences and content in real time for “consumer communities” – it’s no longer about “managing campaigns, rather facilitating conversations”. “ROI” has long been a popular industry buzzword, however in lieu of changing times, there’s less focus on return on investment as it used to mean, we need to be interrogating the data for a better understanding of our audience groups – it’s about return on insight now (Hipperson, 2010:2). That being said, these new tools and new technology, mass marketing is still economical and viable, but with the ability to target precisely and personalise messaging at scale (Clift, 2014:2).

From a temporal point of view, portable devices – especially mobile – have altered the way we approach media (Gomez, 2017). Consumers can consume content and purchase products anywhere, at any time, perusing online stores and content hubs at leisure without the constraints of time, space, programming schedules or human interaction (Gomez, 2017; Goldsmith, 2016; OgilvyRed, 2017). This phenomenon has come to be known as ‘always on’ and it’s something brands have to embrace if they are to remain profitable and relevant (Gomez, 2017; Goldsmith, 2016; OgilvyRed, 2017). Goldsmith (2016) leaves little room for marketing inadequacy, especially in regard to content relevancy, targeting, and other consumer centric marketing initiatives – even user experience design. Now, unlike before, consumers are very clear about what they are willing to engage with from brands, either directly through two-way communication avenues on social media, or indirectly by allowing their data to inform marketers around their interests and behaviours (Goldsmith, 2016). Traditional agencies have never previously had the power of big data and measurement or the responsibility to serve relevant content that resonates with individuals (Pickard, 2015; Gillepsie, 2012;
Big data is widely understood as a biproduct of the digital revolution (Oracle, n.d.). Big data has afforded marketers newfound access to exceptionally large volumes of psychographic and demographic information on internet users, largely derived from their online behaviour to formulate “habits patterns, trends and associations” that can be generalised and personalised to help better inform campaign content, the targeting of said campaign, and ultimately analyse it’s success in market (Oracle, n.d.). In fact, agencies have never had to embrace this level of accountability for their work before. These new considerations around audience and detailed consumer insights, became client expectations and key performance indicators for campaigns – ultimately the scope and nature of the work had to change (Pickard, 2015; Gillespie, 2012). Against this scope, Hipperson (2010: 2) believes traditional advertising agencies aren’t equipped to deliver on these demands for “agility and speed” that comes with technological and media innovation. Chalk (2014: 3) echoes Hipperson’s sentiment and reinforces the truth that consumers want real time access and feedback across a myriad of channels simultaneously, without any true consensus favouring a specific channel or uniformity in these encounters. As much as our consumers are changing, we see clients following suit - it is only natural and imperative for agencies to begin the evolution process too and conform to the new demands and expectations that envelops the industry (Chalk, 2014: 3). Chalk (2014: 4) concludes: “social change is led by technological change”.

Digital technology and its many various applications to our world has proven to be powerful and revolutionary, and one has to think about this differently from the established systems that are far slower to change – especially when it comes to communication. Sable (2012) calls this “digital exponential” which takes a stance toward integration as the augmentation and improvement on the physical world aided by digital technology. It’s about creating seamless experiences on and offline that make sense and enrich human lives. Sable (2012) illustrates this point by discussing online retailers like Amazon creating physical stores for a richer overall experience; the same can be said of the local online retailer YuppieChef opening their first physical store in Cape Town (Smith, 2017). Smith (2017) discusses the journey the online retailer has taken, and why the decision to open a physical store in conjunction to their online shopping platform was made. E-commerce offers a wider variety of products to display to consumers, with minimal stocking and display costs, as well as minimal overheads when it comes to salaries and rent (Smith, 2017). Online retailers also mitigate any sales loss owing to the opening and closing of the store – a benefit to consumers as well since they can shop whenever and wherever
they want, not bound to the limitations of space and time that would affect a physical store (Smith, 2017; Khan, 2016). Smith (2017) however points out that the South African consumer also enjoys shopping as an activity, and this behaviour couldn’t be ignored regardless of how overwhelming the uptake to online shopping has been. Smith (2017) explains this approach as a move towards future proofing their business through an omnichannel solution and encourages shoppers not to view this new channel as separate but rather understand Yuppiechef as a “single retail brand, and [shoppers] should have the freedom to interact with [Yuppiechef] on [their own] terms, whenever and wherever [they] are”. The Yuppiechef case study fits well under the “digital exponential” definition, as opposed to a “post-digital” stance, as the retailer’s routes are still firmly grounded in e-commerce excellence, the new store will allow an augmented shopping experience on and offline. The need for a physical store in conjunction to the digital platform will surrogate the consumer needs that may sometimes be lacking online, for example, the social components to shopping with friends, and the need for tangible and sensory based decision-making cues when evaluating a product (Smith, 2017).

Khan (2016) discusses this modern phenomenon that is “webrooming and showrooming” – as yet another complex system that applies to customer experience in the retail environment. Webrooming refers to the behaviour whereby consumers do online research of the products either beforehand or while they are in the physical store to inform and then affirm their decision to purchase an item from the physical store (Khan, 2016). Showrooming on the other hand refers to the physical shopping experience in a brick and mortar space where consumers can have sensory and tactile contact with products to aid decision making, but then will probably purchase the item online for a better price (Khan, 2016). As discussed earlier in the research, the rise of mobile device adoption on a global scale has been unprecedented and shows signs of continued and steady growth (The Mobile Economy, 2017). There is also a symbiotic relationship causing strong correlations between mobile device adoption and the rapidly increasing internet penetration statistics across the world (The Mobile Economy, 2017). Mobile devices have become an extension of the self, and share in almost every activity of our day, whether we are tracking our sleep through sophisticated app technology, streaming playlists while we work out, texting while we watch television and even doing research while we shop – to name but a few instances. Seamlessly our devices have integrated into our daily lives to enhance the things we do – the digital exponential (Sable, 2012).
In light of this, it’s easy to understand why Khan (2016) stresses the importance of understanding the “mobile assisted shopper” profile. Shopping in the digital era has become a complex system, where there is overlap between different experiences, different decision-making cues and different avenues of purchase and receipt intercept and affect each other. If one looks at the overlap and cyclical influence that webrooming and showrooming has on the shopping experience, it is impossible to understand it from a linear perspective. The overlap of digital in this sense augments and improves the decision-making process and has become a major component of the shopping experience (Khan, 2016). It is evident then that there is a need for a better shopping experience that integrates both the digital and physical shopping realities into a seamless, consumer centric omnichannel (Smith, 2017; Khan, 2016). Again, the case of “digital exponential” has been made over post-digitalism. Where the omnichannel argument is made for businesses – it is clearly an effort to improve customer experiences whereby digital initiatives act as aids, augmenting traditional channels and efforts to create a seamless and richer user journey. A truth many marketers forget is that consumers do not experience or even understand the online and offline worlds in isolation of each other, there is already seamless integration between digital channels and traditional channels evident in their behaviour. Only marketing practitioners still force the issue to separate these worlds instead of taking a symbiotic view where they work in binary to offer a holistic experience; and so, communications practitioners need to understand this integrated relationship between these many channels better, and understand consumer behaviour better to deliver on integrated brand strategies.

As much as there is symbiosis between digital and traditional media, digital technology can’t be treated the same as traditional channels, as it is far more complex and is continually evolving (Sable, 2012). While post-digital evangelists maintain that digital practitioners and the channels they specialise in should no longer be separate verticals, “digital exponential” drives the principle that it’s too complex for such a reductive and simple solve (Sable, 2012). What is really required, according to Sable’s (2012) “digital exponential” paradigm, is that there is a bridge between the digital and the physical world, where technology meets the real needs of individuals and can innovate to solve problems and improve our quality of life. A great example of the digital exponential paradigm is Uber. Uber was one of the pioneers for the disintermediation movement we are seeing across various businesses. Uber’s business model had created disintermediation within the transport industry by merely connecting civilian drivers to passengers (Froehlich,
While owning no assets themselves, Uber was only providing the technology to facilitate the process; remuneration was structured as a percentage fee of the transactions. Uber used digital technology to solve real human needs – the tedious booking process of a taxi, long wait times, unpredictability of scheduling, anonymity and so forth; and completely redefined a business model for the transport industry (Froehlich, 2016). The fares were cheaper owing to the disintermediation, and drivers could work flexible schedules for additional income, and it operates off a cashless debit system – holistically the model is very beneficial to many stakeholders (Froehlich, 2016).

Sable (2012) concludes that when implemented effectively, digital exponential is a better-suited paradigm to understand how digital technology and channels fit into our lives, as opposed to post-digitalism. Sable (2012) goes as far to pose the question: “who wants to live in a world where, as one pundit put it, digital is becoming like air: the only time you’ll notice it, is when it’s not there?”. The reality is that advertising agencies and other communication practitioners simply cannot avoid the powerful and lasting impact that the digital revolution has brought upon the industry. The significant changes are cyclical and perpetuate each other – technology, consumers, clients (brands) and communication agencies are all affected and effected by each other. What this means is there is ever more pressure on agencies to deliver on existing and new key performance indicators for their clients, and both brands and agencies struggle to remain viable and relevant in their own ways to their respective clients. The goal posts on an advertising agencies deliverables are continually shifting to be agile and adapt to remain fit for purpose to deliver against these new demands through the use of new channels. This manifests in restructures of the current agency model and the teams within it so as to optimize their efficiencies and attempt to deliver on holistic or integrated service delivery.

2.4. The Changing Models of Advertising Agencies

Abey Mokgwatsane (2014), CEO of Ogilvy & Mather Johannesburg, discusses two primary agency models from a South African context and how they are changing. Mokgwatsane (2014) extends beyond these descriptors as purely agency models and rather attributes the differences to “separate steams of thinking and activity”. The existing above the line, traditional or “legacy” agencies have endured for many years, but now find that they are becoming redundant as the digitization of communication permeates deeper into our everyday lives (Mokgwatsane, 2014). In an attempt to remain relevant
and guarantee their position as a communication partner, traditional agencies are scrambling to secure that a new digital service offering is available to their clients – in the case of Ogilvy & Mather South Africa, this was achieved by buying out the digital purest agency Gloo (Mokgwatsane, 2014). At the other end of the spectrum, digital purest agencies have seen the value in offering a full-service communication solution, and are embracing traditional media, channels and approaches so as to maximise value for their clients (Mokgwatsane, 2014). Both models, situated at the spectrum poles are converging toward an integrated agency solution (Mokgwatsane, 2014).

2.4.1. The Advertising Communication Industry’s Shift Toward Integration
Merriam-Webster defines integration as the combining of several elements to form something that is a singular whole and functions as one unit (2017). However, further definitions of integration exist, and so integration could be understood as to “unite with something else” or to “incorporate into a larger unit” (Merriam-Webster, 2017). More and more, clients are demanding to work with full service agencies that can deliver on “integrated briefs”, and offer “holistic service delivery” (Lake, 2017). There are numerous conveniences around why one service provider is a better business solution, some major decision drivers include: faster turnaround time through less briefings and reverts, more creative consistency across the work, and ultimately lower costs for having to brief less, revert less and employ less resources (Lake, 2017; Them Advertising, 2016). If integration as a client demand comes down to delivery on integrated briefs and holistic service delivery, then the true definition of integration for the purpose of this study can be understood as the combining of several elements to form something that is a singular whole and functions as one unit (Merriam – Webster, 2017). Clients, however only make up one stakeholder group of the advertising industry. Pressure from the clients to drive integration cannot be understood in isolation, and rather the complex system that is the advertising industry is undergoing cyclical pressures from multiple stakeholders and these exponential forces influence and perpetuates each other (Rocha, 1999). As the communication industry changes, new consumer behaviours emerge, which implicates new demands and challenges for brand managers and marketers, ultimately, they then require partners with an “integrated understanding to address their business needs” (Mokgwatsane, 2014).

How the scope of work or agency outputs have changed can be understood as the move to integrated brand strategy delivery (Beakbane, 2012; Torrance, 2017). Client demands
have created the need for integrated brand strategy and thus in turn created the pressure for organisational restructuring of the agency models (Digital Market Asia, 2016; Gibbons, 2013). As new channels and content formats emerged, and the creative product changed, new practitioner roles arose and new digital teams were formed (Marshall, 2012). With polarised understanding of channels and advertising schools – the gap between teams, briefs and work deliverables separated further. Marshall (2012) and Chaffey (2016) confirm that agencies are ill equipped to drive integration, as they do not understand the problems creating resistance. Boches (2011) further drives the point that digital and traditional business structures and operations are different – so until traditional teams can adopt a postmodern operational lens and lend itself to more flexible structures, the two will always be at odds (Houghteling, 2015; Lamb, 2016). Lake (2016) discusses what the ideal full service agency should be equipped to provide, listing services as follows “strategic planning, production, creativity, and innovations as well as interactive marketing services via the internet” which isn’t quite as descriptive or comprehensive as the way these agency’s position their offering in a consumer facing sense. An analysis of how Google has indexed South African advertising agencies is a clear indicator of which players are bidding to rank or list “integrated brand strategy” and related search variables – it is clear that this is an important perceptual investment from a corporate marketing perspective to change their own brand positioning.

In response to meet the changing needs and demands of client, it could be said that advertising agencies have been integrated several times, in several ways over the last few years. Initially, agencies would buy out their competitors, smaller, specialized digital shops so as to maintain that locus of control within the industry, especially as advertising spend and revenue was increasingly shifting to digital channels (Manson, 2015). When major advertising power houses like Ogilvy & Mather decide to buy out smaller, niche, digital agencies like Gloo, it could be said that by incorporating Gloo into the larger Ogilvy context, they have integrated (Manson, 2015). If it can be understood that to integrate is to “unite with something else”, a case study could be made of 76 MotherRussia and MorrisJones’ decision to merge, or rather integrate their businesses and form Mojo MotherRussia, in an effort to pool their resources and increase their client base (Media Update, 2013; Merriam-Webster, 2017). However, Lake (2017) discusses integrated advertising outputs as a “full service” offering from a full-service agency. More often than not, agencies that have integrated though acquisition still operate separately and deliver work separately (Manson, 2015; Lake, 2017). Integration through business mergers
seem to deliver better on holistic creative and strategic outputs, and in the case of Mojo MotherRussia, a third entity was born, instead of each business retaining their respective, individual corporate identities or cannibalizing one into the other (Lake, 2017; Manson, 2015; Media Update, 2013). The converse could be said about the separateness of Gloo and Ogilvy & Mather, where each retains their identity and operate as separate business units under a single holding company (Manson, 2015). As the organisation experienced teething issues through the merger, Ogilvy & Mather and Gloo transformed into Ogloovy, investing heavily into building their integrated offering through systems, tools, education and resources because digital should be “pervasive”, not existing on its own, but living across each department and discipline within the business (Mokgwatsane, 2014).

Another example of an agency’s response to adapt and restructure to deliver on integrated brand strategy is McCann Johannesburg (http://mccann.co.za/), a traditionally above the line agency, like it’s competitors Ogilvy (http://www.ogilvy.co.za/) and TBWA (http://www.tbwa-africa.com/). These renowned agencies would never claim to offer anything less than integrated holistic advertising solutions. Even Aqua, traditionally a specialist digital agency has invested to reposition itself as a holistic, integrated service provider (http://www.aquaonline.com/). What is then meant by “full service” or “holistic” service delivery is the “integrated brand strategies” but also reporting, analytics, media full technological and digital offering, strategy, development, creative and more from both the traditional and digital streams that need to contribute to building those integrated brand strategies and then delivering on them for clients (Lamb, 2016). The industry shift is apparent but it’s difficult to clearly ascertain why. Barker (2013) and Therrien (2015) advocate that the shift towards integrated brand strategy and a full-service agency offering is a result of “an integrated consumer” in the way he/she now consumes and engages across multiple channels.

2.4.2. The Relationship Between Consumer Demand, Technology and the Impact on Advertising Agencies

As discussed earlier, the advertising industry is a complex system, owing to the very many stakeholder groups, organizations, and other interacting and influencing parts within it (Rocha, 1999). Indeed, there are systems within systems when it comes to the advertising industry, between regulatory bodies, corporate clients, consumers, agencies themselves and the teams of people within them. The relationship between these multiple variables is difficult to understand in a linear sense, as the trends and forces that they are
affected by and contribute to are compounding and carry exponential might in a cyclical sense, like an Ouroboros, it is difficult to determine where the initial starting point may be within a chain of interlinked events, for example: did consumer led demands and expectations drive technological developments or have technological developments altered consumer demands and expectations? The answer is both. They instigate and perpetuate each other mutually and cyclically (Rooster Marketing, 2016).

These new channels present new advantages and opportunities but coupled with that more responsibility and accountability for agencies – which is being felt as an added stress. Audience targeting is more accurate than ever before, and even though avenues like social media offer a new choice for broadcast media online, the benefits thereof truly outweigh those of traditional channels like television and radio (OgilvyRed, 2017). Digital allows for minimal wastage, the opportunity to optimize the content mid-campaign, and see accurately how the work performed and delivered (Pickard, 2015; Gillespie, 2012; OgilvyRed, 2017). Traditional, or above the line media like television and radio for example, have never had their creative outputs come under fire for performance. The creative agency would create a television commercial and then the media agency would choose channels to flight it on based on projected viewership, readership or listenership data that has been generalised- like AMPS, RAMS, TAMS, etc. - which usually came from the South African Audience Research Foundation, or the networks themselves (South African Audience Research Foundation, n.d.). There was very little accountability when it came to reporting actual effectiveness after the campaign had run, as the systems and structures to accurately report on performance data just simply don’t exist for these channels, or they were too difficult to implement tracking (Markelz, n.d.). Digital, however, has made it possible to target and track marketing initiatives with extremely high accuracy (Markelz, n.d.). From cookies, to pixels and all the tracking code in between, the cumulative data available on a digital audience makes it exceptionally easy to understand our users, and how they behave. It’s possible to accurately assess a video-based ad’s success by looking at a view through rate – did our audience members watch until the end; or the average duration of views – we can see exactly where they stopped watching and lost interest; and how many people the advert has truly reached, to name but a few new metrics that are being tracked (Markelz, n.d.). The cumulative or “big data” that has been made available to better inform communication practitioners should be shaping the creative work from a return on insights perspective and helping reach the correct target audience like a sniper instead of a shotgun approach when it comes to broadcast,
increasing consumer relevance and overall media spend – so better return on investment (Markelz, n.d.).

Marketers have to concern themselves around new channels and formats, but also around new devices that connect brands to their audiences. Consumers expect relevant, interest-based content as compensation for providing marketers with their data – it’s the value exchange that dominates the industry (Gomez, 2017). Audiences consume content across multiple channels, through multiple devices, which have multiple screens and the rise of mobile has been a watershed moment for the industry at large (Gomez, 2017). So much so, that “most firms had to stop operating as single entities with a well-defined market and rather become multi-platform companies that can reach consumers at all levels of activity” (Gomez, 2017). The contentious disconnect that communication experts can’t seem to grapple with is the conundrum that consumers do not share their same view around the marketing mix. Consumers don’t consciously distinguish between their devices and the content that they consume through them (Chaffey, 2016, Barker, 2013).

Previously, we may have considered a multi-channel approach to planning, however, it is evident now that consumers live in and across a seamless omnichannel universe, which is really a connected reality that runs adjacent to their daily activities – an integrated communication infrastructure (Gomez, 2017). Merriam-Webster (2018a) defines “omni” as a prefix denoting universality, in all ways or in all places. Cloudtags (n.d.) describes what is meant by omnichannel, multichannel and cross-channel by distinguishing the terms from an etymological point of view. While all three prefixes are have Latin origination, they should never be confused to mean the same thing – even though practitioners often confuse the terms and use them interchangeably (Markelz, n.d.). We have established that “omni” denotes universality, derived from the Latin word “omnis” meaning “all” (Merriam-Webster, 2018a). However, “multi” is the route prefix derived from “multus”, which is the Latin word for “many”; and “cross” is derived from the Latin word “crux” which means, “to span across” (Cloudtags, n.d.). A multichannel approach has been used to tackle integrated channel strategy at its most basic level, where marketers will consider employing multiple channels within the media mix (Cloudtags, n.d.; Gomez, 2017; Markelz, n.d.). Integration in its infancy may find a group of specialised practitioners who are well versed within a specific discipline, who are now deciding to include material or campaign collateral on channels that they may not usually be responsible for, for example: traditional or above the line strategy and creative teams may consider...
developing a radio ad, a television ad and a print ad, but may now also find it viable and valuable to include a digital blog entry to promote their campaign. There are multiple touch points considered, beyond the team’s usual remit, however the individual campaign elements still remain separate. Cross-channel planning approaches are very similar to multichannel planning, in that communication teams are now considering and developing creative assets for channels and platforms that are not traditionally within their realm of expertise or obligation. However, the major difference between multichannel planning and cross-channel planning is that instead of creating separate assets or collateral across multiple channels, those campaign elements now work in conjunction with each other across multiple channels. For example, First National Bank of South Africa has held a consistent and pragmatic approach to cross-channel planning, leveraging their above the line media for awareness, acting as a stimulus with a call to action to drive their audiences online to complete an action or find out more – the many channels work together along the user journey, instead of the campaign material existing across many channels performing the same role, but in isolation of each other (Media Update, 2017; Cloudtags, n.d.; Markelz, n.d.). It is then evident that the cyclical and symbiotic relationship between consumer behaviour and new, emergent technology is exceptionally telling and impactful, creating demands that communications agencies have to meet on behalf of their clients. Planning processes have to accommodate these needs to succeed and ultimately neither channel, medium, device or the behaviour demonstrated thereof can be ignore – rather it must be understood exceptionally well and executed against if key performance indicators and communication objectives are to be achieved through the strategies and resulting campaign work. This is the value clients demand from their agency partners. If the agencies cannot deliver on these measures, they are required to re-evaluate their current structure and the services and products it currently delivers, and evolve to succeed.

2.4.3. An Omnichannel Approach to Creating Integrated Campaigns
For many communication specialists, the “omnichannel” approach is understood as cross-channel planning that has been carried out exceptionally well (Cloudtags, n.d.). However, as one unpacks the meaning of integration, as established above, to connote unity, oneness, or “all” – it is valid to deduce that the objective of the integrated campaigns created by the integrated agency teams is to deliver on an omnichannel experience for their audiences or consumers they are targeting (Merriam-Webster, 2017; Cloudtags, n.d.; Gomez, 2017; Markelz, n.d.). Mirsch, Lehrer and Jung (n.d.) reaffirm this idea by
stating that an omnichannel approach allows and “enables consumers to use channels seamlessly and interchangeably and experience the channels uniquely”. True integration will produce an omnichannel strategy for successful communication, from a team that considers all consumer behaviour within a coherent ecosystem of touch points and channels (Mirsch, Lehrer & Jung, n.d.; Cloudtags, n.d.). More so, the difference between cross-channel and omnichannel approaches comes down to three functions of the system that Mirsch, Lehrer and Jung (n.d.) have labelled as: seamlessness, interchangeableness, and uniqueness.

Seamlessness can be understood as the quality of uniform continuity, without any overt or noticeable changes to the experience or platform (Dictionary.com, 2018a). Seamlessness is achieved when the various touch-points within the omnichannel universe operate cohesively, so much so that moving between them is easy and frictionless (Mirsch, Lehrer & Jung, n.d.; Cloudtags, n.d.). Seamlessness means the user can start their journey on one particular device or channel, and end that experience or task on another channel or device without any hassle or compromising the experience - it feels and works the same regardless of the channel (Mirsch, Lehrer & Jung, n.d.; Cloudtags, n.d.). Two brands that have conquered the principle of seamlessness very well are Google and Facebook. To illustrate this point, consider the user experience offered by Facebook: from a device and channel perspective, one may login via the site on mobile or desktop, or on to the app via mobile and tablet – however cloud commuting through synchronised storage has enabled seamless migration between device and platform without compromising the experience or losing any data and updates. Interchangeableness is understood as the quality of being able to substitute one channel or platform in place of another (Dictionary.com, 2018b).

Interchangeableness can then be viewed in terms of catering to native consumer behaviour – that is, building functionality into every touch point from a consumer centric point of view, allowing users to engage or convert on any channel or platform within the omnichannel universe that they choose, depending on what they feel most comfortable using (Mirsch, Lehrer & Jung, n.d.; Cloudtags, n.d.). This is very much about convenience, and to illustrate this concept, one can look at current South African banking models: if a user has a query that needs to be addressed by banking staff, he/she may either physically enter a brand, call the customer care line, email the customer care staff, private message the brand on social media, or log the query via the app, to name but a
few variables. Ultimately, interchangeableness means offering a host of options around channel and format for a user to complete a task, providing more personalised convenience and choice when it comes to engaging a brand on his/her own terms.

Lastly, uniqueness can be understood as the quality of having distinct characteristics or distinct experiences (Merriam-Webster, 2018b). To illustrate the quality of uniqueness, one may continue with the South African banking model example from before: although a customer may fulfil the same objective that he or she set out to achieve, either within a branch or via the digital app, the experience of the channel is totally unique. The in-branch banking experience involves more sensory stimuli (new sights, sounds etc.), owing to the physicality of the channel, and allows for interpersonal communication between human beings. There are many factors contributing to the overall in-branch banking experience, from the commute to the store, and waiting in line, right up until the interactions with the teller. The app-based banking experience is totally unique to the in-branch banking experience in that it is not bound by space or time, it is instantaneous and it is devoid of peer-to-peer interactions – however, one will still be able to fulfil the same functions or task on the app as well as in-branch. Digital technology has revolutionised the banking process in that operating hours, physical stores and human capital are no longer mandatory to do business, however having an omnichannel means a business will offer a suite of opportunities to engage, putting the consumer’s comfort above all else in allowing them to decide how they would like to do business with a brand.

Through the lens of integrated brand strategy, it is clear to understand why omnichannel ecosystems are so important. As discussed above, the omnichannel approach can be qualified according to three defining properties, namely: seamlessness, interchangeableness and uniqueness (Mirsch, Lehrer & Jung, n.d.; Cloudtags, n.d.). What can then be deduced is that digital technology has not been implemented to optimise and replace traditional channels and platforms, but rather to support and augment them within a larger system – the omnichannel (Mirsch, Lehrer & Jung, n.d.; Cloudtags, n.d.). Digital channels and technology is merely integrating with the traditional channels, or uniting, and combining with them to offer seamless, interchangeable and unique business solutions to suit every customer (Mirsch, Lehrer & Jung, n.d.; Cloudtags, n.d.).
Communication practitioners, however, still seem to silo and subject each channel, device and message to severe analysis and scrutiny, and feel the need to justify and differentiate their roles to the point that a campaign may suffer fractures and fissures (Barker, 2013). This reduces the level of integration of each campaign and often these efforts go unnoticed by consumers living in a cluttered, noisy world. Perhaps this is then another argument for integration. It is clear then that there is another complex system at play – the advertising campaign. The campaign’s messaging and channel mix need to convey levels of consistency at all touch points within the ecosystem, e.g. the radio elements must do a similar job of communicating a message, just like a Facebook ad, and a print article and so forth. For a successful campaign to run, all those elements within the campaign ecosystem are required to contribute towards a functioning, unified, singular message. The fact that there are several components working toward that singular goal, while interacting with each other along that consumer journey render the campaign itself a complex system, and the user journey and its various touch points demonstrate that it is in fact, impossible to understand the campaign in a linear sense (Rocha, 1999; Merriam-Webster, 2017).

The complex system that is marketing campaigns can be easily understood through Google’s Micro Moments tool, which helps illustrate the moments that interject stages of the user journey, as detailed by McCann Worldgroup’s Truth to Meaning model (see figure 1) (Think With Google, 2017; Truth to Meaning, 2016). The cyclical nature of the user journey is clearly explained and supports the notion that the system cannot be understood from a linear perspective. The purchase funnel, a very linear path from awareness to purchase is no longer applicable or logical in the digital age (Truth to Meaning, 2016). Imagine the purchase funnel now as a user journey, a figure eight that is a continuum of moments without an end, and depending on each individual, they will enter the journey at different points and continue through the stages throughout their lifetime – again, it is not possible to understand the system from a linear perspective (Truth to Meaning, 2016; Think With Google, 2017).

To illustrate this cyclical user journey, one may understand through the example of purchasing a car. For a person who has never experienced brand X before, or never had any exposure to them, they will enter the system or user journey at the awareness phase; after this initial exposure to the brand, they may look into their retail offers or promotions, as well as the promotional material of other brands, their specification sheets and then
probably seek advice or opinions from his/her peers, entering the consideration phase; on closing the deal, this person enters the purchase phase and then will enter the usage phase. Depending on his/her experience of the brand, he/she may become an advocate and re-enter the purchase phase and buy the new model of that brand of car when the time comes (Truth to Meaning, 2016; Think With Google, 2017). Now imagine this person’s peer, they may be in the market to purchase a new car and have ridden in their friend’s brand X vehicle. He/she is also privy to the driver’s feelings of advocacy around brand X and may be influenced by his/her recommendation. This new person may enter the journey at consideration, and quickly progress to purchase.

The campaign activity should cater to every stage along the journey to ensure that the brand-consumer relationship is serviced over a lifetime, improving customer retention rates. Digital advances have made this possible and easy through programmatic media buying tools that can automate the prospecting process, using machine learning to target users based on their behaviour; as well as smarter customer retention or relationship management software that cleans and segments audiences based on their behaviour online, purchase histories or other demographic criteria to make marketing more relevant and meaningful using data.

Platforms like Facebook’s Ad Manager and Google’s Ad Words have removed the reliance on media agencies to implement campaigns and re-empowered clients and
various business owners through their user-friendly interfaces and plug and play mechanics (Sewerd, 2014). Chaffey (2016) labelled this trend “hands on marketing” as brand custodians begin to cut back on service providers and take ownership of these roles that were traditionally outsourced.

Chaffey (2016) has flagged this “hands on marketing” behaviour as a trend that will become a defining characteristic of the industry, ultimately shaping what the future of digital advertising will look like. Agencies exorbitant fee structures for this kind of service can be removed entirely; while that same budget can be reallocated to the media spend, enhancing a campaign’s reach. While business owners are becoming increasingly closer to their marketing initiatives through exercises like these, they are also increasingly becoming warier of their communication partners, their abilities and their remuneration models. It’s not only media agencies that are experiencing these shifts, but traditional content producers too. Freelancers and individuals who now have the technology required to produce content that is of a high enough standard to be used by brands are making gains over traditional agencies (Pickard, 2015; Gillepsie, 2012; Sewerd, 2014). The expectations from clients of their agencies have changed too, especially when it comes to social media content. There is an understanding – be it right or fair - that digital advertising should be cheap, instead of understanding that is value for money, or garners better returns; it’s required to be economical (Gomez, 2017). Not only should it be cheap, but also the turnaround time to produce it must be faster than that of traditional media (Gomez, 2017). In spite of these demands, the creative outputs for digital must also be of the same quality and calibre as would be produced for traditional channels, even though that content may have enjoyed the benefits of more lead-time and more financial investment. However, the benefit of digital media goes beyond targeting effectiveness and extends into omni channel adaptability and increased longevity from a consumption point of view (Gomez, 2017). What this means, is that unlike when a television commercial flights, or a radio ad airs, digital media doesn’t dissipate into the ether, digital content can be hosted on a site, archived and remain accessible for a long time after the fact. What this means is that given the right channel mix, an integrated campaign has the ability to deliver different, sequenced messaging evoking different actions from consumers through a phased approach across different channels. There are misconceptions that must be disproven around the value and impact of digital execution within a campaign, it shouldn’t be undersold and under budgeted, but rather it should force a new standard of quality on above the line work.
2.4.4. Technology and the Impact on Client Relationships

These properties or attributes of digital communication (both perceived and otherwise) along with circumstantial influences have created a new dynamic between agencies and their clients. With a declining economy, unstable political climate, diluted consumerism and constant uncertainty when it comes to the marketplace, we are seeing advertising budgets being cut and diluted more than ever; however, these shrinking budgets are coupled with growing marketing needs from brand custodians to try spur the purchase cycle and get more effective messaging across (Jansen van Rensburg, Venter & Strydom, 2009: 25; Bruning & Ledingham, 2002: 28).

To stretch their marketing budgets further, clients want highly effective, highly economical digital campaigns that sell product; all the while, advertising partners are looking for higher revenue opportunities like television that value more emotive drivers and offer award potential for the firm (Jansen van Rensburg et al., 2009:25; Bruning & Ledingham, 2002: 25; Bainsfair & Hay, 2014: 42). Bruning and Ledingham (2002:25) have highlighted the plight of agencies when it comes to retaining clients and fostering better relationships with them so as to mutually future proof their businesses. Firstly, retention is far more cost effective than continuous acquisition, with the time and cost to pitch new clients rapidly growing – so there is a need for agencies to change, or integrate and offer an array of services in order to keep servicing their existing client’s needs (Jansen van Rensburg et al., 2009:26). Another issue at play, based on the need for effectiveness, economy, and service, agencies have had to sustain client relationships by becoming service providers instead of partners – meaning agencies are no longer required to ideate, but to purely execute against client demands cheaply, and this is reflected in the remuneration model, whereby agencies charge for their time, allocated to different resources (Jansen van Rensburg et al., 2009: 25-26). This time-based remuneration model creates the competitiveness between agencies, so price is a factor, instead of the quality of the work and ideas. If advertising has been commoditised, and agencies have been rendered and reduced to vendors instead of partners, then the alignment between clients and agencies when it comes to mutual or shared objectives is breaking down (Bruning & Ledingham, 2002: 25-30). If one had to analyse the relationship between clients and agencies through the lens of interpersonal relationship development, it’s clear to see why the compromised state between the two entities is entering discontinuance, having passed differentiation, i.e. the relationship lacks respect, trust, common goals and ultimately is breaking down (Bruning & Ledingham, 2002: 25-30). There is even a shift
toward clients developing their own in-house advertising teams and terminating the relationship with advertising agencies entirely (Bruning & Ledingham, 2002: 25-30). A major takeout from Bainsfair and Hay’s work on building better client-agency relationships (2014:44) is that it is imperative and vital for the relationship dynamic to shift back to a partnership between agencies and clients, instead of that of a service provider and a customer.

![Figure 3: Knapp’s Relationship Escalation Model, Communication Theory](image)

It is worthwhile discussing Knapp’s model for interpersonal relationship development (Figure 2, Communication Theory, n.d.), as it is applicable to two complex systems at play when it comes to understanding agency integration, namely: the client-agency relationship as detailed previously, and the relationship between practitioners who now belong to integrated teams within the integrated agency.

Sewerd (2014) discusses human history in terms of revolutions, from the industrial boom in the West, to the digital revolution that is sweeping across the world at an accelerated pace with no indication of slowing down. What caused the digital revolution to be the fastest and widest spread revolution to date in human history can be attributed to what Sewerd (2014) calls, more specifically, the Internet and mobile revolution. Sewerd (2014) continues to marvel at the benefits of the Internet and mobile revolution, highlighting its affect in third world spaces, as it “[penetrates] every sector of society” and is constantly
improving the lives of many disadvantaged nations, for example in regions of Africa where communities living in the diaspora are required to send money home, advances like M-PESA and other mobile wallets have made these transactions simpler. Not only this, but the rise in internet penetration globally, especially in third world nations like Africa have exceeded all expectations, owing to the receptiveness of people toward technology and connectedness (Business Tech, 2014). The increased accessibility made possible through Internet service providers, and the economic production of smart devices, have created new opportunities for brands to reach previously untapped markets across the world, globalising content and breaking down barriers previously erected by the exclusivity of exposure (Business Tech, 2014). Not only are brands forming relationships with new consumer groups, but also, they can do so in engaging and novel formats owing to the technology that connects them – creating better brand experiences which will ultimately form better brand relationships.

Goldsmith (2016) and Chaffey (2016) foresee a shift in the industry toward a post-digital era. The post-digital movement advocates for marketing and advertising to return to their basic principles, by putting the consumer at the centre of the communication plan, building the campaign’s assets and initiatives into an ecosystem where the consumer is the epicentre (Goldsmith, 2016; Chaffey, 2016). Furthermore, the post-digital notion can be understood as a call to integration, within agencies so as to deliver on integrated campaigns (Goldsmith, 2016; Chaffey, 2016). The reason for this is that the “use of digital media and technology in marketing has become so ubiquitous” and thus can no longer be thought of as separate or “other” when it comes to designing a robust, holistic marketing strategy (Chaffey, 2016). Many of the thought leaders who advocate for post-digitalism are insisting that communication practitioners stop treating digital differently, stop creating job titles that promote digital exclusivity, and even put an end to entire digital departments and so, begin truly integrating and thinking about their brands and their work from an integrated point of view (Chaffey, 2016).

Sable (2012), however, contests all notions of this post-digital movement, insisting that we are merely at the foot of the mountain that is the digital revolution, and the apex of these developments may be an asymptote as it progresses, develops and changes every day, outrunning those who try to curb or control it. Sable (2012) deftly concludes that the “bigger truth is that while digital is everything, everything is not digital. And, in fact, it never has been, nor will be — despite dire predictions”. Sable (2012) doesn’t agree with post-
digitalism, as it tends to take a reductive stance toward digital technology and how it has and will impact the way we live and the way we communicate.

Overton-De Klerk and Verwey (2013:364), Stokes (2005:554), Edwards (2012:11) and Kuhn (1970:103) make the case that by pure virtue of its paradigmatic framework in rejecting hard and fast rules, embracing fluidity and flexibility, postmodernism is clearly the sustainable approach to remodelling post-digital agencies. Organisations are striving to structure all units and departments around the agility model, which presents new benefits and detriments (McKinsey & Company, 2016). For digitally centric agencies, it’s been a highly beneficial approach owing to the turnaround time from inception of an idea, to its testing, development and prototyping the technology (McKinsey & Company, 2016). However, in pursuing this model, a business cannot ignore that “typically [those agile units] remain physically and strategically disconnected from the rest of the…organization and the rest of the company” (McKinsey & Company, 2016). Thus, collaboration and cooperation to increase the quality of work and grow the skill set across the business would not be possible.

A postmodern and critical approach to integration will allow for clear understanding of the problems, and assist in developing more sustainable and effective solutions. Postmodernism requires practitioners to be critical of their modernist limitations, and become agile in their conduct and problem solving – or rather their communication efforts must become as emergent as the phenomenon of digital disruption (London, 1996). Against these sources, it is evident that integration is viable and necessary for creative organisations to remain profitable. It is also clear that certain efforts to accommodate digital have been futile. What is unclear – ultimately what this research intends to investigate and solve - is what exactly is in the way of integration? What are the barriers and challenges to integration? The value of this research is that it has developed from a real social and business problem, it has legitimacy from the premise and literary backing that the issues do indeed exist and the industry is hungry for a solution.

The available research has executed well on exposing the existence of the issue and the need to solve it, but not why it exists.

2.4.5. Integrated Brand Strategy
Marilungo (2017) discusses how the choice to execute a campaign using above the line channels and/or digital channels will not only affect the planning and implementation of a campaign, but also the overall message or content. Marilungo (2017) defines the shift from above the line strategy to digital strategy as a move towards “performance based,
outcome driven planning”. Planning for digital starts with the solution or desired outcome, it’s functionally driven and starts with the end result in mind, whereas above the line planning usually does not (Marilungo, 2017). The benefits of digital to target audiences without wastage, track performance and optimise campaigns for effectiveness have become more and more appealing to clients, especially since budgets are getting tighter (Marilungo, 2017). However, “Digital is in the very fibre of everything we do as professionals and as consumers. Consequently, digital marketing is no longer a subset of marketing communications. Instead, it seeps into every aspect of the industry” (Rooster Marketing, 2016). Rooster Marketing (2016) continues to compare digital connectivity to the way electricity has an omnipresent role within our lives, so entrenched in every facet of our day that we rarely ever acknowledge it let alone marvel that it’s there. Furthermore, “digital” is the ouroboros, infinite and impossible to delineate where it begins and ends (Rooster Marketing, 2016).

To view digital through a lens like Marilungo (2017) seems to be dated, as many agencies are dropping the digital label from their organizations all together (Rooster Marketing, 2016). The distinction between the two disciplines only exists in the marketing and communications world, consumers do not distinguish between the two as they’re completely “interlaced” within their channel mix (Rooster, 2016). Rooster Marketing (2016) uses a fitting analogy to advocate for integration: “If you walk around with a hammer you are only going to be looking for nails. But, if you pick up the whole toolbox, the result will be a much more sound and rounded end product” – true strategy should take a channel agnostic approach to solve a problem, strategists should suggest what is needed instead of what is familiar or within their individual skill set.

2.4.6. New Agency Models

Bruell (2016) discusses how through digital, consumers have changed, and so clients’ demands on agencies have changed. Agencies are now required to service an array of platforms and channels, and target an array of different kinds of audiences with personalized and tailored content (Bruell, 2016). In addition to this, agencies are required to monitor the data and optimize these campaigns for success, and finally report back on the results (Bruell, 2016). What is really required now is a “higher degree of consolidation to make integration and interdependence more effective” between or within agencies to
service these needs with a single point of entry from a client perspective – it’s no longer acceptable to deliver on single components, convoluting the reporting lines and shifting accountability or blaming miscommunication and poor alignment (Bruell, 2016; Hall, 2012). This often occurs when there are too many service providers, one shop leads the strategy, one shop is responsible for media, another is servicing digital and so forth. The strategies are written in isolation from the other disciplines and they are required to plug and play to deliver on an “integrated campaign” (Bruell, 2016). To cater to clients’ dissatisfaction with this original model, and to mitigate the dilution of a campaign budget between organizations, advertising agencies are restructuring to become “integrated” and offer all of the disciplines under one roof, promising to save time, reduce misunderstandings and deliver on a truly integrated campaign (Bruell, 2016; Hall, 2012). Hall (2012) explores how traditional agencies have approached this “reconfiguration”: Hall highlights the partnership route, whereby agencies outsource to boutique start-ups who are specialists; often agencies will absorb or buy out those boutique start-ups and move them in-house; sometimes they will hire single freelancers or consultants; but very often they will purely hire against a need and poach individual human capital from specialist agencies (Hall, 2012). Within this dynamic, there is still misalignment and legacy issues from leadership and established practitioners, often not knowing how to delegate work, how to collaborate and how to engage the new team (Bruell, 2016; Hall, 2012).

2.4.7. Obstacles Facing Integration
Gibbons (2013) and Dan (2014) highlight certain issues that obstruct true integration within an agency, namely budget allocation, practitioners from all teams and their digital education when it comes to resourcing and taking briefs as well as internal politics or mandates from a leadership perspective. Agencies are aware that they have to evolve their organizational structure to accommodate integrated brand strategy delivery, but are ill equipped or sometimes unwilling to make the necessary and sometimes radical internal changes to achieve it (Gibbons, 2013; Dan, 2014). Agencies are still focusing on their own offering, as put by Gibbons (2013) “what should an agency offer” as opposed to “what does the client need” – clients are spending a designated fee to achieve certain objectives and how that revenue is allocated departmentally speaking isn’t their concern, it’s the agency’s internal key performance indicators that complicate effective service delivery. Gibbons (2013), Dan (2014), Bruell (2016) and Hall (2012) raise the issue of skill and calibre that agencies face when employing a new, specialist arm. Agencies
employ against the skills they are lacking, and so aren’t always qualified to vet the candidates who will comprise of this new team. Often these hiring decisions are made with haste and are financially motivated, with leadership opting for more economical hires as opposed to practitioners boasting seniority and clout, since these new resources and their services will not be costed for separately and client retainers will remain the same (Dan, 2014). Rectifying poor hiring decisions can be cumbersome and expensive, not to mention they are loaded with the risk of invaluable loss that could be incurred when this could impact the agency’s reputation and client relations (Bruell, 2016; Gibbons, 2013; Hall, 2012). Conversely so, hiring the right calibre of practitioners could up-skill other employees and elevate the overall quality of work and team output. Gibbons (2013) further discusses agility within the agency, and how beneficial or detrimental it can be depending on how equipped the organization is to adapt quickly. Again, the argument for a paradigm shift from modernist agency structures to a post-modern set up is valid as this will be the ultimate driver of successful integration in the digital age.

Hall (2012) identifies micro and macro remodels geared toward integration within the teams and across agencies. This isn’t uncommon to South African agencies, for example the restructure between Native VML, Y&R and LabStore (Manson, 2017). Leveraging each other’s strengths, each may service their portfolio of clients from a full-service angle, from shopper marketing, to digital and even classical brand building (Manson, 2017). Native VML internally had a specific micro model for their team structure that consisted of a media representative, creative partners (copy and art direction) a strategist and social media manager per output, a common “integration model” explored by Hall (2012) (Manson, 2017).

2.4.8. Integration Models
Cox (2013) details the four basic models of integration within an agency, likening campaign delivery to conducting an orchestra. Firstly, Cox discusses a “no integration” approach, common even within seemingly integrated agencies when the brief hasn’t been allocated to the correct resources and isolated channels are proposed and then used (Cox, 2013). The second approach is advertising led integration, whereby a single creative concept is executed across multiple channels and platforms – usually led by one agency and adapted by the other disciplines, even if it’s just a look and feel (Cox, 2013). Third, there is brand idea led orchestration, which as Cox (2013) puts it, consists of “unification around a shared brand concept or need-state platform”. The brand message
is consistent across channels and executions, though creative manifestations of the idea may differ (Cox, 2013). Lastly there is participation led orchestration, whereby the brand and key stakeholders co-create conversations and design experiences for higher relevance and shared understanding (Cox, 2013). Orchestration is the most effective solution to integration, since channels cannot be planned in isolation and all practitioners or partners are required to play a role in the ideation and strategy phases (Cox, 2013). Cox (2013) motivates that a strong brand led idea allows for all parties to buy in to the strategy and execute as per their specialty or discipline, keeping the campaign’s integrity intact and allowing for maximum effectiveness across an array of touch points. Internally, several problems exist when it comes to delivery integrated brand strategies. Tornquist (2013) like Gibbons (2013), Dan (2014), Bruell (2016) and Hall (2012), has listed managements unwillingness to be agile and restructure processes to allow for true integration, usually because of the financial impact on the organization. Another issue is the skillset and capabilities of the resources be it new or existing, since the new digital juniors can’t seem to win over traditional teams and garner support and buy in – usually this hurdle can be solved with education; but also, both teams often lack the skill or experience to deliver on integrated communication tasks (Tornquist, 2013; Gibbons, 2013; Dan, 2014; Bruell, 2016 & Hall, 2012).

There is little evidence highlighting the functional day-to-day challenges and obstructions hindering integrated teams from delivering on integrated brand strategy. Research into the processes and functional barriers needs to be conducted before any solution can be proposed to tackle the issues of integration. There is not enough substantial evidence relating to problems of integration in a South African context available. Research is further required to prove that the above-mentioned problems of integration are universal and valid when applied to smaller case studies like McCann Worldgroup Johannesburg.

Leach and Winegar (2015:4-6) have developed a number of principles that they believe leadership is required to adopt, or at least consider while attempting to navigate a successful integration and manage change within a complex system like an agency, namely: experimentation, agility, continual development, fluidity, and dissent. Experimentation and agility as principles of change management have been unpacked by Leach and Winegar (2015:4) to champion an approach around emergence instead of prescriptive planning. This also requires leadership to formulate and communicate expectations and guiding principles around the change, but then allowing complex
systems to self-organise, and ultimately, leaders should test and learn, keeping what works and changing what does not (Leach & Winegar, 2015:4). Continual development as a change principle forces leadership to let go of the reigns and step out of their comfort zones – while changing the system they may end up undergoing a change in themselves too, stuck between high levels of uncertainty and the almost total loss of control over the situation (Leach & Winegar, 2015:5). Fluidity and dissent forces leadership to remain open to conflict and adaptation during the process – as Leach and Wingar (2015:6) have written “prior successful approaches lead to rigidity and failure when we close ourselves off to flexible, adaptable structures” - an undeniably post modernistic approach to managing change. Leach and Winegar (2015:12) continue by stating that the organisational goal, or reasoning behind the change needs to be clearly and effectively communicated to all involved stakeholders, at every level. The key tenets around successful change management that emerge from Leach and Winegar (2015:4-15) revolve around transparency and clarity when it comes to communication, observation, flexibility and reactiveness instead of prescribed action, democratising processes and decisions and allowing for conflict, inclusion/participation and uncertainty.

While neither the traditional or digital agency models seems to remain sustainable in their original formats (Mokgwatsane, 2014), even attempts at integration face trials and tribulation in light of new shifts and more applied pressures, driven by the emergence of new industry trends and so, the silos of any kind are to be broken down in the pursuit of integration and holistic service delivery. Against this context, what then is the effect on the people in those teams and the work they are required to produce?

2.5. The Effects of Integration on Advertising Agency Teams

As one may deduce from the base of literature above, integrating an advertising agency is a difficult and sensitive matter that requires stern commitment by leadership or change agents; as well as thorough planning to succeed with the initiative so that the advertising organisation may remain sustainably viable. Should integration see fruition successfully within an advertising communications business, the internal teams should be experiencing greater levels of collaboration between themselves and their formally disassociated colleagues (Findlay, 2017: 6). Collaboration is the ultimate end goal of integration: integrated teams – new specialists and traditional generalists – should be working much closer together in an interpersonal sense to deliver on integrated campaign
work, that is a far more cohesive strategic output and executional output post client approval on the planning elements (Findlay, 2017: 2-6). Ultimately, clients should be feeling like they are getting holistic service delivery from a very united, single team with diverse and rich perspectives on their problem to be solved. However, this is a theoretical and idealistic state and not necessarily a reality.

As put by Findlay (2017: 1-7) issues arise around the mindset of the individuals who make up these integrated teams, traditional and generalist teams are unable to operate or think as agile and dynamically as the specialist or digital teams that come from start-up backgrounds. Major and crippling challenges start to rear their heads in the form of human capital issues, often emotionally driven around feelings of inadequacy, competitiveness, fear and so forth (Findlay, 2017: 1-4). There are legacy issues that traditional, generalist or above the line teams in terms of how things should be, coupled with the reluctance to change their modus operandi or obligation to learn a new, foreign medium – in this case and many others, digital media (Findlay, 2017: 1-6). Findlay (2017: 3) discusses the problem in these scenarios as simply a failure for certain mindsets to adapt from an established order to the new, “start-up mentality” that many new digital shops and digital resources were born into. Start-ups and future fit, agile digital or specialist business models do not struggle with these legacy structures, systems and mindsets purely owing to the ever-changing nature of the industry within which they operate (Findlay, 2017: 2-3). For true integration to thrive, lessons must be adapted from these post-modern business models around agility, lean resource structures, broken down silos and more collaboration; with a mandated sense of urgency to foster the willingness to adjust a mindset from an established discipline and system toward a way of working that is less rigid, modernistic and far more future proof – mirroring the new integrated team members, their processes and the new mediums that communications organisations simply cannot avoid or ignore anymore (Findlay, 2017: 3-5). Clift (2014: 1-2) echoes this sentiment and insists that agencies have to start behaving like start-up businesses, often reimagining the whole organisation to be more critical of their value offering and products to remain viable. However, Findlay (2017: 1), Lynch and West (2017: 4-5) clearly believe that traditional practitioners simply cannot think like start-up or digital resources, the work is “simply beyond their skillset”. That being said, Lynch and West (2017: 4-5) also acknowledge that specialist resources and teams already have multidisciplinary practitioners that require little upskilling and can tackle integrated brand strategies from their inception. Clift (2014: 3) advocates that traditional resources need far more training
and education on specialised disciplines than digital or specialist resources need to have on above the line communication. The inability of traditional or above the line resources or practitioners to adapt and learn not only creates duplication amongst resources within the organisation by having multiple assets perform similar functions, toes are stepped on and lines are crossed and the emotional responses - which include anxiety, fear, the loss of relevance and control – have dire ramifications on overall team morale and will ultimately render traditional models of communication agencies obsolete (Clift, 2014: 1-2; Findlay, 2017: 1). Findlay (2017: 6-7) discusses a drastic solution to “cut the dead weight” if it doesn’t “fit within the new structure” which isn’t always a legal or ethical solve, though it may be the correct business solution. In trying to manage these new structures and the teams that operate within them, Findlay (2017: 6) emphasizes that change agents or leadership simply have to foster employee involvement and buy in into the new ways of working and future vision. Second to this, leadership within the organisation have to ensure that adequate and broad training is provided to all resources, both specialist and generalist to ensure there is mutual understanding and the ability for individual to still deliver value regardless of the changing mediums (Clift, 2014: 3). The converse is also true, as the communication mediums and channels change, practitioners are required to upskill themselves and in so doing, become more “hyperspecialized” within their niche (Clift, 2014: 3; Williams, 2014: 1). The problem of siloes re-developing is a reality and breaking them down is not an initial solve, but rather an ongoing struggle that faces leadership as well as team managers below them to continually bridge the gap in their working relationships (Clift, 2014: 3).

Lynch and West (2017, 1-4) discuss creative teams at an individual level as being exceptionally valuable to agencies. Creative and strategic communication teams are required to collaborate and upskill each other and in so doing deliver exceptional work, since great communication campaigns are only as strong as the team that conceptualises it (Lynch and West, 2017: 1-4). That being said, the strength of the individual in the team is irrelevant since creative and strategic communication teams are complex and interrelated systems in themselves, so the strength of the work is reliant on the team members abilities to collaborate with each other (Lynch and West, 2017: 1-4). This approach has been deemed a “resource-based view” of the organisation, and managing the resources within the organisation is vital yet complex (Lynch and West, 2017: 2). Jurevicius (2013) explains the resource-based model as an approach whereby the success and strength of an organisation is dependent on the strength of the resources or
practitioners that work within it, in so doing, ensuring the organisation can “gain and sustain [a] competitive advantage”. Ideally, an organisation must become introspective and seek their competitive advantage within the business, looking at their own human capital’s strengths and value offering as opposed to comparing themselves to their external competitor set in market (Jurevicius, 2013). What the model advocates is that a business should assess their forthcoming opportunities and upskill and/or reallocate their existing staff members to capitalise and tackle these opportunities instead of reinvesting in additional resources and bringing new, external skillsets into the business (Jurevicius, 2013).

The resource-based model distinguishes between resources in two senses: first, a business may have tangible resources which are usually physical assets like property or equipment which may be easily replicated or matched by the competitor set (Jurevicius, 2013). The second type of resources is considered intangible, like brand equity, intellectual property, valuable human capital and so forth – these resources cannot be purchased or replicated by the competitor set and unlike tangible assets, offer the business truly differentiated competitive edge in the marketplace (Jurevicius, 2013). The resource-based model relies on two key tenets for resources to hold value. The first tenet explains that resources (especially intangible resources like capabilities or skill sets within the business) must be heterogenous, diverse and unique to a particular organisation, in so allowing fair competition instead of commoditisation within the marketplace (Jurevicius, 2013). The second tenet requires resources to be immobile in that they cannot be transferred from one business to another, especially when it comes to intangible resources like branding, equity, reputation, ideologies, etc. (Jurevicius, 2013). The problem with a resource-based model comes down to the intangible resources that are human capital. Teams of individual people cannot be owned, and cannot be replicated, a competitor cannot go out and buy the same staff members as another organisation. Furthermore, the strength of the business relies on those intangible assets to provide a competitive advantage (Jurevicius, 2013), as Lynch and West (2017: 2) put it: an organisation’s strength lies within its team dynamic and their ability to collaborate. For the resource-based model to work, team dynamics need to be diverse yet immobile. Integration mobilises teams of resources, they are restructured and no longer fixed, which disrupts their dynamic and further disrupts the competitive advantage that their established collaboration brings (Jurevicius, 2013; Lynch and West, 2017: 2). Great intangible resources, especially individual staff members and the unique working dynamics they create with each other is “valuable, rare and inimitable”, impossible to replicate within the same business with a different mix of resources, or externally, and
this phenomenon of human relationships and chemistry is “key to market competition” (Lynch and West, 2017: 2). Disrupting a team dynamic that works is exceptionally dangerous to an organisation’s competitive advantage as “the process or mechanisms by which successful collaboration is achieved remain unclear” (Lynch and West, 2017: 2).

Conversely, integration demands collaboration and forces diversity upon an established team dynamic – the resource-based model requires heterogeneous resources after all (Lynch and West, 2017: 6). A broader, more representative team structure challenges the established order, calls for innovation and theoretically should produce better creative results (Lynch and West, 2017: 6). Regardless of the theoretical benefits, the byproducts of integration have come to include low group cohesion, poor communication between team members which often leads to conflict and the ultimate result is arguably slower outputs that are substandard – there needs to be a level of “functional diversity” that doesn’t interrupt or interfere with the quality of work outputs owing to relationship issues (Lynch and West, 2017: 6). What may be more problematic is the issue of information sharing, which doesn’t produce knowledge integration (Lynch and West, 2017: 7). Lynch and West (2017:7) put the onus of responsibly integrating teams squarely on leadership to foster team cohesiveness and a safe, productive “learning environment” through correct facilitation. Chalk (2014: 1) infers that advertising agencies need to “embrace adaptable differentiation” responsibly in their urgent departure from assumed sustainability around their current value propositions and services rendered.

The need for holistic planning has been discussed at length by multiple authors, and it is an undeniable truth that many well established communications agencies are coming to terms with. Team or resource integration is an inevitable consequence of an agency’s attempts to restructure their model and remain commercially viable without incurring higher expenses and losing valued resources including their human capital. What many sources fail to detail is how these teams should be structured or how one should go about the pursuit of integrating digital and specialist teams. Martin (2018: 1) sheds some light on multiple, imperative conditions for success when forming these multidisciplinary teams – firstly, the team needs to be comprised of equals to minimise feelings of superiority, inadequacy and other emotional friction that may arise (Martin, 2018: 1). There needs to be minimal overlap when it comes to job roles and skills to avoid unhealthy competition that is counterproductive (Martin, 2018: 2). Leadership is required to explain the reasons
and benefits for the integration or restructure and get whole hearted buy in from resources at every level within the organisation (Martin, 2018: 3). Furthermore, at every level, the individual roles and responsibilities of the resources or employees must be defined clearly in so that there is no dispute and genuine understanding amongst peers (Martin, 2018: 3). Martin (2018: 3) goes as far to suggest that every newly integrated team requires a “neutral centre”, a multidisciplinary resource that can lead and mediate the new team diplomatically and help steer them through the teething phases of transitioning, especially when it comes to culture clashes.

Issues of differing cultures, legacy structures and an unwillingness to change arise post integration, when the new team dynamic struggles forward to established hierarchy and order again (Martin, 2018: 4). Martin (2018: 3-4) offers what may be a feeble solution in that change agents need to encourage their peers to enter the period of change with open minds and without their egos and emotions. Overall, structures and cultures need to change entirely, and the new integrated team will need to develop its own culture and structure to succeed and become a successful, cohesive unit with a true sense of belonging (Martin, 2018: 4-5).

2.6. The Gap in the Literature

The former discussion of available literature explores change as a concept, change management tools and models, the reason change is occurring within the communication industry and how that affects communication organisations and their structures, and lastly how these restructures impact the individual team members within the business. What is evident is that change is constant, imminent and inevitable throughout the life stages of human beings and businesses alike. Many theorists have studied change and devised models on how to manage change, usually from a very functional perspective that deals with step by step implementation to facilitate change. There is however a gap in the literature in terms of how to pre-empt and cater for the emotional, less tangible problems that arise from the individual human beings affected by change. The same may be said of agency case studies in a South African context. Integration as a process of change is tackled from a strategic, outcomes-based context, concentrating on process and less on people. The de facto approach to managing change and executing change within an advertising agency is flawless, but content around the true de jure obstacles that face integration is light. There is acknowledgement from many of the authors that human
problems exist and thwart a well-planned and well executed change, however there is minimal literature available advising or theorising around how one may tackle planning for or dealing with very real, very human and very emotionally routed problems around change and the complexities they bring.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Methodology

The purpose of the following chapter is to outline in detail the procedure followed in collecting research data to be analysed in an attempt to answer the main research question posed by this study: How are South African advertising agencies integrating their digital and traditional teams?

In order to comprehensively answer this main research question, other facets of the problem will need to be unearthed through the following sub-questions:

- Why is the South African advertising industry shifting toward integration?
- How are South African advertising agencies responding to integration?
- How is integration experienced by specialist teams in South African advertising agencies?

Research Aims
To understand how South African advertising agencies are integrating their digital and traditional teams
- To investigate why the industry is shifting toward integration?
- To explore how South African advertising agencies responding to integration?
- To understand how integration is experienced by specialist teams in South African advertising agencies?

This chapter will delineate and advocate for the research design, the methods followed to gather information, followed by explaining the sampling strategy and why certain participants were selected and a discussion on the instrument design. The chapter will conclude with an exploration around the ethical considerations that must understood in context of the study and a delineation of the problems and limitations of the research conducted.
3.1. Research Design

Having conducted an in depth look at the existing research available around the problems of integration and how organisations are attempting to solve this, it became apparent that there is a sea of functional, implementation and process led content on the subject matter but the missing element, the human level, emotional issues are often overlooked, as well as micro impacts on the work produced by those affected individuals within the business. This creates a knowledge vacuum in the sense that there is a lack of depth to fully understand the subject matter of change management and integration realistically when applied to a business. The valuable contribution that this study intends to deliver should shed light on the more emotional effects of change management procedures and the effects of integration on the social and working dynamic of teams within an advertising agency context. Given the nature of study underway, it will deal with more human, emotional data so the chosen research design to pursue is qualitative in nature – owing to the required depth of insights from participants and will make use of a case study approach in terms of the research design. Qualitative research focusses more on “why” looking deeper into social problems, than the “what” of what is observed. The study relies on the personal experience of the study’s participants as opposed to numeric based cold facts and figures. Qualitative research requires a researcher to use his or her own analytical skills to understand content and interpret and explain the data findings, as opposed to statistics and other quantitative tools to explain social phenomena. Yin (1984:23) defines a case study as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context…when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident…multiple sources of evidence are used”. Owing to the study’s contextual emphasis on postmodernity and critical theory, (since digital is emergent and affects social systems) the interpretive paradigm will be employed in making sense of the findings. Interpretivism lends itself well to socially constructed realities – like a creative agency – and will allow for the application and testing of solutions and ideas (Yin, 1984:24).

3.3. Sampling Strategy

Non-probability sampling, or rather purposive sampling was used to select participants who can yield insights ranging from the business leads laterally placed across the agency’s service offerings, as well as key change agents responsible for integration in
the business. Two members of upper management, the chief executive officer of the agency group overall, and the chief digital officer who ran the incubated, separate digital team that was to be integrated with the above the line agency. The reason these members of upper management were chosen is that they developed the vision to integrate and are generally responsible with motivating and activating change from a top-down approach to middle management. Two representatives from middle management were selected, namely head of social media and the executive creative director overseeing the digital creative resources. These participants were selected as they represent the conduit between on the ground agency teams and upper management, their role is to follow and help implement mandated business decisions from upper management and look out for and communicate with their own, on the ground teams’ best interests directly and daily. Lastly, four participants were selected from the on the ground digital teams as they are the last chain in communication from a top-down approach and are likely (based on observation) to be affected the most by the change toward integrated teams. These four participants include a digital copy writer, a digital designer, a social media manager and an operations specialist – these four individuals are tasked with daily outputs of the creative product and will be required to work with the above the line resources directly post integration.

3.2. Research Methods and Instrument Design

McCann Worldgroup has been selected as a case study for the purposes of this research as they are undergoing change through the integration process. McCann Worldgroup is a global agency, boasting over 23 000 employees across 120 countries (McCann Worldgroup, 2016). The group employs a hub and spoke model, centralising their African arm from their base in Johannesburg (McCann Worldgroup, 2016). The group prides itself on integration and the collaboration of various communication disciplines. Within the Johannesburg office, McCann’s offering consists of: Universal McCann (media), specialist client teams e.g. Beauty Team, Commonwealth and McCann Health, Reprise and Cadreon (media), Weber Shandwick (Public Relations), Craft (quick turnaround studio) and lays claim to access the other global satellite offerings from the group (McCann, 2016). Since Africa is a leading mobile region, successful communication organisations would be strategic in their digital offering to service this social phenomenon and consumer need.
Permission from the CEO of McCann Johannesburg is to be obtained in order to interview staff members. The study will be explained to participants in detail in terms of process, and eventual desired outcomes, as well as basic temporal requirements in order to obtain written permission and garner support and buy in from primary leadership.

3.2.1 Interview Guide
The following interview questions will be posed to participants to answer freely and encourage discussion after having signed written consent forms, and had the considerations and aims of the research study explained to them. The sentiment and essence of the questions remained consistent, however in certain instances the questions were rephrased given the context of the discussion and often participants will be prompted with more questions that aren’t formally planned for. The interview questions below will serve as a guide and will be treated with flexibility while staying true to the research objectives:

Table 1: Base Line Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) Why was the decision made to integrate the traditional and digital teams at McCann Worldgroup?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2) What does integration mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Please explain the implementation process that took place to integrate the teams? What measures or actions were taken?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) What challenges or problems have emerged from integration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) What impact has integration had on your work and deliverables?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) What does successful integration look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) What effects has integration had on you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4.2. Data Gathering and Analysis

Interviews were conducted at McCann Worldgroup's business premises in either the participant’s office or a boardroom. The participants were informed that the study would not impact their standing within the organisation and their contributions are anonymous, though would be recorded for transcription purposes and then analysed. Thematic analyses were employed to make sense of the data, to identify and explore patterns and analyse the results for meaning (University of Auckland, n.d.). One on one interviews have been selected as the research instrument for this study since it is imperative that data is to be collected in casual, free-to-speak settings that prompt broad and deep insight, which will allow for conversation to lead to further questioning and/or discussion. The research questions are open ended and were conducted in semi-structured interviews, asking the participants to describe their efforts, plans, experiences and so forth. Their oral responses have been recorded on tape and transcribed. The data will be analysed through thematic identification and then formulated into concepts and/or social phenomena to extrapolate meaning. The interview transcriptions were thoroughly interrogated and read and re-read for many iterations during the coding process. Bengtsson’s (2016: 8) four-step process was employed:

- **Stage 1:** Decontextualization - units of meaning were identified
- **Stage 2:** Recontextualization – relevant content was included to the units
- **Stage 3:** Categorisation – homogeneous groups were identified
- **Stage 4:** Compilation – conclusions related to the above were made

Through contextual analysis and tabling of the results to assess frequency, many themes and patterns emerged which were later analysed, condensed and grouped thematically into sub themes and major themes, to be discussed in later chapters.

3.5. Ethics

In terms of quality assurance and trustworthiness, the researcher will commit to prolonged engagement with the participants in an immersive sense – conducting several interviews with the chosen interviewees, continue with persistent observations of participants within the agency environment, and lastly triangulation of data and responses to ensure...
consistency across responses. A consideration that underpins the research is the researcher’s close, daily working relationship with the selected participants. Maintaining objectivity is vital when analysing the results of the research, and remaining professional yet open during interviews was imperative. Care was taken to be true, honest and reliable when assessing the interview data and coding correctly as the credibility and legitimacy of the study is of the highest importance. All participants as well as the business consented participating in the research. Though case studies are critiqued for their limited sample size, researcher involvement and ability to translate universally, careful consideration has been given to the structure and outputs of the research design to mitigate irrelevance owing to bias and sample size. Qualitative research generally comes under fire for validity concerns and overall research quality, especially when compared to quantitative research’s simplicity to report data without too much risk of human interpretation incorrectly reading the data. For qualitative data to be considered quality research, researchers employ what a measure of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness as a measure of quality qualitative research is comprised of four tenets: first, credibility. Credibility involves a researcher ensuring that participants agree that the findings yielded from the research study reflect their social reality. The second measure of trustworthiness is transferability which means research findings must be able to be applied and generalised to other contexts or populations. The third measure of trustworthiness is dependability which requires that research findings are consistent and accurate. Lastly, conformability is a principle of trustworthiness and conditions the degree that the research conclusions are correlated to the focus of the study and not to the biases of the researcher. This study will adhere to all academic conventions for research in order to ensure trustworthiness.
CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This table has been compiled using thematic analysis of the coded interviews. The research was analysed in terms of the context and frequency of the key points from the interviews to yield patterns. Of the thirty-nine codes, the data was condensed and further condensed into seven major themes. In terms of frequency of response and the patterns exposed by the participant interviews, there were some issues that stood out in volume, far beyond the rest of the data set:

- Management at all levels are responsible for implementing and leading integration
- Integration is not understood clearly by all staff members, there are differing definitions and there is no clear vision held by the agency – there are communication failures across the business
- There are many differing opinions as to why integration is happening at McCann Worldgroup – little consensus from participants
- Integration hasn’t been successful. Integration has been tumultuous, expensive and exposed skills deficits at every level, even management
- Education is imperative, digital education and education around colleague remit and skill sets
- There is a clash of cultures, lack of understanding and respect between teams
- There has been no method or real change process followed
- Feelings of fear and inadequacy of rife amongst the above the line teams; animosity between the teams, little collaboration
Table 2: Contextual Frequency of Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication issues around change</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No common/shared vision of what successful integration should look like communicated to employees</td>
<td>AJ 1</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication around the integration i.e. why it is happening and how it would be implemented</td>
<td>AJ 1</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top down approach should lead and implement integration</td>
<td>AJ 2</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication about integration via unofficial lines e.g. word of mouth, closed door conversations or gossip</td>
<td>AJ 2</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason for integration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry pressures for advertising agencies to provide holistic services to meet changing client needs i.e. be a one stop shop</td>
<td>AJ 4</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to adapt: Global network mandates, &amp; best practice in other markets</td>
<td>AJ 4</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiencies: Cost effective allocation of resources, accountable reporting and direct management lines</td>
<td>AJ 3</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More accountability: through a unified company culture/way of working i.e. upskilling resources at all levels to be competent in digital and traditional</td>
<td>AJ 3</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration is not successful</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clear integration process/model used</td>
<td>AJ 1</td>
<td>AF 2</td>
<td>AD 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration not working: not implemented properly (too early, too late), teething issues</td>
<td>AJ 3</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonalignment between middle-senior management on the need for integration, the process and what’s expected of them</td>
<td>AJ 3</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher resource turnover due to dissatisfaction with integration i.e. unclear growth paths</td>
<td>AJ 1</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having the right people &amp; tools for specific jobs i.e. Resources not adequately skilled or allocated to manage work tasks post integration</td>
<td>AJ 6</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency networks are typically made up of two types of agency models: Traditional &amp; Digital purist</td>
<td>AJ 1</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration needs to merge cultures of purist digital (start-up mentality) and traditional teams - falling</td>
<td>AJ 2</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration is needed to future-proof a business to compete in the modern world</td>
<td>AJ 1</td>
<td>AF 2</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding of integration: attitudes and beliefs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe integration is not well understood and no clear process was used to implement</td>
<td>AJ 6</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe integration is understood and a clear process was followed</td>
<td>AJ 4</td>
<td>AF 2</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe the responsibility to effectively implement integration and understand capabilities of their new teams lies with senior management</td>
<td>AJ 2</td>
<td>AF 5</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe true integration ensures all employees working on a campaign are clear on their deliverables i.e. shared understanding and working toward a common goal</td>
<td>AJ 2</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe there is a lack of consensus on generalist vs. specialist approach - what skills are needed in the business</td>
<td>AJ 1</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe benefits of integration will be tangible terms - client savings and increased agency productivity</td>
<td>AJ 4</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversity to change: Conflict, difficulty &amp; damage in employee moral when implementing change management and changing culture</td>
<td>AJ 4</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friction between integrated teams: lack of trust and understanding each other’s skill sets and working in silos i.e. not willing to collaborate</td>
<td>AJ 9</td>
<td>AF 4</td>
<td>AD 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees feeling pressured by workload and to embrace integration. Afraid to raise concern/confusion with senior management</td>
<td>AJ 3</td>
<td>AF 1</td>
<td>AD 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>Mid-Senior management not competently trained to implement and manage integration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>Employees not properly equipped/hired to succeed in their roles post integration i.e. upskilling, on-boarding etc. negatively impacting productivity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Lack of alignment around integration planning between senior management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Lack of accountability from Senior management on clear and effective communication around the integration</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process &amp; Communication</td>
<td>No clear integration plan, process or platform in place to communicate to employees. Lack of transparency on how roles would be affected</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>The need to re-educate clients/industry on the agency's new positioning/capabilities and how to work post integration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiencies</td>
<td>Negative impact on cost and efficiencies - more people (specialist and traditional) need to sit into meetings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Start | Putting people first - On-boarding and upskilling integrated employees where and when necessary | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 12 |
| Start | With a clear change management process with more hands-on approach from senior management in dealing with change | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 13 |
| Start | Investing in hiring the right people/skills and tools for integrated team structures - update old hiring policies | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 13 |
| Start | Embracing the idea of a unified agency and approach to business i.e. no more silos, more open-door policy | 3 | 5 | 1 | 9 |
| Start | More accountability at all levels of the organisation to make integration work better | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Stop | Being afraid to admit failure or course correct where needed | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| Stop | Forcing integration and talking about integration as if its succeeded when it hasn’t | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 |

The interviews are coded by use of colour and annotations and may be found in the appendix of this document. The coded data was thematically analysed for patterns and meaning. Initially the codes were designated after extensive reading, revealing thirty-nine codes. The codes were then analysed for primary themes and those themes further grouped by context and relationship. Having outlined the broadest possible, logical themes and understanding the subthemes or facets that comprise it, conclusions were drawn about the data. The table reflects the broadest themes that emerged from iterations of grouping and regrouping to understand patterns, as well as the many codes which fall within the broad theme. The table also reflects participants by their initials for identification and correlates their responses individually as well as collectively by code. The grey shading reflects the highest volume of responses per major, broad theme.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Discussion of Findings

As per the research, integration at McCann Worldgroup was widely considered to be a failing initiative - ultimately, the research revealed many challenges to integrating the digital and specialist teams. There was however, consensus amongst all the interview participants as well as the existing literature around the inevitable need for agencies to integrate and offer more holistic service delivery, agencies have to adapt to remain viable, profitable and relevant (Holman, 2010:17; Lundby, 2008:4; Overton-De Klerk and Verwey, 2013:364). Relevancy as a problem facing integration was a key issue raised by the digital executive creative director, particularly when it came to the overt animosity he has experienced while attempting to integrate with the above the line team. Elaati’s body of literature (2016: 2-4) discussed the psychological barriers to change, further echoed by many participants observations that the above the line team’s limited digital knowledge have left them feeling irrelevant, some go as far as to say fearful and threatened by the digital team and their alternative skillsets. Findlay (2017: 6) stated that the end and ultimate result of integration is increased team collaboration that is evident socially and in the work output. This was not the case in the research, in fact it was the opposite result, forced collaboration was insincere and unsuccessful and vehemently and defiantly opposed by both teams. However, Findlay (2017: 1-7), Lynch and West (2017: 4-5) do acknowledge that there exists a problem with traditional teams’ mindsets – they are difficult to upskill, aggressively oppose change and they are rigidly loyal to their processes, procedures and disciplines. This proposition was a recurring sentiment through the research conducted, again echoing Clift (2014: 3), Findlay (2017: 1-7), Lynch and West (2017: 4-5) in that digital teams are far quicker to adapt to above the line methodologies and executional practices, while the above the line or traditional teams require an extensive amount of education to learn digital principles and are slow to grasp these new skills.

Based on the research, it is evident that Lynch and West (2017: 6) had accurately reported on the problem of integration creating low group cohesion, higher levels of conflict in the workplace, general animosity and the end result is slow, inadequate work outputs. Furthermore, Lynch and West (2017: 2) discuss chemistry in the team dynamic and how individual talent and strength is irrelevant out of a group context. This issue was
raised in the research, with the incubated digital team being attested to the super stars with excellent group chemistry, resulting in profitability, great culture and steady and sustained growth. Several participants expressed outrage and frustration at leadership having collapsed such a successful, agile and cohesive digital team and forced (“forced” was a very frequent descriptor for the integration process) integration with unfamiliar and hostile colleagues. Echoing Lynch and West (2017: 6), participants acknowledged that the work output began to suffer post integration for many reasons. Leadership tasked the digital resources with upskilling their new above the line counterparts, and given their normal workload and the unwilling and uninviting attitudes of their new peers, this is a difficult task. Team level participants reported that leadership had shifted accountability to adequately train the traditional teams and this created resentment amongst the digital team for the extra burden bestowed on their already full agendas. To add to the problem, the lack of clarity within the agency around specialist versus generalist approaches to integration was further aggravated by unskilled traditional resources being allocated digital briefs and vice versa as some employees were under the impression that integration means all resources are competent in all disciplines. What this misconception created was even more work for the digital team as incorrect or inadequate digital work produced by the above the line team came back to the digital resources to redo, on top of having to upskill them. Regarding digital teams having to tackle above the line briefs, the frustration created by being “forced” to execute on work out of your scope of expertise and be penalised for it was reported to be emotionally taxing.

Further to the issue of upskilling, as discussed previously, Clift (2014: 3), Findlay (2017: 1-7), Lynch and West (2017: 4-5) raise the issue that above the line resources are difficult to train in digital owing to the mindset in which they have been trained and are unwilling to depart from. Many team level participants raised the issue of having new above the line leadership post integration as digital was disbanded and absorbed into the traditional team because it was the “path of least resistance” as put by the chief digital officer. To build on the previous issue of digital resources being tasked with work out of their scope of expertise and being lambasted for what is considered an inferior end product, what new above the line leadership yielded was further frustration when they failed to understand or input on digital jobs. Participants reiterated many times that their new managers do not understand what they do on a day to day basis and so their growth trajectory is compromised and the experience is frustrating – the campaign work and the human beings have been suffering as a consequence. Conversely, above the line
leadership are also feeling fearful, inadequate and frustrated that they can’t truly add value to the digital work but are now responsible for its delivery and quality overall.

Lock (n.d.) looks at Lewin’s change management model and raises key issues for success. Firstly, change needs to be for the better. Mccan may have set out with good intentions but not one participant deemed this initiative to be successful. Several participants even question the motives for integration, one even stating that it was financial decision to save cost overheads. Lock (n.d.) states that change must be gradual, not sudden – participants have outlined that integration was a label applied to an overnight reporting line restructure accompanied by an email, very sudden, not gradual. Though leadership reports that this change has been coming for a period of time, the on the ground level team members were not privy to these plans and the change for them was sudden – this highlights a failure to communicate and get buy in. Next Lock (n.d.) raises the issue of structure and planning, with objectives for change and processes to implement it. Mccann’s leadership had admitted to “winging it” and rather choosing to “fail forward” without any planning or process to integrate, they put the accountability on middle management to take responsibility for digital deliverable (regardless of their own agenda to thwart this project out of fear). Leadership considered this to be a test and learn iterative process – which really meant the vision was confused and inconsistent across the agency. This problem was raised by a few participants in the research, claiming every employee at Mccann has a totally different definition of integration, if they understand the term at all. Leadership failed to communicate a consistent, clear vision and failed to garner buy in for the benefits and share the implementation plan for the broader agency – these are fundamental mistakes according to Lock (n.d.). Cherry (2017), Kritsonis (2004: 2) and Normandin (2012) raise a problem that was a consistent pain point for the team level participants of this study, the lack of planning and lack of communication by senior leadership, coupled with the sudden change to “integration” with subpar leadership who are resisting the change themselves has left the team level employees feeling out of their element, stressed and displaced.

Leadership should create a new, integrated culture that is neutral and mutual for the two integrated teams (EBA, n.d.; Status, n.d.; Vuodatus, 2014; Webster & Webster, n.d.), and Gibbons (2013) and Dan (2014) further elaborate on this point detailing how leadership must invest and do things correctly the first time around, what is easy is unlikely what is right for the problem – in the case of Mccann, leadership wanted the quickest, easiest solve and that meant “forcing” the digital team into the above the line team without
creating a new mutual and neutral culture or new processes and so the team that was underperforming feels as though their way is reinforced and digital must fit in and acquiesce. Since the above the line team was underperforming, and require the most change to become relevant and employable in the digitally dominant age – and given the digital team was exceeding their key performance indicators successfully and were tasked to influence and educate the above the line team, it is counterproductive to reinforce and validate the team, culture and processes that are required to change and disenfranchise the team, culture and processes that are desirable in the business. This frustrated and confused middle management and team level participants. Integration in their view was careless, reckless and detrimental to the success of the agency. Findlay’s (2017: 1-6) view on this matter aligns with the participants view of culture and process especially across management level, the new way forward, the new culture and processes need to take learnings from start-up culture, and digital agency culture, however what was stated as a desirable goal and what was executed across the agency does not correlate – there are many incongruencies between what is desired in terms of a process and vision and what was implemented.

A surprising revelation that emerged from the research is that clients want the convenience of a single point of entry and the ideals of integration, but given the duplication of roles and specialists has rendered the integrated offering to be too expensive, contradicting Lake (2017) and Them Advertising (2016) who discuss the benefits of integration as a cost saving exercise with fewer, sharper resources. McCann’s CEO and operations managers had used strategy as an example: in meetings, and attempting to collaborate on briefs, the business then deploys a digital strategist, traditional strategist, a media strategist and a shopper strategist. Instead previously one strategist was deployed against a brief, now several resources with similar capabilities are deployed and the cost to client has exponentially increased causing some friction. A recurring recommendation that emerged is that there should be a resource skilled enough and knowledgeable enough to understand the brief and the expertise within the business who would then allocate the relevant resources instead of duplicating the roles and incurring more costs on the work to be done. This contradicts the on the ground experience team level participants reported to be happening, where any resource can tackle or is allocated any job and instead of understanding disciplines or specialities in depth, a generalist approach to resources is taken. McCann’s CEO then stated that clients in turn don’t want integration from their agency and the teething period is creating
a problematic client-agency relationship, as previously acknowledged in the literature by Gibbons (2013) and Torrance (2017). Goldsmith (2016) and Chaffey (2016) discuss the post digital era in a similar sense to the respondents’ suggestion for a brief to be looked at in terms of the problem to be solves, forget discipline obligation and deploy resources to best answer the brief in an integrated sense. The agency needs to deliver integrated brand strategy that solves the brief from a discipline neutral, zero based approach (Digital Market Asia, 2016; Gibbons, 2013; Marilungo, 2017).

What the literature didn’t cover to a great extent, but was revealed through the research is the people problems. Participants stated that the egos, animosity and fear are major hinderances in attempting to achieve integration (Clift, 2014: 1-2; Findlay, 2017: 1). Because of the emotional issues, digital team members are not included in the briefing process and the work suffers owing to time constraints and misalignment with the work produced by the rest of the agency. The lack of process leaves middle management who are tasked with leading integration between their existing resources and newly integrated team members without a mandate to pursue these efforts properly. Participants have reported the lack of communication between themselves and their new managers, the lack of an onboarding or ways of working process and in general, the teams are not feeling or seeing the efforts of change management. Culture is suffering immensely and participants have reported stress, low morale and feelings of misdirection. As a consequence of these issues, participants have predicted that some colleagues will leave the company and move on. Given that issue, hiring new resources was raised as a problem and a recommendation for integration to succeed in the future. Clift (2014: 1-2) and Findlay (2017: 1) recommended that multidisciplinary resources that can understand, plan and execute an array of media and channels need to be hired, and they usually come from a digital background. This recommendation to hire multiskilled resources who are usually from a digital background had emerged consistently across the research, with multidisciplinary resources being likened to rare and valuable, sometimes mythical in nature. However, another problem that was raised in the research contradicts this desire from leadership to hire multidisciplinary resources – the new additions to the teams are from above the line backgrounds and don’t understand digital or how to brief in digital work and the overall product output in suffering.

In summary, what emerged from the research predominantly is that there are massive gaps in the communication chain when it comes to garnering buy in from all staff and
stakeholders to integrate or how they should go about integration. There is little understanding around what integration means in general and what it means in the context of the agency, coupled with vastly differing opinions amongst those who believe they know or understand why integration is happening and what it means. There was no change management process implemented or mandated and there is a fundamental lack of accountability when it comes to leading integration. What leadership express as their vision is starkly contrasted to the reality of their actions in terms of how work and processes is carried out, and even in selecting new hires and additions to the business. What consistently emerged from the research is that stakeholders and staff members are unhappy about integration as they are feeling adverse effects of the change. Participants have lost faith in their leadership, though believe they should be squarely accountable when it comes to leading the change toward integration. The study elicited very emotional and passionate responses from the participants. While the process issues were acknowledged, the people issues were very evident. Feeling of fear, irrelevance, animosity and inadequacy are rife, usually expressed from the above the line team who are not adequately skilled in the new channels, or the new skillsets that exist within their team. Overall staff members are feeling frustrated by being misunderstood, experiencing increased workloads and the new pressure to educate their new above the line colleagues though the education required for these resources is beyond the scope and remit of the digital teams. Ultimately, the work outputs are suffering greatly, as are client relationships because of lower quality of work, increased expenses and tighter deadlines owing to inadequate and then duplicated work in the system.

5.2. Problems and Limitations

One of the major limitations of this study is the sample size of eight participants, coupled with that, only one agency makes up this case study, so there will be some findings that cannot be generalised accurately. In the case of qualitative research, objectivity is generally slightly more compromised than in the case of cold data led quantitative studies. Regarding this study in particular, where the research sets out to discover the problems facing integration, the emotional responses are a by-product of discovery. Discussing the problems of integration had elicited exceptionally heated and emotional responses from certain participants which may influence the objectivity of the data. Another limitation to consider is the nature of the study focussing on particular individuals, at a particular time within a particular company that underwent a particular process of change.
management that wasn’t structured or formalised and so can’t be replicated – this includes the issue of social dynamics within the agency which factors into consideration the success or lack thereof of integration. These social dynamics, agency structure and change process aren’t able to be replicated from study to study and so, every iteration will yield or create unique circumstances. It is recommended that a similar study is carried out across different case studies or different agencies with higher volume of participants so as to correlate more data and generalise the findings as much as possible – patterns and consistencies should eventually become evident, regardless of the superficial or minor differences discussed above.

5.3. Conclusion

This study set out to understand what are the challenges that South African advertising agencies, in particular McCann Worldgroup Johannesburg as a case study, face when integrating their digital and traditional teams. Integration as a general approach has been adopted by many advertising agencies globally and locally, and many of these communications organisations are experiencing problems in attempting to bring about organisational change and integrate their digital or specialist teams with their above the line or traditional agency teams. In attempting to answer the research questions and understand this phenomenon in its entirety, the study looked at three sub-constructs that confound and impact the issue of integration, namely the industry wide shift toward integration and what macro forces are propelling the communications industry to change; the approach that agencies have taken to remodel themselves and provide a solution for the changes in the industry as a whole; and lastly, as the agency restructures to remain viable and profitable under these new industry conditions, the study looked at what the effects of integration had on the teams within the organisation that are experiencing change.

Three leading models of change management were reviewed, namely Lewin’s three step change model, McKinsey’s 7S model and Kotter’s eight step change model. The three change models build on from one another respectively and include additional steps to surrogate any consideration or step where the previous model experiences a deficit. Some major findings from this exploration delineate parameters for successful organisational change: change will always be opposed by those affected and leadership needs to manage the emotional reality and monitor it closely with a people first approach.
Leadership should include or involve all stakeholders in discussion and planning, explain the benefits of integration or change at length and get their buy in to avoid miscommunication or conflict. Change agents, or mandated resources are required to lead change within the organisation, accountability needs to be placed on leadership in a hierarchical sense and leadership on the ground in the form of change agents. Change needs to be gradual, not sudden and extensive planning must be conducted for successful change.

Having looked at these change models, the study then sought to review literature around the changing nature of the communications industry. The exponential rate of change that propels emerging digital technology is undeniable. The power of the digital revolution has empowered consumers and shifted the power balance between producers and consumers of content, and affected advertising agencies value offering and ultimately relationship with clients. New channels, formats and devices have given rise to new skillsets, job roles and opportunities for practitioners and client business alike. Given the new accountability agencies have owing to big data, there is less focus on return on investment and more focus on return on insight – consumers demand personalised value from brands and clients demand better, more accurate campaign work from agencies. However, agencies don’t always have the skills to execute on these new channels and against these new deliverables, there is a need to upskill and educate existing staff or invest in new resources who are skilled and capable of delivering integrated brand strategy.

It was evident from the literature that there are many obstacles facing integration, some only detailed by the authors in a functional sense, allowing a gap for further study around the emotional impact and “people” problems, and less around process. From a process perspective, leadership is not always committed to integration owing to the initial investment required, financially and structurally from a turbulence point of view internally. Integration should yield better integration between the teams and in so doing, yield better integrated brand strategies. Clients should be experiencing holistic service delivery from a one stop shop. However, this is an idealistic state with idealistic benefits that are not so in reality. The above the line or traditional teams are struggling to learn new skillsets, while digital teams are better equipped to deliver holistic work that is channel agnostic. In integrating, agencies are required to adopt learnings of agility and post-modernist approaches from the digital agencies, however in McCann’s case, this converse was
implemented. Instead of aligning the resources and business model to the digital structure, it was easier and more convenient to fit the digital team into the above the line team – ultimately there is consensus that this approach and the lack of change management has allowed the pursuit of integration to fail. The duplicated work and resources have caused high frustration and animosity between employees, and the lack of leadership at all levels to follow integration through is attributed to not having garnered buy in or correctly articulated a coherent vision for the future. The agency is riddled with problems of miscommunication and misguidance. The research set out to identify the problems emerged in the face of integrating digital and traditional advertising agency teams. The research conducted has produced valuable and interesting findings that often mirrored many sources in the literature review, but also rendered very interesting and unexpected findings that were discussed above. The research successfully exposed the problems of integration within advertising agencies and exposed deeper reasoning and understanding for many of the problems raised in the literature review that were discussed at surface level. It is recommended that further research be conducted across a larger sample size, different agency contexts and different agency cultures, and global cases assessed to draw parallels and generalise richer findings.
CHAPTER 6: SOURCE LIST


**APPENDIX**

CHAPTER 7: APPENDIX
Adam Jayes Interview  

**Middle Management**

Lara: Interview with Adam Jayes, head of social media at McCann World Group. Thanks for doing this, Ad. Cool, so I've got six questions, and the first one is, why was the decision made to integrate the traditional and digital teams at McCann?

Adam: From my understanding?

Lara: Yes.

Adam: From my understanding integration is taking place as part of a global mandate, right, so I think through conversations with [name], who is the Chief Digital Officer, he reports directly into [name], who's the global Chief Digital Officer, so a lot of the digital mandate comes from him. So, I think having sat on the global digital leadership council (DLC), a lot of these discussions come about. So, New York being as mature a market as it is, we leverage off best practice from New York and London, and I think, to my understanding, that's how the structure is set up there. Naturally, they've been around for a lot longer than we have. I think they've had digital in the business for like 20 years, and I know we're going to jump ahead, but interestingly Clyde remarked the other day that [name] was really chuffed at what we're trying to achieve from an integration point of view, and that they've only just managed to get it right, having had digital in the business for like 20 odd years, and the fact that we're trying to do it this early in our life stage is really impressive. Obviously, we haven't cracked it, but yeah, my sense is that having done some of the competitive research, I'm very fortunate that I got to build a business case for LIVE, right. Part of building that business case is we had to look at things like the total serviceable market and also at the competitor landscape. What I noticed, locally anyway, is you have these global advertising conglomerates owned by massive networks. So like, the WPP's of the world, or IPG that owns multiple agencies. What I noticed when they entered the market, in order to get or have digital capabilities within their businesses they bought out digital-only businesses, so then you have this model where you have FCB, which is like the traditional agency, then you have Hello Computer which is their pure digital specialist place, right. Publicis, Publicis Machine and you start to see this is how they've gone around doing this, like these little takeovers and buyouts, and I know that McCann didn't want to do that. That wasn't an avenue they wanted to explore so they wanted to position themselves in the market as a through the line agency as opposed to, for above the line you deal with McCann Johannesburg, and for digital you'll deal with McCann digital. And whilst that has its pros and cons, the pros being integration, so the client gets a one stop shop, if they put in their campaign brief they can get TV, billboard, social executions and...
they only have to deal with one agency. There's one PO, one CE, one integrated line that's all consistent, like golden thread throughout the campaigns, that touches all the pain points that clients typically have, whereas other agencies, you see that working on Chevrolet, you've got to brief if it's prospect for media, and Adhara if it's retail, and McCann if it's creative, and so to kind of avoid that, I suppose that's the point and that's how we get to position ourselves in the market.

The obvious con there is that there is a lot of education that needs to happen in the industry in that we don't often get seen as a digital agency with digital capability so therefore we get excluded from digital only pitches, right. So, you'll find that like if someone is going out on a social media or digital-only pitch, whether it's web development, CRM we get excluded and the big pure-plain agencies like Hello Computer and Native are left to fight for those, so with that said, things are slowly changing in our favour, given the wins that we've had over the last year or so where we've gone up against like a Native for Maggie, and whipped their asses on that. I think that kind of thing from a reputation build will help us get our foot in the door when it comes to digital only stuff, at which point theoretically we should have a leg up going cool, we've got digital, but we've also got these ancillary services where you would typically have to go to other agencies. It's a very long-winded way of saying that global is telling us to do it.

END TO END HOUSTIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Okay cool. So, what does integration actually mean to you? And what does integration actually mean to McCann?

So, contextually speaking, this is the only agency I've worked at, so it's very hard for me to say what integration should look like at an agency level, cause I don't have a frame of reference. I only know McCann, but I suppose from that perspective having come from where we've come from to where we are supposed to be now, there's a vision for integration, which is when we started, Clyde had to incubate digital. So he had to recognise his own P and L in order to justify hiring resources so that he could build this digital team within the business. What that meant was we had two MDs, we had the MD of McCann Johannesburg who looked after the client service department, the creative department and the strategy department who all reported into him. Then you had Clyde who looked after the digital department, where you had split reporting role where client service, so if you were a client service person, you reported to the J'burg MD, but you also reported to Clyde on a digital level because he was responsible for your salary. You had this weird kind of thing happening, and what this did was it wanted to allow Clyde to effectively build his own team with its own culture. And we effectively became the A team. As a result, it has an entrepreneurial culture, we are quite flexible and agile and there's no micromanagement really and you could come and go when you please, it was like an output-based model that worked really well. But then all those forces were completely opposing to the type of culture that was already built into the traditional McCann agency and was continually being fostered in that agency. So you had these opposing forces. So, integration really meant, I think from a
McCann Johannesburg point of view, how do we get this digital team that’s been built in isolation and bring them into the broader agency? And so, you no longer have a digital client service person reporting to two effective MDs, you just have a client service person working at McCann who’s really good at digital, right. So I suppose we reached the scale in the digital team where I think before we could just carry on with our own work – it was weird having started there was such a small team, people actually didn’t give a fuck about us. We were like these small kids playing off in the corner there, nobody cared what we were doing, we just got on with it, and then we became so big, and Cyde will tell you this, that to date we recognize half the revenue in the business is digital, we can no longer be ignored. But what’s good for us is that because we were left alone and we were allowed to play in our own little sandbox, whatever the broader agency did didn’t affect us. When they dropped the ball on the Zurich calendar, for example it didn’t affect us. When they were fucking up on creative on certain clients, it didn’t affect us. We got to the point where we were so big now, and the clients we were winning, we were kind of integrated, that when they were fucking up it was affecting us. OnTap TV where above the line failed for example and we ended up losing the account, not necessarily because of them, there were a number of factors that played a role and we were also certainly to blame but it started to really have a material impact on the way we do business, so I think yes, to the first question there was the global mandate to do so, but I think also just like the digital team reached the end of its life cycle as a department, and the only way forward is to really put everyone into their respective teams where possible. So, we have the strategists, digital who report into Cyde who are now theoretically reporting to the strategic director. And yeah, there were the creatives and client service and other departments that were isolated, so integration for me was deploying those assets into their respective teams and then figuring out the right process for those teams to work amongst themselves. What I still find here is that we still operate in silos and so part of integration is not to have a deep understanding of what someone else does, but to understand and respect it enough of what the other person does to know where they participate, and then having a model or somebody who is intelligent enough to figure out where those people plug into the story. That’s like strategy upfront, who do we need in strategy? What are we trying to execute? We need a digital strategist and a shopper strategist. Then when we do a second revert we realize there’s a social media component so we need to bring in the social media team to figure out what that’s going to look like. And you get the appropriate people involved at the appropriate time. What we don’t have is we’ve got this superficial integrated model where it’s still the old guard doing things the way they do them, and then right at the end going ‘Oh fuck there’s still four other facets/disciplines that need to plug in here, please plug in, you’ve got two days to figure it out, which is a balls up, but that’s kind of what’s happening because this integration thing didn’t necessarily happen. So, to sum up, I think integration is departments working like a puzzle with one another but figuring out the appropriate pieces going in at the appropriate times, if that make sense.
Lara: So, can you explain the implementation process that took place to integrate the teams? What measures or actions were taken?

Adam: There wasn't one. At least I don't think, I mean, Clyde had a really great idea of what integration should look like, and how everyone should be deployed in their respective teams, and naturally it's still an on-going process, but beyond that, if you look at the organogram for integration and the way he mapped it out, there are heads of departments, then there are directors, and some of those guys have to step down to fill those roles, but basically you were put in a department that existed, the traditional structure that had a hierarchy, that had senior players and had their respective reporting lines, and then you have the digital department that in some respects has those layers like there were layers of social, and in creative there was a head so like you had Terence as ECD, strategy was still young, it was just you so you were reporting directly to Clyde, same thing for media, same thing for dev, so those roles didn't necessarily have heads of departments. But what you had now is you were taking people out of those structures and putting them in structures that already had seniors in the team, but there was no... and I don't think there needed to necessarily be a brief from client or Fraser who is CEO, but you had no sense of welcome, or welcoming pack. It was like "cool, business is no longer business, you are entering our realm now". Like this is how it looks like for us, this is how we operate, like some kind of on boarding you know? Like this is the team, these are the expectations of the team, you're not going to get that from Clyde, Clyde isn't going to tell you what's expected of the creative department that comes from Nick who's the leader of the creative department. I just didn't get the sense that there's this "Cool you now report to me, these are my expectations, these are my ground rules, this is how we operate, this is what I expect of you, we'll check in every three months. This is how I work, you are more than welcome to come into my office at any point or whatever those ground rules, there was just like none of that. It was just like "Oh... we're integrated", and that was it. Anecdotally, I think it took two months for Bruce to even say hello to Tshnepo for example, if he even did, but Tshnepo is now supposed to report to Bruce. And I know anecdotally from your situation as well where that didn't even happen at all, and even more so is that you had two people who are now your colleagues working in the team towards the same goal who sit in an office and you don't. That's a managerial thing. That's Dallas going "cool Lara, straight after the meeting pull you aside and saying cool, this is what it means now to be part of my department, these are my expectations, this is how I work, get a sense of how you work, let's figure out what that relationship can look like and how do we get the best out of one another." That just didn't happen across the board, I think Clyde told me that Heather did something like that with Ronsi which is interesting cause Heather actually opposed the whole integration thing to start with. There was a bit of friction there cause she is losing that cause DTP is not going into creative, so I think it was quite a big change in her world. Not that she opposed it but I just think the initial friction was frightening from her perspective cause of the changes being quite significant in her world. But she took that on and brought Ronsi under her wing, but I think that is a very granular
level within your team and there should be one with all the heads of the department. From that perspective those things didn't happen so in my mind integration did not happen beyond everyone saying “you no longer report to Clyde you now report to Bruce”. That was integration. That is literally all that changed. Even from a process point of view it wasn't until about after a month we started figuring out oh fuck that Bruce and Cayla kind of have to approve digital content now. But that conversation never happened. So even the structural processes that have changed have impacted... leave Cayla to fend for herself, like she only had Clyde who was running the whole digital department and maybe a few seniors then Fraser who is the CEO is the next level up. Do you think that Cayla is going to walk into Fraser's office if she has a problem? He is just too senior, it is fucking crazy. I don't think you get that filtering down of proper management. Integrations would just never work from that perspective.

[Audio cut from 14:46 – 22:23 min]

Lara: So, you mentioned how there were a lot of seniors in the business already, and taking the digital team they had to fit into that existing structure, and those existing seniors maintained their role and nothing was adjusted. What sort of impact did that have for the digital agenda?

Adam: It kills our culture. We had the right culture compared to the broader agency. We were on the right foot. We had this entrepreneurial thing going, we were challenging process, we were innovating, we were pushing boundaries, we were winning business, and the rest of the agency had stagnated, if not gone backwards. I mean like Mix had gone through three creative teams over the last year and a bit beyond Diageo. The weirdest thing is that it's more of like a size thing. They were bigger than us, so we had to integrate. Theoretically, there should have been a middle, which was identified that we all integrated into as opposed to “oh they're bigger so we'll fit into their structures”. Maybe that was an oversight. Maybe the actual platform for what integration lives off and the foundation for what it builds from, I don't think was established, it was just a case of we have this thing, they'll fit into those things, which maybe in some respect works, maybe it works from a management point of view if you have good managers, from a process point of view if you have good process. It doesn't work if you have a cultural conflict, and it doesn't work if you have a human specialist or equity-type problem. Digital, I think it's a lot easier for digital kids to grasp traditional stuff, than it is for traditional guys to grasp digital. You're taking a very specialist thing and you're making them report to people who have no fucking idea what you're doing. That's a massive fuck up. Like I said in the creative department, we're very fortunate that we had Jaco as the stop gap, so Bruce and Eric could always default to Jaco and go “We don't get this Jaco, can you please approve it” which is happening with the social content because there's no way they can do it, they don't have the mental capacity to do it. It's even worse in
strategy because there’s only four of you, and the guy you’re reporting to doesn’t know what you do, how can there be anything other than a fuck up? It’s impossible. The client service team and the way that structure works is better. I think Otis can get on with her work in spite of Paula not really knowing what she does. There will be some conflict that will need to be resolved there, but if your manager comes from a reporting line, or a senior, then you’re fucked. Like Otis can have a relationship with L’Oreal outside of Paula. A strategist can’t do strategic work outside of the person who is giving them the strategic work, and the same thing from a creative point of view. That was again, a massive oversight. We never had a platform where we could both integrate into it. You never had a plan for what each side needs to bring to the table, it was a case of you, Lara, fitting into the strategy team. It’s a culture shock, because its completely not what you’re used to, there’s no on-boarding, there’s no ways of working, there’s no hand over, what do you prefer, how do I do better to get the best out of you, so you have both those things happen concurrently. It almost feels like all that hard work has gone down the toilet. It’s even harder now because we can impact culture because we had safety in numbers. Now it’s almost like divide and conquer. We’ve all been pushed into different departments, we’re not really as close as we used to be and now we still carry that burden and responsibilities of effecting change, except now you’ve got to do it on your own, and you’re against three or four others, and it’s the guy who signs your leave and approves your pay check. How do you go up against that? You can go up against that if it’s me, you and Clyde and you have the safety of Clyde because theoretically you’re also reporting to him, but in the absence of that you’re almost left to fend for yourself. It’s no wonder it’s not working. But there seems to be this idea that it’s teething problems, and it’s not working in this specific area, but another big thing with McCann is that people will move on. The actual thing doesn’t change, but people move on and you’ll get people who can work in that system until they can’t anymore, and they they’ll move on. We’ll see. The next person they hire has to be a digital person, we’ll see if anything changes and if it doesn’t...

Lara: They’ll be out too. Okay, so my next one is, what does successful integration look like, and what should we be and what are we working towards?

Adam: You’re always going to have issues, right. Whether those are process related or people related, but like, ideally what it should look like is that when a brief comes in, there shouldn’t be a predetermined person who is going to receive that brief, irrespective of what the brief is, and there should be some kind of kick-off or system that can disseminate that brief into the relevant departments, and then they can get on with their work. That work will touch various facets of advertising, and then you’ll come up with an integrated solution at the end. That’s how creatives should work in this agency. So a brief will come in and Lara will work on it because there’s digital aspects to it, there’s opportunities for radio so we’ll bring
in Jamaica to help with copy, there's a social media element so social media will be brought in, and the kick start happens, and we figure out in that system what the various avenues are, and how we can explore them, where they'd fit in. Then you can do a consolidated strategy off the back of that that everyone has already been party to and then when that gets signed off, you have the respective rollouts in the respective departments, but because you were all integrated upfront, there are no shocks, everyone knows what they can and can't execute on, everyone knows what they're working towards from a messaging point of view, so everyone is aligned and no one is going to go off on a tangent and write a radio script that make no sense that doesn't fit into the social media campaign that we're trying to run, in fact it can support it. = True Integration

And then I see that in other agencies, when they run a campaign, like with the Future Life thing, that had to be integrated because the campaign idea that was executed physically from an event and PR point of view, it had radio to support it, there were social media posts going out, there was this whole build up, and then you do an execution at the end. It wasn't a digital campaign, or an above the line campaign, it had elements of all these things because everyone was working together to achieve that single-minded strategy and objective, which you don't have here. Which is funny because Future always champions "receive well, do well, hand over well" and the one thing we haven't cracked is receiving well, which means we hand over shit. So, you have someone like Hester brought on to an account like Diggers where you know digital is going to be a massive ask, and you know she has no digital experience. And so, all the briefs that are coming in from a digital point of view are a fuck up because we don't know what people actually want, what they are asking for, we can't deliver on those and we're still getting isolated. It's still like "Cool this social media brief has come in, so get the social media team to work on it". There isn't even a kick-off with the strategist who wrote the comm strat to tell us what's happening. You can't do that. In an integrated agency, that brief comes in, the strategist would have helped work on the comm strat upfront. Then we'll get the social media scope, and I have to do the scope work, and I'm being told no, we're going to be on these three platforms, and Twitter is going to be tactical, and it's like, well, we haven't even done the strategic exercise yet, how do you even know that that's right? Maybe they shouldn't even be on those three platforms, maybe we should at least do our due diligence. They just put together a slideshow and we have to go back and force fit why Twitter has to be tactical only and you don't even know if it's right for the business. Because if you stop to ask what you're trying to achieve, if it's awareness, cool you shouldn't be on Twitter, in fact you shouldn't even be on Instagram. You should be on Facebook and you should use all your media, employ only four posts a month. That conversation you have up front, but when you don't involve everyone in the process upfront you don't get to have that conversation until you're three weeks from putting content on Facebook. So, integration is a way of working together. Bringing the relevant people who are smart at the things they are smart at into the room at the appropriate times to get the consolidated output, then you'll get integration at the end because everyone will have been involved, but I think there's a power dynamic complex having,
where people have to own their respective bits. Maybe that’s another reason why integration didn’t work because people feel threatened. It’s a broader socio-economic problem in that if you’re a traditional marketer, you would be threatened by digital because it’s threatening the way you work, so there’s that already, but then you’re being threatened by people in that space who can do what you do and what they do.

And then also the fact that we were also put on a pedestal as the digital cool kids. I don’t know if its envy, jealousy, resentment, but those kinds of feelings also come to the surface. So, strategy comes in and says “Don’t let Lara touch it”, but then at the end it’s like Lara should have been involved up front, and it’s a fuck up. So, I suppose to get successful integration you need to break down those barriers, but that’s a management thing. If you do interviews with everyone in that team and ask them how they’re expected to work with the other person, no one would know. So, it’s still separate silos, separate departments, run separately, but under the guise of integration, it’s the weirdest thing.

Lara: So, the next one, and this is always the fun one, what challenges have emerged in terms of integration, the problems, what sort of barriers are there?

Adam: So, the main one for me is that cultural conflict. Massive barrier. I think human expertise, massive barrier when you expect someone who’s really good at something to integrate into a team that doesn’t understand what that person does. Massive barrier, massive problem. Not hiring people with integration in mind, so bringing a Turtle to run something as big as Dior, without the human expertise to understand digital, and how everyone should plug in and play. Hiring moving forward is going to be interesting, and even then, I think people are going to default to what they know so that’s going to be difficult, but the next ten creative hires should all be digital, and then retain the guys that you have. It will be interesting to see if that happens. I think process is always going to be a problem, so how do people integrate, how does a brief come into the creative department, and then how does it get disseminated to a digital person vs a traditional person, figuring that out and then massively, the on boarding and human element we just talked about. Expectations just need to be outlined, I don’t think it’s a difficult thing, like you’re in a new environment, these are the rules of engagement, and these are the expectations. I think these are all massive challenges because they’ve all been overlooked. And I don’t think they’re being addressed as we speak. I think it’s just something we hope everyone is going to figure out and get on with it. And we’ll state for the record integration is not sitting next to each other in an open plan office but you’ve never said a word to one another. How is that integration? You don’t work on the same briefs, you’re not in the same room at the same time. Faulty.
Lara: You mentioned a little bit about like, the other team, that threat that digital faces, and you mentioned a little bit about the education that needs to happen. Why do you think that’s not happening?

Adam: I think the two points is, one we’ve got some very senior seniors, right, who maybe haven’t given too much thought about how to bring everyone on board, and secondly, it’s a human thing. Dallas is just terrible at doing that, Bruce is just not really good at it, and those are two really big departments. Archie is useless at it. That’s like three big departments — creative, client service, strategy. The people running those departments can’t do what you’ve just asked. They just can’t do it. And again, because the gap is so big between people like Alastor who’s feeling it, and the next person above that who’s the CEO. I just think it’s not brought to their attention, so they don’t know to tell someone like Archie to drive something, and I think even if they did, he would be too incompetent to do it, so it is a massive fuck up. Then on my side, I know there’s a lot of things like, whereas at least I’m working from the social point of view, where I’m bringing on a lot of new hires, Rikki’s completely inundated, I don’t have the time to do it, like, it’s on my radar to take everyone through LIVE, to hijack things like creative training, to literally take everyone through the handbook and how things are supposed to work, and in that there’s some semblance of help, like how to brief people, who should be involved on what, so that will certainly help. But from me it’s just a timing and resource thing, like I can’t get to it. I don’t think it’s my responsibility to help Dallas drive the strategy department, so it shouldn’t be my fault, but I do have some tools that can help, but I haven’t had the time and the pressure hasn’t come from the top to force me to do it either.

Lara: But even when it comes to digital education, there’s nothing formal you can really enrol into. You have to be quite disciplined and self-reliant and teach yourself. We kind of discussed how all the people in power or department heads don’t have that digital knowledge and background.

Adam: Yes, and they’re responsible for you. It’s a massive fuck up. But to your point now, I think the first bit of education that should have taken place, and you can count it as education is not even education around extending your skills, but just educating the rest of the team around what this person does. Maybe it’s just sitting everyone down in strategy and giving Lara an hour to explain what digital strategy is, how digital strategy can better strategy, and what point they should be involved in certain things and opening up that platform then everyone will know cool, that’s where they plug in, that’s what they’re expected to do. I’d venture a guess that if somebody puts in a brief for a radio script, and they’re working on it, and they understand digital, they’re thinking about ancillary ideas, that support ideas and they know who to bring into the discussion. When you don’t even know, all you do is put out the radio brief. Then there’s this massive missed opportunity, because it could have been a huge project, right?
I think back to that massive survival billboard. I often look at these big campaigns and I think about where they started, and the person who inherited that brief, understood enough about digital and could navigate it in a way where they could have an idea and say cool call Lara in, and you know enough about what everyone does to be like, oh, Brad does dev, so call him in. Is it possible to do this thing? Yes, so let's explore it. So, the team builds and the campaign idea builds as a result. I just don't think people know what other people do here, so the amount of shit I have to say no to because people don't know what I do, and they think that that's right and I'm being left out of all the important ones is insane. How can you have a social media discussion without a social media person in the room? And it happens, because people just don't know. They don't understand what we do. It was an education when Mick first joined, the type of questions we would get. I mean you'd have Archie come to me and brief me on a post, and his expectation is that I'm going to execute the cinemagraph but it is not what I do, then it's a kick out session when it's not delivered on time, but I don't do creative. Like, I can tell you what it should look like and where it should go, but I'm not going to actually physically design the thing but they don't know that. Like how can you run an agency, you're the MD of an agency, and you don't know what a social media person does. I can tell you what Lisa Marie does, because it's so easy for me to pick up and understand. It's the inverse that's the problem, but yet we're the ones that have to integrate with them. Maybe that sets the wrong precedent, because maybe it tells them that it's business as usual, that they don't have to change or pick anything up. It's a problem. Another problem is just the onboarding process of the new clients in this new integration structure is we're bringing in new hires as we go, but we're not bringing them in fast enough to warrant education and scale. Like, this department is due another round of PXL training, but they're waiting for everyone to be brought in before we can do it, so in the meantime it's a fuck up.

Like I need to take everyone through LIVE, but I don't want to do that if I know five new client service people are starting next month so I've got to wait. It's not that we don't have the curriculums or methodologies, the shit exists, but again it's existing in silos and there's no real drive to want to put that in the rest of the agency, and there's no real drive to want it. I've had Paola come to me and send me links to workshops and talks, and ask if that's worth going to, because she wants to learn more, but that's not happening throughout the business. And I think you're right, it's because we're forced to integrate with them, and so it's business as usual for them, and we figure out how we play in their environment.

Lara:

It's sad actually. Alright, so number five, what impact has integration had on you and your team's deliverables so far?

Adam:

Cool, so outside of receiving terrible briefs, which was kind of there before, there hasn't been a material impact on my department, fortunately. I still report to Clyde, so we still have that relationship. I'm not really affected by the on goings...
of your department for example, at least immediately. The only impact we’re
having are on the actual work, when we’re being asked to get involved, it’s a fuck
up because the integration thing hasn’t happened yet so we’re not involved at the
appropriate times. So, from a work and output point of view, I don’t know if it’s
gotten worse, but it’s bad. I’m trying to think if it’s always been this bad, but I
don’t think so, because you and I would have just smashed it. Something that
Lara typically should have worked on is now being worked on by someone who
doesn’t understand digital, then it’s being handed over to social, and then it’s a
fuck up. So, things like strategies and things are a problem. So, having to pull
two all-nighters to get something out because you get briefed at the eleventh
hour because the other person didn’t know what they were doing, that’s a real
problem. Ways of working hasn’t really changed too much internally, but what’s
great is that now in brainstorms we can get more people involved, so more ideas
are always welcome. Initially we had a problem with the approval process on
content, but that seems to be sitting with Mark who’s the only senior digital
creative, so he saves us from that perspective. But naturally as we get scale and
the more stuff we put out, that’s going to be a problem. I suppose what’s a really
positive impact is that while people don’t understand what we do, they do
understand what we don’t do, which is creative. We’re not part of the creative
department anymore, so we’re not beholden to Mark’s whims anymore, which is
fantastic. There are clear barriers being drawn so that’s been great because now
we’ve been allowed to get on with our shit without being pulled into weird
directions, but the problem is we’re still not included in the appropriate
conversations. So there are still teething problems.

I think that the material impacts have been in client services, the creative
department and the strategy department, but beyond that, my team is still okay I
guess. Luckily.

Lara: So, last one. What should we start doing, and what should we stop doing to
make this work?

Adam: I don’t think it’s too late to do an on boarding. I think we’ve recognized that it’s a
problem, everyone should just go back to the drawing board, admit fault and say
"we fucked up when we brought you into the team, we should have done this,
this is how we work, these are our expectations", so reset those, I think is going
to be massive. I’m hoping you become a martyr, and you become a catalyst for
change, and you give Clyde an excuse to be more hands on from that
perspective. I’m hoping to see what change comes as a result of that, and it’s
going to be interesting to see, because Dallas has to find someone to replace
you, so that hiring decision is going to be massive. On that, new hiring is going to
be important, but what it doesn’t solve is that you’ve got Bester as BUD, so it
doesn’t help to bring in three digital client service people that report to her,
because we’ve established that if they don’t understand what that people
supposed to do, it’s a fuck up. So there needs to be some kind of
educational/cultural change happening at the senior level, which is not going to happen. We’re going to have to make it work in spite of that, which is really difficult. I don’t know if we can overcome that challenge. So, some kind of onboarding, course correcting process, and then there needs to be some structure and process changes in terms of how we receive briefs and who gets involved in briefs at those points. And that’s just like a mind shift for the current establishment and people are set in their ways, that needs to change, but maybe that changes with traffic. We’ve also got an old school traffic department who has to traffic digital and does everything in the traditional way, and who refuses to do to in a digital way and bring in digital people (client service, strategy, traffic). Digital needs to slide into that environment.

Lara: Even to your point with the processes, we’ve kind of merged into their system, or we’re trying to, but if you look at their strategy as well, if you’ve got two strategists, who aren’t trafficked, but then we’ve carried the legacy that the digital strategist is trafficked, then there’s no consistency in the department.

Adam: Yes, this is the onboarding thing, because Dallas’ expectation is that is strategists are not trafficked, he doesn’t want them to be, and he doesn’t tell you that and he does not tell traffic that, but he’s responsible for the department and that’s that disconnect. The guys who are responsible for doing this on boarding and this course correcting doesn’t know. Go and ask them what integration is, I don’t think they’ve been told. There’s no drive for change. I think there should have been some hand holding, like “Guys, you should have done this, try and do this, let’s check in”, but Clyde set one up, because it’s in his interest for it to work, but I don’t know if anyone has been asked if it’s working.

As with anything, the biggest problem is the start, is the genesis. It’s the issue of the initial conversation happening with the client. If you don’t have the right person there, it doesn’t matter who’s working with the client, because the right people are not going to be pulled in at the right time. I think we can make it work in spite of our internal challenges if we give the right briefs - we went gung-ho on these comm strats and two months in you get told there is a comm strat that is approved.

Lara: I’ll tell you this, and we’ve discussed this before, you and I, but what upset me is I told them that you never do a comm strat before you’ve done an audit or explore what was wrong, but you warn everyone and they tell you to shut up, and you watch the world burn two months later when the client figures out that it’s wrong.

Adam: And then it’s up to someone else to save it.
Lara: And now these cats have mandated what needs to be done, because apparently now digital is only execution according to them. So now we have to make this happen, gun to our head because they've already sold it to the client.

Adam: There's three immediate things. One: an admission of guilt and course correct. It's never too late to do that, some kind of on boarding, then two: and this is a slightly harder one, is to have the right people bringing the briefs into the system and having the appropriate people work on it at the appropriate times. I think those things will have an immediate material impact on the business.

Lara: And what should we stop doing to make this work?

Adam: I think if we start making the structural changes and the on boarding from the beginning then that means to stop doing what we're currently doing. I think we need to stop receiving briefs in the manner we're currently doing it, which is in the traditional mind-set/manner, in the traditional mind-set, then trying to figure out how digital should work towards the end. I think that's a massive one. And I think our current hiring policy needs to change, whatever that is. That should stop immediately. Clyde should be vetting every single hire that we make, irrespective of department, so that's going to be key. So ya, those are two things that come to mind. Maybe we should just stop talking about integration like it's working, and stop talking about it like this Garden of Eden type of environment that we're all working towards when no one knows what the fuck it looks like. I think we should break it down into short-term goals. Like, this is the next step in integration, let's achieve that. That is everyone understanding. We've gone like, the goal is that end of the table and we haven't figured out the steps to get there, so people are just meandering off into their own directions because we all have a different understanding of what it looks like.

Lara: Thank you so much Ad. This was awesome.
Lara:

Interview with Aletia Fourie, the digital art director, designer and animator at McCann World Group. Okay, Aletia, thanks for seeing me girl. So, why was the decision made to integrate the traditional and digital teams at McCann?

Aletia:

From what I know, and from what they've said, not hearsay, is that it is based on the win of Diageo and that is what they've promised the client, and therefore they decided to implement it because it is something they promised. And I'm sure they have some motivations behind it as to why it's actually going to improve things in the long run, and how it should function ideally. They have other objectives as well, but from what I can tell, it's something they promised but they didn't have yet.

So, what does integration mean to you, and what have they kind of communicated is integration, to you?

Aletia:

Collaboration across briefs. So basically, having people from different disciplines working on the same brief at the same time, instead of just having different groups working on digital stuff separately. So I'd say, exposure for the traditional people to the digital stuff, and exposure for the digital people to traditional stuff.

Lara:

So, is that happening?

Aletia:

Not to a great extent.

Lara:

Can you talk to me a little bit about that?

Aletia:

Yes, so I've worked... actually it was still a digital product, so no, I've never actually worked on anything that's integrated yet. But we did get a print brief that I need to help Tshepi with, and like there wasn't like specified print or whatever, we were like, trying to figure out what this brief is actually for, and then after calling the guys a third time, they were like "no, this is actually a print ad". Which is fine, I mean Tshepi can design print ads, but just tell us it's a freaking print ad, it needs to be A4, it needs to be this. We'd like, go onto the website cause they're saying like they bought the whole page on this thing and this thing, then we went...
onto the website and we were like "okay, so they bought this whole ad space here". Like, just communicate what this is.

Lara: So, can you talk to me a little bit about and explain the implementation process that they used to integrate the teams? What measures or actions were taken to integrate?

Aletia: It was done, semi-legal probably, (laughing) probably fully legal ya they had people sign documents to tell them that they had the option to either be retrenched or to be part of the rest of the company, and no longer be part of the digital team. The digital team basically is disseminated/disintegrated and everybody from the digital department were told that they no longer are in a team, they no longer work for digital, they don't have a digital boss anymore, they have new people they are working for now which they don't know. And basically, they were told a bit before, and then after the weekend just like "Oh, effective of the weekend that has passed you now work for this person".

Lara: So, tell me a little bit about like your new manager and how that sort of went. Like, what did they do to help smooth the process?

Aletia: By manager do you mean boss?

Lara: Yes, whoever you report to now.

Aletia: So, they haven't had a basic meet and greet. There's been no team building, or team introduction at all, and generally there's been no communication as to like "Hey, cool so you guys are the new peeps that work for me, and what do you actually do?" you know, them asking what is it that you do at McCann so that we also know what the rest of my team does. So, there's been no communication from their side. I mean, I have collaborated with them on jobs and asked them things and stuff, but there's been no formal introduction or informal introduction or anything of that sort.

Lara: So, what should successful integration look like, and what do you think McCann is working towards?

Aletia: I don't know what they're working towards yet, but what I think successful integration would look like is a lot more discussions and basically just communication. I mean, if you actually have a conversation with people and have
the people that are supposed to be integrated talk to one another, then I mean, that's the first step. So, I think... what was the question?

Lara: So, what a successful integration look like, like what would be happening here if it was going really well?

Aletia: I think the people that work together that are all now the bunch of creatives, just for an example, all the creatives that know one another, they'd know what the other person is good at, and they'd know what they're not good at, and well they don't need to know them all that personally but at least just have had a conversation with them because immediately you'd have the confidence to speak to this person and be like "What the heck are you doing? What am I supposed to be doing here?". Um, so I think they would have, they would actually know one another, and then well because that's the way I see integration. If you have people from above the line and people from digital or whatever, they're working together confidently. That does not really make sense but I think we're still separate teams so people don't talk with one another, they don't work together.

Lara: So, do you feel like integration is more a label than a working system, if we're still separate teams?

Aletia: At the moment, yes. LABEL - NOT REALITY

Lara: So, what is McCann doing to really make this process work now that we've integrated? Are they doing anything to help you guys be a stronger kind of unified team, or...

Aletia: No. NOT DOING ANYTHING TO INTEGRATE EXCEPT CHANGE REPORTING LINES ON PAPER + TOOL TEAMS THEY'RE PART OF INTEGRATED AGENCY NOW

Lara: No? That's sad.

Aletia: They're doing nothing. Yes.

Lara: Okay, cool. So, my next question: What sort of challenges have emerged in the face on integration? What barriers have we seen kind of rear their
heads? What sort of things have gotten in the way to make this work? What's sort of stopping this from working well?

Aletia: Well I don't think there's necessarily been any massive like hiccups in terms of the actual jobs, like, that there's been issues with an actual job that needs to be executed and there was a problem because the people couldn't integrate or something. I think the problem is a social problem, if that makes sense.

Lara: Can you talk to me a little bit more about that? So, tell me about the social problems that we've seen arise because of integration. Like when you say social problems, talk to me a little bit about what that means and what you've seen and what you've experienced.

Aletia: Well also I want to go back to the way that this whole thing was introduced, I also feel that I was being picked on especially in that meeting by Mick, the boss. Yes. By the way that he just conveyed his message, like specifically picking on me and telling me "You no longer work for digital" and "You no longer report to your boss. Do you have that?" I mean, like, I'm not a child. We all know how this is going to work. There's no need to pick on me and tell me specifically "You must know that you no longer work for digital, and you must remember this and get your mind-set right" and stuff like that. I mean, to me that was just handled terribly. So, I mean for me, that immediately, I wouldn't say caused an attitude problem, but I mean of course it's going to affect me if that's the way that I get introduced to integration, by way of force and not by way of having a conversation "Okay cool, this is your new boss, and there you go".

Lara: These are the ways of working and why we want to make this better...

Aletia: Ya, so for me I think there's a lot of, I would say friction between, still between the different teams because people don't know one another and they don't feel they're integrated, because they're not socially integrated yet.

Lara: Okay, cool. So what impact has integration had on your deliverables and your work? Or like, even if you tell me about a project where you've had to work with other teams...

Aletia: So this far, what I can tell you, that was a disaster, now I actually remember, yes. So, for me personally it hasn't been a problem because I haven't been given anything that I wasn't able to do, and I wasn't necessarily given something
traditional, but one of the traditional art directors was given a project that is purely, clearly digital and she didn't have the skillset to do the job, yet I was asked to help her. Not to do the job, which I am capable of doing, I was asked to help her when she is not capable of doing, so I ended up doing the whole job, I mean I was tasked with other stuff, I was supposed to be doing my job, and now it wasn't trafficked in that I was supposed to work on this thing cause then I sat there and did the whole thing and she's just watched me. I mean, it's fine if you're going to teach people something, but that's not the way you teach a person a whole new programme. You're not going to be able to be proficient in a programme from watching someone else doing something for half an hour, once. So that was, that was clearly, I don't know if it was a mishap, but they want them to integrate, and I think if you want people to be integrated in terms of their skillset as well, you need to make an actual effort with actual deliverables, and say "We're training you in this programme. We're going to tick it off after you're done and say okay, you're capable in doing this programme", and then they'll actually be able to do traditional and digital stuff.

Lara:

So, do you feel like they've kind of tasked you to be the one to teach the other designers, instead of, you know, as a company really putting in the effort themselves to up skill?

Aletia:

Yes, Bruce has tasked me on some list, some or other list. Yes, I'm on a list now for anything that is digital or motion graphic or something that the above the line people don't understand, they're supposed to ask me. Which, I mean it's fine, I do have the knowledge, but also there's the time thing. So, if you have something that's structured and be like "Okay guys, we're setting out this Wednesdays, three hours of creative training. We're teaching the people that are not digitally inclined how to do digital things", and then instead of having people just come up to your desk in the middle of you working on something.

Lara:

So, in your opinion, what should we start doing and stop doing to make integration work?

Aletia:

I think we should start with the people in management – senior management, and have them communicate to the rest of the teams and actually have a team build. I think, I mean it's something so stupid but a team building actually builds the team, and if you want us to be a team, then you need to do a team building, some sort of exercise or whatever, just one day, or have people meet outside of work. So somehow to get them integrated, and stop calling them integrated when they have not been integrated. So, I would say start by actually just having some sort of informal team building thing and communicating with all the rest of the people. Cause also, now I have a new boss but I've been working for someone
Lara: Thank you.

Aelia: Stop trying to force it. Ya, I think that.

Lara: And what should they stop doing to make integration work?

Aelia: No one’s been proactive. Remarks taken therein. Expectations visioned story.

Lara: So, I think that essence, that things of haven’t built. A relationship is still missing. You need to somehow get to the relationship. I think built a relationship, you don’t need to be best friends—but you need to have a conversation with each of the people that are now under you and have a relationship. I think it can start a relationship with them—\( \text{for a year and seven months, and now if I have to take leave it’s with someone.} \)
Lara: Interview with Ashlyn Davis, social media manager at McCann World Group. Okay, Ashlyn Davis, why was the decision made to integrate the traditional and digital teams at McCann?

Ashlyn: Basically, because digital was taking over a lot of business from above the line. We're obviously moving into a world where everything is digital. Print isn't dead, but it's more digitally inclined. As well as like it being a cheaper media and more effective kind of means of reaching your audiences. So, I guess a lot of the above the line clients were moving in that direction, a lot of budgets were moving in that direction and we wanted to kind of be an agency that was offering a 360 service, so integration seemed to be the answer.

Lara: So, talk to me a little bit about the performance of each team?

Ashlyn: Which teams specifically?

Lara: Digital compared to above the line, how were they performing individually before the decision was made?

Ashlyn: So, the thing about the digital team is everyone was native to digital, so they started in digital and their thinking is based in digital. Whereas above the line is still adapting, so you're taking those old school advertising ideas and trying to adapt them to digital, where as we kind of start with the idea in digital, so it just works better, it's more effective, etc. We're also a smaller team, so we were able to adapt a lot easier, we could, I don't know... we're more flexible and able to achieve more at a faster rate, I suppose.

Lara: So, what is integration in your opinion and what is integration according to McCann?

Ashlyn: So, for me integration shouldn't really exist, because you should start the entire thing off with an idea of how you work, rather than trying to retrofit things into something that accommodates a changing climate. Integration should really be about combining different expertise from different people, and just enhancing whatever you're delivering as a product or service. In their opinion, integration is moving a few desks around, making you sit opposite someone who isn't in digital.
and... ya, that is about the extent of integration really. I think with a few changes to the hierarchy. Their version of integration isn't really about bringing out the best of two different fields or two different areas of expertise, but rather about retrofitting an above the line team into a digital kind of realm.

Lara: So please can you explain the implementation process used to integrate the teams; what measures or actions were taken?

Ashlyn: There weren't any measures or actions taken. Well, I guess the actions taken were an email, and a group announcement, and maybe a few more new faces being thrown into digital jobs. For example, you might have content that is written for the month, and they might throw in an above the line copywriter to write your copy for your social posts, etc. It doesn't always materialize into anything we actually use, so in hindsight I guess it just adds more to the process and really extends the time because if you're not a digital native you don't really understand what the audience's mind-set is, so it's an adaptation it not really like an instant fit. So, its more of an education and a process of education. So in essence its really taking steps backwards and starting from scratch.

Lara: So, what have they done in terms of that education? Are they teaching the other team about digital, and how to work digitally?

Ashlyn: So, I think they've thrown a few links out to do online courses, which we all know pretty much result in absolutely nothing and no one doing anything most of the time. Other than that, it's a matter of saying "Hey Lara, why don't you teach them about Tumblr", or throwing a few slides together to help someone's presentation, for example. So, what I guess is really happening is all of the digital team are spending more time educating others rather than actually doing their work or getting any kind of results that influence their work. I mean I guess it might come down to, I guess, the different characters and individuals that are thrown into the mix as opposed to the whole idea of integration, but essentially retrofitting is never really a good idea.

Lara: So, what does successful integration look like, and what should McCann be working towards?

Ashlyn: So, I think successful integration would look like this: You would have a team of individuals that are really strong at what they do. For example, our digital team, you have a really strong strategist, you have decent content, you have a good writer, and you have a good overall kind of manager making sure all of this stuff
comes together at the end of the day. Then taking that expertise and kind of either enhancing it or matching it with someone that brings something completely different to the table. So maybe we're really strong at thinking innovatively in our different platforms or on our different platforms and understanding them a lot better and understanding the mechanics, understanding the mind-sets of those type of individuals, and then taking say a group of people that are strong in ideas, or really strong in activations or something like that, and then bringing those two different expertise together to bring something new to the table and bring something better to the table. So, it's identifying what our strengths are, and finding other people that might bring something to the table as opposed to making it just take a whole lot longer to execute.

Lara:

So what challenges have emerged in the face of integration? What are the barriers that we've seen when it came to integrating? You spoke a little bit about it is more about people issues than it is integration itself...

Ashlyn:

So, the attitudes of everyone that's in the mix is definitely pretty key. So you've got to have people that are willing. So if you're bringing new faces to the picture, they have to be okay with and understand the fact that this is a new process, a new structure and be open to working and learning from other people. I think a lot of the problems that we face is we have a lot of creatives coming from above the line that obviously have years of experience, and I guess for them it's taking steps backwards because they have to learn things from scratch or there's a lack of understanding which creates kind of a fear, I would say and that fear translates into difficulty in working with people because you don't want to reveal that lack of knowledge, and you don't want to kind of lose your position as a superior or as a senior to anyone else. So, what it results in is a lot of people stepping on each other's toes, it results in a lot of duplicate work, so nobody really understands their roles or responsibilities because they haven't been outlined, they're not clear and nobody really has a sense of how that should be and how that should look. Especially when the whole process of integration is coming from someone that's above the line with no real digital background. I guess it might work better if you have somebody with experience in both fields, or digital especially, if we're moving more towards a digital angle in terms of the work that we are delivering. Other issues that we've had is completely different ideas of what process looks like. Some individuals take more initiative whereas others are more used to following like a more standardized process, which means like work basically takes a lot longer, presentations for client tend to be quite pieced together because there's just no coherency, there is no to oversee it, there is no one who steps up to the plate and says well this project is mine because it is owned by so many people. And with that lack of ownership and responsibility obviously the quality of work declines, the flow of everything declines and the overall morale kind of drops, basically.
Lara: So what impact has integration had on your work and your deliverables?

Ashlyn: So I guess I’m delivering a lot more. Your work loads increased and that’s about it. So you’ve got all that you’ve previously had to do and more. And a lot of people land up bringing you onto things because they don’t really understand what you do. So they think social, okay cool you’re in social media, you must know everything about influencer strategies, you must know everything about like banner ads, because they don’t really understand what you do. So that lack of understanding means that you’re working on a lot of projects where you don’t necessarily have to. So, you either landing up spending a lot more time on projects that aren’t necessarily yours, or for example, within our company, we’re allocated certain clients. Currently we have those clients which become our main responsibility we’re responsible for making sure that everything regarding content and social is exactly where it needs to be all the time, so on top of having all those responsibilities, you now have to kind of be drawn or pulled into other presentations where there’s a lack of understanding and they just want you to do something at the very last minute. And wow another really big issue that I completely forgot about, is briefing. So you have a lot of account managers that are above the line, and they don’t have a good understanding of what the client needs. So that lack of understanding results in briefs that are pretty poor, and of course it’s a chain reaction and everything just starts to fall apart from there because it always starts with a good brief. And a lot of the time the client don’t really understand what they need either because their field isn’t digital either. And it is our responsibility to educate them on those kinds of points, but if you have an above the line team presenting work and presenting ideas that they don’t really understand, they’re either setting the entire team up for failure because they’ve created an unrealistic expectation from the client, or something that actually doesn’t even make sense because they don’t really know what it means. So, there’s a lot more back and forth, there’s a lot more reputation management because of course if one part of your team is promising something and the team that fully understands it is saying that we can’t actually deliver on that and these are the reasons why, so there’s a huge disconnect, and that translates into a lack of confidence from clients. It results in just missing deadlines, and just poor quality of work, like everything that is put out is not where it needs to be because we don’t have the efficiency. We’re including all these processes and these extra steps and these added people that aren’t weren’t previously necessary but are now becoming necessary just for the sake of integration. So there is a lot of things happening just for the sake of integration. We also have a lot of briefs that are worked on by the wrong people. So if we’re moving towards a digital age, which I think is pretty undeniable, you can’t be telling clients, for example, that we can maybe do content that isn’t digital because then you basically anti-digital.

Lara: So, talk to me about this anti-digital. Is that kind of a feeling or a belief system within the agency?
Ashlyn: So I definitely feel this is birthed from a fear and this is of being found out that you don’t really know anything. So, it’s a lack of understanding again. So when you’re uneducated on something and there’s a massive change, So I think for a lot of people who have been working in the industry for a while, especially above the line, this has come quite suddenly, so kind of the progression of technology, etc. and the way that we are doing and the way people’s minds are working is changing at a much faster rate than it used to and I think it’s caught a lot of people who work in the industry by surprise. So if you’ve been working in a senior role that isn’t digital for the last 20 years, and suddenly you have to know digital, it’s basically like going back to square one for a lot of people. So if you’re the head strategist, for example, and you’ve been a strategist for say like 20 years, and now suddenly you’re in an integrated team, and you’re presenting to client and you are presenting digital strategies, your lack of understanding is obviously going to make you feel a little bit insecure, which means that you’re probably just going to find routes to avoid doing anything digital altogether just because you’re going back to your comfort zone and you’re going back to what you know because that’s what makes you feel more comfortable owning. In our particular company and this particular case, we’ve had a lot of strategies that don’t support the idea of using digital, so it might be an overall strategy, and digital out of a 172-page presentation might only consists of one or two slides that don’t really speak to anything tangible that we can literally translate into decent content or something marketable. Ya, yes that’s it.

Lara: Why do you think that people who, it’s not necessarily their department, why would you have someone who’s maybe an above the line strategist presenting digital things instead of a digital representative presenting that work?

Ashlyn: I guess, again, it comes down to the idea that you’ve literally had this change just lumped on your lap, and it’s not really a choice, it’s a matter of either you go with it and you’re signed over to being an integrated agency or you lose your job, so nobody is going to decide to just quit their job or lose their job. Everyone is going to kind of fight to stay in the game, and by including somebody with more of a digital background especially someone that isn’t perceived to be as senior as you or experienced as you, you’re going to try push them out the picture so you can still kind of captain the ship, so you don’t have to feel like you’re relinquishing any of your rights or responsibilities to someone that’s junior. So naturally you’re going to push anyone that’s threatening them out, and I guess this is the problem with integration; there’s this natural threat because there’s so much overlap in what you do when it comes to strategy that you’ll be stepping on each other toe, so that’s what a lot of this process is about and the problem with it is you can’t really go to a client and say “We’re so so sorry that we presented a comm strat before we presented a brand strat because we don’t have any communication with someone else due to integration”. Because no client is just going to say “oh no that’s cool, we go through integration all the time, we totally
understand that’s fine. You can just keep our money and do nothing with it. Unfortunately, that’s not how the world works, so ya.

Lara: In your opinion, what should McCann start doing, and stop doing to make this thing work?

Ashlyn: What they should stop doing is forcing integration. Integration, I almost feel like it’s a mythical word, I don’t even know how we’re supposed to do that without like a lot of struggle. In this kind of climate where there isn’t a lot of work, and there’s a limited amount of work with quite a lot of agencies fighting for that work, you can’t really afford to just say “Oh no, we’re going to take a hit and we’re just going take the next two years off to kind of find out feet”. Unfortunately, that’s not how it works. So, integration especially in this space is kind of a myth because it has to be birthed, do you know what I mean? You have to bring all of those individuals and their strengths to the table and you have to start it from scratch so that they grow organically and they grow together. For example, within our company, when we weren’t integrated in such and we were just a normal agency and we weren’t integrated as such, digital was growing so so rapidly, like it was unbelievable. I think we went from, okay I’m obviously going to get this wrong but roughly about like three people to around twenty people within the space of two years. Even more than that. So, it just goes to show that when you have an agile team of people that are eager to learn and eager to bounce off of each other and work together, it just works so much better than trying to retrofit some above the line team with a digital team. So, they should stop trying to force it on, hire people from scratch so that this grows organically, choose them based on their experience and qualities that they’ll bring that don’t already exist within the company, rather than hiring a whole bunch of people that have very similar or blurred lines when it comes to roles. Within our case, for example, we had a digital strategist, and then we hired an extra four strategists, as well as a head strategist. So naturally when you have such a plethora of strategists working together who have never worked in an integrated environment, there’s going to be a lot of crossover, there is going to be a lot of internal conflict going on, and basically all that results in is a poor quality of work, extended timelines for delivering anything, or basically going back to scratch because you might have someone above the line that’s doing like a strategy, and it doesn’t make sense and you have to start again because they wanted a digital strategy, because that is what everyone really wants.

What should they start doing? No, it’s going to sound terrible but they should really start getting rid of the dead weight, to be honest. If you don’t need someone to be there then I mean get rid of it or if there’s an overlap, then choose somebody which is eager to learn or brings something new to the offering. They should probably, if they’re going to keep everyone who’s above the line, they should probably start training them in some way, and not make that responsibility
everyone who works in digital, because it's not like everyone in digital has absolutely any motivation to train somebody that in essence is either going to be their competitor or somebody that is a threat to their job. So, it makes absolutely no sense, you need to hire people that are already learning, or who currently learning, educating themselves or already know what they're doing. I think leaving that onus on a whole bunch of people that have just been doing their job and giving them extra work basically for no reward is completely nuts. So there either has to be some kind of structure where we learn off each other. So, we currently have creative training on a Wednesday, which is supposed to be some kind of graded training, and it's about using that time to kind of share each other's knowledge and skills to open your mind, broaden your thinking and improve the quality of work and ideas that you're putting out. It would be a matter of say, for example, enlightening an above the line copywriter in terms of what kind of stuff works online, why shorter is better, why you need to have your main CTA's in the first few seconds, etc., people's attention spans, where this is going to live and their mind-set. So, educating them on the kind of stuff that they need to know that it doesn't eat into the time of other people. So we either have to be sharing that knowledge in a way that everyone feels that they're rewarded as opposed to drained is either definitely something that they need to start doing. Hiring new people and the right people, like we don't need another strategist, we need designers, thank you very much.

Lara: Thank you Ash.
Lara: Interview with Clyde Mallon, the Chief Digital Officer at McCann World Group. Hello Clyde. So, my first question is, why was the decision made to integrate the traditional and digital teams at McCann?

Clyde: Simply speaking, because if the advertising agency doesn't do digital, and we create a digital agency, then eventually what will the advertising agency do? As the world becomes more digital, we live in a digital world, so a lot of our communication sits in digital. What we don't want to do is be in a situation where we're doing digital for digital's sake. And we also don't want to have two parts of the agency, i.e., digital agency versus traditional agency competing for revenues because at the end of the day the client suffers because of the pressures sitting in those entities. So, we rather want those entities sitting together working towards what's best for the client regardless of whether the solution is digital or other.

Lara: Alright, so please explain the implementation process used to integrate the teams, what measures and actions were taken?

Clyde: Good grief. So, there's many layers to this. First one I've already touched on, which is the way the business is structured. If you have two P and L's, and two targets, you end up competing, which is a barrier to integration. The first thing you have to do is remove that. I think for us the process on integration has been around an integrated strategy as a departure point, and then you probably, if you sat with Fraser you would have heard a lot about open architecture, which is the McCann methodology around integration. Which is that when you win a multi-market, multi-discipline client, you structure and organise your team around that client and bring in the various specialist skill sets you require, whether that's PR, digital, media or other to create one team that lives and breathes and sleeps that brand, embraces their culture and delivers relative to that client. That obviously works very well with big clients, major clients like General Motors where we have Commonwealth, or L'Oréal Beauty. In the context of an agency like ours where we have lots of people who work on lots of different brands, so we're integrating necessarily on a client level but we're integrating on an agency level, it's more challenging. So a single minded strategy as a key departure point is crucial. I think client service are our biggest agents in delivering on that, so you need a strong integrated client service lead that has potentially specialist client service people below them that can deliver the digital component or the non-digital component, but you need a lead that understands both sides. Crucial to that is getting the scope of work, budgets and the job to be done and clearly understood upfront with the business stakeholders which allows us to deploy a team effectively to
deliver against a client’s requirements. Be those digital, traditional or integrated in
nature. What we try and do is we try and have a single process that is a heuristic
of sorts in that it works for a lot of generalized situations, and we try and model
all processes to mimic that so that processes are as simple as possible. So what
I mean by that is that we have a process of how we go from originating
something into actually the development of the final assets that go out. And that
process applies for outdoor, it largely applies for TV, websites and social media
etc. And then what we do is we add depth where there is needed for specialist
areas, but the macro-level process remains the same across the agency, that
way ensures the biggest chance for success. One of the barriers for integration is
that if you create a lot of additional processes for the extra bits, it becomes
harder to implement and a bigger barrier for entry, so the path of least resistance
is often the best, which is find the process that people are already familiar with
and add the layers beneath that that you need as opposed to creating a
complicated multiple processes.

From a staffing perspective, our approach has always been to try have
specialists and generalists. So, I believe integration is a generalist model in that
you’ve got to be good at everything. Our risk with that is becoming a jack of all
trades and a master of none. So the way we balance that is that we trying to
have generalist leads with specialist capabilities beneath them. So, whether that
is having the depth in social media VS development skills someone like Brad VS
someone like Dallas who is more of a generalist VS in client service we have got
a Faust who is quite a generalist and embraces probably all things in a comm’s
perspective VS someone like Kyle who is not necessarily not going to do a TV
ad and is much more centred on digital. So, we try to find a mix that we can
be being our clients the specialist capabilities they would get from a digital pure play
for example VS the generalist capability they expect from us. Because they
expect us to hold all conversations but they also expect us to be the best at what
we do in any one discipline, so we constantly have to balance that from a staffing
perspective. The challenge that this faces and you know this first hand from the
King Price exercise we did is that as much as we want to cover all of those
things, we cann’t have every specialist in every room because the bill goes up.
Cause if we now have media, social, strategy, analytics, and, and, and we end
up having four or five people in a room, all contributing their part of the strategy
which means the costs double or triple, quadruple depending on how many
people we have. And as you know from King Price the volume of the deck, we
end up with a 200-slide deck because everyone is adding their bit which is all
very smart. So, one of the big barriers to integration, one of the things we need to
plan for from a process perspective is understanding the right tool for the job. So,
it’s having a very quick rally up front, and understanding this type of solution
requires a digital solution, therefore we’re going to invest that type of person to
solve it versus this is a very traditional so we’ll get this type of person to solve it
versus this is a generalist task but requires depth so we have generalist
strategists work on it to bring the depth from social and things. We have to get
more efficient in that and understand how do we package integration so that it is
not a 300-slide deck even if it is that everyone is contributing but have the right people contribute relative to the problem?

Lara: So then in terms of rolling out the change to the people, what was the process on that? What did you guys do to really kick-start this thing?

Clyde: So, if we take a few steps back, the plan when we started our digital business at McCann was always to incubate it, so to ring fence the business as an agency within an agency. That allowed us to remove the digital business from some of the constraints in the way the traditional agency was working. So, we did that for a couple of years to grow the scale to the point where we could fully integrate, and the key sort of departure points there were looking at our client mix. One, a good 80% of our clients are integrated clients, you look at L'Oreal, you look at Chevrolet, you look at Diageo, Kulula they all integrated. We have very few digital-only clients and we have very few traditional-only clients. So our client mix is really good. Our revenue mix we at about 50% of all the revenue in this business being digital, so we are very integrated in terms of the amount of work we do and so we're on quite an even keel. So, having an agency in an agency and having separate client service teams, separate operations teams etc. creates conflict across those silos because you have got two operational departments effectively in the same business and so the first port of call was to bring those together and create one seamless operation structure. The benefit of that is that we save cost because what we were doing in the past is we were duplicating a resource in two departments. Bringing everyone together means one resource base so there is a big cost saving for us because we are not duplicating on resources. The approach to do it was to first start with client service because client service was almost already integrated by nature, so it was a low hanging fruit. We did that for three months, made sure that client service was working smoothly because that way the clients felt integration and the briefing process for client service wasn't any different. They were used to briefing digital, they were use to briefing traditional, so we integrated the client service team, made the client service leads responsible for everything on their clients regardless of what it was digital or otherwise but we kept the process in the back end the same, so the only conflict or only difference that they felt on their side was just that now they were responsible for everything, they didn't have a digital client service lead they had to report to, the digital client service lead became an integrated BUD where they had 4 integrated BUDs with their client service teams and they were ultimately responsible for their clients so there was no crossover with like a Vicky VS a Paula on L'Oreal. Paula would cover all things L'Oreal and Paula doesn't touch it. So that meant the client felt less conflict, it solved a lot of issues with client service, made the accountability easier, made it easier to manage them, but it didn't change the backend process so they were still familiar with how to brief and work.
After three months, we then looked at the broader business and completed the same exercise on the strategy department, the creative department, operations department where we integrated all of those bits, brought the digital teams and traditional teams together into one hierarchical structure, where now operations has the responsibility, the ops director is in charge of digital or otherwise and we hold them accountable for that. So, in this the accountability is really important. The leaders who now have the digital capabilities in their teams need to understand what those people are capable of doing, they need to understand what they need to do their job and they need to staff according to what the business requires, whether it is digital or otherwise and make the choices in the best interest of the business. The challenge and barrier to that is that you don’t know what you don’t know. So, if you don’t know digital, it’s a big barrier as a leader to get up to speed with that. And this is the pressure we are putting on our leadership at the moment. We’re forcing the accountability really hard, so that they are very much accountable for the delivery that goes on in their team. So in the past, if there was a digital issue with strategy or a digital issue with operational it would land on my table, it now lands squarely on the ops or strategy director’s table, which forces them to have to constantly think about those conversations and involve their teams accordingly. So that’s our future proofing dynamic. We got that part right, and then specialist teams that didn’t exist in the past like development and social media, we elevated to be departments in their own right to stand on the same level as creative, strategy, client service that typically exist in the traditional ad agency. Part of that was to make sure we removed this notion of digital being a black box, because when it’s a black box, people throw stuff at it and they go it’s not my problem, there’s this digital team to solve it. Now people have to understand that they need to create a solution they need digital to be a part of it, or they need a social solution or they need a development solution. They will no longer go “this is a digital brief” they will go “this is a website development brief”, which forces the whole team to go a level down in terms of their understanding of digital. So, there’s some happy side effects and consequences of that in terms of cultural perspective that expects to be in play. And then with the integration, we want to do is continuously drive the sharp end of our digital capability, the intention is although it hasn’t been done properly yet is to formalize a digital steerco across the organization of senior people in each team that are there to contribute and drive the digital capability in their respective departments and who are ultimately accountable to me. That way we try and cover the generalist model which is the integrated organogram with the appropriate sharp end capability development which is the digital steerco that forms as a committee which basically drives McCann’s digital capability across the business in the future.

Lara:

So, you mentioned a little bit about how most of the leadership in the business is under pressure now because they need to up-skill themselves and understand what their teams do, and the individual players in those teams especially from a digital perspective, but also from the fact that the digital team as a separate entity do make up 50% of the revenue, so we're
on par. So, in integrating, who fits into whose model, or has a new process developed, a third culture, or was it a matter of one joins into the other? Which way did that go?

Clyde:

So, this goes back to my previous point, which is that the path to least resistance in my opinion is to rather than creating lots of new processes, and new structures and lots of newness is to get the old school or traditional leadership to embrace digital to make it as familiar as possible. And so strategically the approach was to have digital plug into them rather than the other way around because there would be far less frictious approach. Whether that’s working or not is up for debate, but I think that’s the lowest barrier to entry, is to do it that way around. You don’t know what you don’t know and so what we’re hoping is that the leadership team by being accountable are forced to understand what the digital people in their team do, embrace it and take it on board, but as I say we’re doing it in a way that is as familiar as possible so that it doesn’t create too much change.

Lara:

So, the next one is, what does successful integration look like? Once we reach this North Star what is this business going to be? What are we working towards?

Clyde:

This is the simplest answer I’m going to give you which is the best solution for the problem, I think that’s what we’re aiming for. We want to be our clients most trusted partner and trusted advisor, that means being bigger than a discipline. If you understand that as an advertising agency our job is to move the needle for our client and not produce TV ads, TV ads are a mechanism, then it is only natural that you will embrace digital as it emerges because it is a new vehicle for you to use to move the needle for your clients. At some point in time I think agencies got that. They thought their job was to produce these big creative campaigns on TV, and then these digital guys emerged and they didn’t realize their job was to move the needle for client either, they thought their job was websites and cool digital campaigns and all these things and I think we’re moving into a space where we want to be far more mature as an agency. So, we want to do is be our client’s best partner and we do that by giving them the best solution to the problem, and understanding what our role is in their lives, which is to move the needle regardless of what the output is. We should be versatile in all mechanisms, so in all channels, in all forms of output. It is about what is the best solution to solve this brief. And that is what we want to get to and what true integration looks like.
Lara: Okay, so the next one, what challenges have emerged in the face of integration? What are the barriers to integration? Talk to me about people problems and all of that.

Clyde: It goes back to some of the points I've made already. The biggest issue is two sides: clients and people. At the end of the day it all comes down to people. But on the client's side, clients' businesses are very much structured to deal with a lead agency and specialist agencies, so they're used to that. So a lot of the pitches go out like that, a lot of the briefs land like that, a lot of their expectations are based on that. So, we're having to do a big education job with clients, to say integration means a single point of entry into a bouquet of services, and show them what that looks like, but that means they have to change things on their side in terms of the way they brief and around the way they think, etc. So, there's definitely a challenge there with the clients. Most clients like the theory of integration but they're not geared for it yet, and equally, on their side, clients are not particularly skilled. So we see it when we bring on board new clients, that they're just not on their A game, and so it's a very very tough environment to have to deal with these guys and educate them on a new model of working and new way of thinking. And get them to be actually good enough to engage with a scope of work. Just look at what we are seeing on Diageo on three months, we are struggling to get a scope of work done because it's an integrated scope of work and a team that is quite light. The second part is people, and it's partly people on client's side, but more on the agency side. It's that people don't like change, people like their comfort zone, and integration pushes them out of their comfort zone and integration pushes people out of their comfort zones. Also, what we have is we have traditional people managing digital people. Digital people need different things, traditional people need different things. You have two different perspectives coming at it to solve a problem, which I think is great, but if it's not embraced properly it can be a real fricition point for the agency, and it means that we're not necessarily getting the most out of people. And so, a lot of our issues come down to you know what you know, and you don't know what you don't know. And I think the biggest barrier for us is that the people in the more senior positions don't know what they don't know, and as a result of that, the digital people don't get the opportunities to play to their strengths that they would otherwise and because of that integration fails because we end up doing a very generalist job when we don't add the depth where it's needed, which is specifically on the digital and social media conversations, and integration means being versatile on all ends of the spectrum. And so there is a big question mark as to if those people are going to be able to adapt to be able to embrace digital and engage with it VS not adapt and us having to actually look at making replacements to people who are versatile and are able to adapt. So, there's a big question mark as to a cross on some people's heads as to whether they will be able to do that or not. Some have embraced it really well, someone like a Klick from a creative perspective knows that he doesn't know digital, but he's really happy to have the digital people play a role, and because of that, there's a better environment for collaboration in the creative team. In someone like Hester's
team, she doesn't know it at all, but she still wants to own the conversation so there is a bad environment for collaboration where she still wants to be the person delivering the conversation. So, she's overriding the smart people on digital when she should just let them talk, which I don't think Mick does. Then you have the dynamic with Dallas which you've experienced first-hand, where he doesn't get what you do as a digital strategist, or doesn't know how to bring that to the fore, and as a result you get left out and brought in at the last minute, and you're not given the opportunity to do real digital strategic work. Which unfortunately has an impact on the output for us as an agency. Those are my challenges.

Lara: So, that's the next question, what impact has integration had on the work and the deliverables?

Clyde: So, I think the positive side effect is I think everyone knows they have to embrace digital now. In the past, Dallas, Mick, others could have ignored it, and just gone "it's not my problem" now they know it is their problem and so they're embracing it. The question is that are they embracing it correctly, and I think we have some wins and some losses in that regard. Those who are embracing it well are seeing results. The best example for me is Heather in Ops who brought Robel under her wing, really brought her into the mix and is leaning on her a lot and I think because of that the operational side of the business is better for it and so our operational processes are only winning. The bad example is Dallas with yourself, where he didn't embrace digital strategy. He embraced it in the sense that he now owns it, but he didn't necessarily understand what owning it actually look like, what it means and how to bring it to the fore, and as a result the digital strategy didn't come to the fore, and there were many conversations and opportunities missed from a digital perspective. I think that causes the work to suffer, there's a couple of effects. One is that we end up going into a meeting ill prepared to have a digital conversation, which compromises us, we sometimes lose some very good smarts that we need involved in a conversation and lose the opportunity to shine. The second side of it is that some guys have taken integration to mean that everyone does everything, which means we end up in a very generalist environment and we end up having a lot of generalist conversations, but no specialist conversations, which means the depth and implementation capabilities is missing, so the client doesn't get the sense that we can implement the strategy because it's too high level or too lofty. And so there hasn't been that embracing and the depth needed has not been embraced the way it should be. Then the way the teams are managed is not necessarily appropriate so on something like Smeg there was no deployment of you are doing this and you are doing this and this is how it comes together. People were just left to figure it out for themselves because there was no understanding of what each person can necessarily brings to the party, what their respective strengths were, where the gaps were and how we would bring that together. In an integrated environment, some of that has been lost, which means that some
of the work has been a bit aimless, which has affected us negatively. Then, because of integration we are trying to do everything on every brief, which means we are wasting a lot of peoples' time. Just because we integrate does not mean that there always need to be a digital or strategic contribution. Equally just because we're integrated doesn't mean there always needs to be a classical strategy contribution. It's about the right tool for the job, and I think we've been bad at that, so what we've ended up doing is over investing in a lot of work, by having multiple skillsets involved which means the work is integrated, but we're not necessarily sowing the golden thread through the work. It's a lot of different opinions and sections covering everything from shopper to digital, media, social, etc. As a result, the work is getting convoluted and significant in terms of scale. So, we have to solve that problem as well. We are reliant on the leaders to solve these problems in their respective divisions. We are allowing them to do it their way, because they are the lead and we are holding them accountable. And our hope is they are going to learn by having these people in their teams, and eventually understand how to get the best out of their teams, and hopefully the work will start to see an improvement as a result. So we are in an early stage of this, we're in month 3 so it is going to take some time, but there's going to be friction along the way, but we expect some people to learn and we expect some people to move on, but we do expect it to get us to a better place over the long term.

Lara: So last question, what should we start doing, and what should we stop doing to make integration work?

Clyde: What should we stop doing, we should stop having egos, stop any superiority complexes, we should stop dismissing those that we think have a different skillset, or inferior skillset. We should embrace a single-minded view and the culture of the organisation and integration, we should embrace diversity in the sense of difference of opinion, approach and skill, and those things should come together around the single-minded view to deliver something amazing. My philosophy is that in a creative environment you need a lot of diversity, different interests and opinions, all these things and then you rally these people around a single-minded vision. That is what makes great work and what makes a great agency. We've done that in areas, I think we've done that in digital, I don't think we have that in the main agency. We need to do that to the whole business as opposed to a single department or areas. What we have got are departments that run in certain ways, for example, strategy is not trafficked whereas the rest of the organisation is and that has to be fixed. We need a single-minded approach and philosophy across the business that everyone is held accountable to. That is what we need to start to do. We need to stop having silos, so we need to kill all silos aggressively, we need to kill all silosed thinking aggressively, we need to kill anything that is substandard aggressively. The old way needs to die, and we need an entire organization that works toward the new way, and everyone needs think about what is the new way, constantly contributing to the new way whether
they are an intern or a director. We need to be more commercial minded about the way we do our scopes of work, so that they are thought about in an integrated perspective. We need to be better at the way we staff the organization, hiring people that are passionate about integration, that bring a specialized skillset that does not exist in the business currently. We can only achieve integration when we have all the specialist skillsets. We need to make the generalist thinking valuable. We need to value specialist thinking. We need to stop pointing fingers, blame shifting, throwing briefs over the wall and making it someone else’s problem. We need to truly live the mantra of “receive well, do well and hand over well”, and where we’re particularly bad is receive well, so we need to throw things back that aren’t right. We need to say no a lot to things that aren’t right until those who are dropping the ball become accountable to do it at the right level.

We need better accountability. As an organization, we need to live “good is not good enough” more and more, and constantly strive for excellence. And excellence means every time not doing the standard formula, but evolving the formula, making it better and better every time we go to bat. So, we need to question the way we work every single day, we need to embrace the opinion of failing forward. We need to allow people to have an opinion on the way we work, and be prepared to engage with it and change it no matter who we are or how senior we may or may not be. We need to be humble and open ourselves up for those kinds of conversations, and not feel like we have the answer, because we don’t have the answer. We need to create that kind of environment. Then we need to make sure that we’re constantly investing in the right skills. As always it’s all about people at the end of the day, so we’ve got to put people first.

Lara: Thank you so much.
Interview with Fraser Lamb, CEO at McCann World Group. So, I've only got six questions. My first one is, why was the decision made to integrate the digital and traditional teams at McCann?

Fraser:

So, I'm a true believer that integration is the future. It's not sudden; it's been for a while. The danger is either you're a company that doesn't have those skill sets, so even if you're desperate to integrate, what are you integrating? And if you are a company that has the proverbial sum of the parts, there's always a fear factor if the parts are working, why would you disrupt to integrate? So, to integrate is to make sure that we are providing the client the proverbial single point of entry with a holistic view of the ask or the brief, and then to give them the best solution to achieve the objective. Now, historically you could take a brief and give it to three different agencies, above the line a branding agency, below the line a promotions specialist or digital which is classified in the below the line space, and a PR company. What was always interesting was you got a relevant revert. In other words, the client got three separate and different proposals. But if the brief is the same for all parties, where is the best solution to achieve the objective? So, integration is not always wanted by the client. They want integrated thinking. They don't want to buy this basket of services because it is expensive. They love the single point of entry, they love only having to deal with one team, they like the principle that there's going to be a holistic view of their business, but they still don't want the price that comes with it, so it was the next natural step for us, because we had a form of integration. We had WorldGroup at the centre, so to speak, and we had eight companies around the communication spectrum. Each specialist in their own respective discipline, but at the same time getting companies to collaborate that are P and L driven, and integration is to break all those P and L's down into one P and L because that enables the business not to fight for budget or try to lobby for their particular discipline or service to come to the fore so they can get a bigger slice of the budget. So, there's also the budget dynamic, and we had to undo that. So the next natural step for us was this, so ya that's why we did it.

Lara:

Ok, cool. My second question, please explain the implementation process used to integrate teams, what measures or actions were taken?

Fraser:

If you take an advertising process, regardless of the discipline, it is around the principle of in, to back out. Now it sounds very loose and high level but if you follow simplicity as a theme, it is easy to understand you have a relationship with a respective client regardless of what industry or competitive set. And they will ask you to do something, that is the in. And the back out is whatever you do
along your value chain to derive the answer and give it back to them in usable form. So, if you take that process, the buckets are pretty common. Everybody regardless of discipline has client service or client facing people and all we wanted to do was take the replication across the business and simplify it into the same common buckets. So, the buckets across the value chain, we just populate it with all walks from the different disciplines, so all the client service disciplines in one bucket now, so some of it seems pretty easy to depart from. So that’s the easy part, it’s saying creative is creative is creative, regardless of discipline; art, DTP etc. Same with strategists, digital strategists, media strategists, brand or below the line strategist you’re all in the same bucket. From an architecture point of view, it isn’t very hard, so this is just about a decision in time, so we’re going to start this. We drew one of those organograms to show the buckets, then we went “this is what I’m going to do, one or two people are going to have to change their roles” in how they’re now playing let’s call it a more helicopter type view. Say, in operations moves from a creative and production driven operational role into an in to back out role. So then managing all the way from client service back to the client, instead of just managing the end of the loop.

So that part I feel was the simplest, and I’m sure the next question is around what challenges, but I don’t know. So, I’ll stop there, that is how we decided from this day forth, there isn’t this digital team, or this above the line team, below the lint team, the shopper team, there just is a team of people.

Lara: So digital was run a little bit differently from how the traditional agency, especially from an operations... and that sort of business perspective. So what sort of approach was adopted when we did integrate? And why?

Fraser: If you take someone like myself, I came from a below the line background, direct marketing so I was already au fait with operational intensity, it is very much about the nuts and bolts, and it’s a lot of detail, whereas above the line was pretty loose, it’s about big TVCs and stuff like that. So, there was a want always to bring the level of granular attention that was in the digital team into the rest of the business. So even though there’s complexities in marrying processes, there’s a want for the process that either generates the most money and the best measurement to now become the dominant process of all. So, when you get into a TVC, that process remains, or you get into a big print job, that process remains.

Those are both non-digital, but if you bring the project management discipline of digital into the overall agency, it will invariably benefit the business from being a business money wise, and still being more operationally sound, so we should get more efficiencies and hands-on management because the architecture is greater. But in saying that, there’s only one caveat, and I don’t know if you’ve ever heard this saying in your youthfulness, but it’s that “everything is perfect until you add the people” so everything leads towards even within one organization there are cultural clashes, because the digital team had different set of energy and a different ‘kumbaya’ so to speak than a traditional agency, so sometimes when
you bring those two together, people go, "Well, we're all McCann, but not really". So first off is the individual dynamic, it's not always clear to them why we are integrating, or "what does that mean to me"? So suddenly everyone thought they needed to be generalists, and they don't need to stick to what their discipline is all we need is a process of bringing collaboration to bare. So, we preached it before, integration forces it, and of course when you force something, you have the people dynamic. The people dynamic always lags the process dynamic. So, you can have a vision or a want in a business and then the people will come along kicking and screaming or dragging their proverbial lunchboxes until it will eventually be integrated. So, integration always starts as a process or a theory, and it slowly, painfully comes to fruition through people either getting with it, or being forced to get with it, or some are casualties... it's just the people dynamic is real. I know I joke with everybody and say someone was facing West and now they need to face East and that just fucks up their "fung su".

It's like the whole calm is gone. So, there's that literality in a human person itself and then there's the "I used to work with him and her, now I'm working with him and him". That dynamic in itself goes I miss her/him. And now I have to work with him, I don't like him". Now just because this is the way it works, it's a real challenge. That's why we've invited everyone to give it a go. The decision was made, we doing it like this, it's not a democracy. We're doing it like this because it's right for our clients and for the future proofing of the business, but coupled with that, we're going to be enormously tolerable about a period of chaos or disruption until we smoothen out the human gel, how you get everyone to gel better? How do you work out whether we've lost some strengths, or unearthed some weaknesses? That we now need to address. So, the first time we said we're not going to do a damn thing for a month, we're just going to make it happen, we'll just let it be and see what happens. Then in a month, we met, we fixed two of the glaringly obvious things, then we let another month go to see if more percolation will let other find their way, now we're verging on month three, which will be next month as we are now in month two, we'll get to the point where we'll course correct, either force change or course correct.

Lara: Okay cool, so my third one is, what does successful integration look like, what is the North Star when things are actually perfect? And what are you guys working towards to accelerate that process?

Fraser: I think the measure is unfortunately feedback. So as a business you're arguably, unless you're about to bring in a few additional services, you arguably have the same body of people that are just working differently. But the feedback is from the people who pay us, the clients. They need to say that on average the solutions to the problems they gave us to solve are more successful, they are material to their business, and we've always tried to pride ourselves on being our clients most important partner. Hopefully integration starts to deliver that tangibly. The other thing is that the impact on the consumer on behalf on the client, so the
clients' consumers, needs to be noticeable. The truest form is growth. Let's say we were growing at 3%, hopefully integration gives us 6 or 7%. The other thing is it should give the client savings. This is an interesting thing that we've unearthed, and I'm not saying we didn't know about it, but it's become very real that all of our meetings now are costlier because in integration you want five or six people across especially the thinkers across the different disciplines sitting in one room listening to a challenge or a brief. So, it's costlier on our part, so we burn more hours. But you're hoping that when we finally get this new machine well oiled, we'll be able to do integration, but coupled with specialists. So, there will still be certain briefs that go straight to digital-oriented people, or media-oriented people, or PR-oriented people, but on the whole what you're trying to crack is holistic thinking, and if we crack just holistic thinking we're probably already successful, but the challenges we've unearthed is the drain on resources in the building because normally what would happen is client services would go get the brief and we would pre-decide the solution, so we would go "This is digital or this is above the line and within above the line this is TV". Now we're supposed to look at the brief and allow many minds to contribute and then unearth these solutions. So how can you predetermine the solution if you want to reach the best solution, so best solution must rule if you want integration, otherwise what's the point? Savings come in the operational mandate of the new model because you only have one ops team, one traffic team, one studio, one client service team now. The challenge, though, is that in South Africa elsewhere it's seemingly better, in more first world countries like New York people are more multi-skilled. In South Africa, we still have people who are out and out digital who don't know shit about anything else. Then you have the opposite which is the worst, which is like this is the way we always used to do things, hanging onto the past or the way communications used to be done which was one too many, then they stumble across this thing called digital and the freak out, don't know how to use it, won't embrace it. So, it's challenging to condense the team down to multi-disciplined people. That is why we have nicknamed them unicorns. Spot a unicorn, win a prize right?

We're looking for unicorns all the time, people who are instinctively strategic, instinctively ideators or conceptualisers, instinctively multimedia, or multifaceted, and those are rare, but when they come along, they are special. So, this is what I said to you in the beginning. There isn't a proverbial handbook. Even in a company of our stature globally, which we are now arguably globally the number one advertising and communications company in the world. We don't have a blueprint. We have a framework. We don't have a manual. In an agency of our size, also being physically in one building is different because the human dynamic is rare if it's across the road or here, so we should have a better chance than most. How it's cracked everywhere else, let's say in New York, the clients are big enough in our life that you can build one unique team just to look after Microsoft or Chevrolet. You're talking about teams that are two, three, four hundred people, and you are hiring against the scope of work, so you are bringing in PR or digital or shopper marketing, or everything because it's against the scope of the work. And that is why we manage an agency within an agency.
So, for Chevrolet, they come into a team called Commonwealth. They’re hired into Commonwealth, the only thing they know is Commonwealth and that Commonwealth develops a culture and way of working and integration prevails. When you take an agency as opposed to one client team, and you try to develop integration as a principle, it is not unique to 1 client it is across 19 clients it’s a lot harder to do. Hopefully as we’ve contributed on unique little pieces like LIVE globally or even on global best practice in Commonwealth, our team punched above its weight. We’re hoping at the end of this very painful exercise, we will be able to put more meat to the framework that starts to be a manning or proper blueprint on what to do. So, in some cases we’re pioneers. It sounds weird to say that, but we are because McCann has made one evolution. The previous notion was that we’d all kumbaya together, this collaboration spirit between the different agencies that had different P ad Ls. Those agencies would work almost like at face value everyone was nice, but meanwhile the boss is shouting in the background to bring everything back to our P and L. The disciplines matter in how the discipline evolves, so how digital or PR evolve need to be focused on and niched. But how we play together, like Global is easy, because you build one team. But for us, how do you get all these agencies sit together, work together. Because we’re only doing it at a McCann level, as opposed to bringing in PR people and media people, so we still have a long way to go in that regard so we just trying to get McCann right and look how tough it is.

Lara: So, my next one, what challenges have emerged in the face of integration, and what barriers have reared their heads in trying to make this successful?

Fraser: So, I think there’s only two at the moment, and that’s quite surprising for me, and it’s about persevering. We’re almost discounting people’s shenanigans. We’re aware of it, we acknowledge it but we’re discounting it in the fact that it was anticipated. So, if it’s anticipated we’ve just got to ‘fok voort’ just carry on until the gears mesh and it starts to hum. It’s not for everybody, and we will recruit differently going forward. So there is the people dynamic. The second one was the cost, which was a little bit of a surprise that we would drag more people than normal into the meetings. But when you stand back after the fact, you realize it should well duh it should have been that. So we should not have been surprised but we were, cause suddenly the time sheets are showing an increase in hours per client than the average before, but also making sure that the client is understanding that this is integrated. After a while the client conveniently blurs the lines, they’re just going “you guys are McCann” suddenly we are all McCann. But drawing their attention to it and that if we left this brief to you, you would have demanded TV. We’re doing digital and experiential and they’re not seeing that shift that we’ve take the brief from what they’re demanded and we’re replying with what we believe is the best solution to achieve the objective. And we’re not getting enough credit for that shift. So, what we’ve had to do and we have only just begun this so we need to see if it works, is to have top to top meetings with
the client where we discuss the broad picture. So much so that in the process there is something called the wall, which is to try to articulate the macro impacts on a particular industry sector and what that would mean for the client going forward. It could also be an architecture of how some of their brand work in a portfolio. So, if we can give them a visual representation of their world, they will start to see the power of integration which is to look at their body of stuff. So, if you take J&B and Bells, they don’t give a shit about each other, but the CMO of Diageo need to give a shit about those two plus Johnny Walker, plus Black and White plus Singleton, someone’s got to be looking at whether we’re spending good money against each other so we are making J&B eat Bells, or are we making sure that we’ve covered between our product stable as many as the total universal drinkers as possible without creating a one size fits all. And that obviously is strategically driven, but it does impact eventually on operations. So not all brands are screaming on Father’s Day, you pick one, and the rest take a back seat. Which means your elected brand, which is strategically the best one to shout Father’s Day has a better chance of being heard against the competitor set without being drowned out by our own stable. So that’s just a small example of how, if you get the calendar right, or the portfolio look at something, you can bring efficiencies and effectiveness in how they go to market and basically be more effective. These are all versions of integration. It’s not just the best solution to achieve the objective at a brief level, it’s also the best solution to achieve the objective at the portfolio or company level. So it is an interesting space and obviously we have picked Diageo to stress it in depth but even clients like Nestle are starting to say, and if you think about it they have four monster agencies in their mix and of those four agencies we’re the only one anointed as integrated. We’re the only ones that the client sees digital but never asked for digital, or the client sees shopper as opposed to a straight promotion, so these are good signs for me. We’re nowhere near smooth, but we took the plunge, we’re doing it. The early feedback is good, but as you well know because you live in it, the internal mass is chaos. So, it’s waiting for the dust to settle, but it’s a big cloud hey it’s going to take a while.

Lara: Okay cool, so the next one is, what sort of impact has integration had on the outputs, the deliverables, the work?

Fraser: So, I mean I’d love to say it’s all hunky dory, but it’s not. We’ve had some chaos, we’ve had some balls dropped. We’ve had some deadlines missed because certain people aren’t au fait that should have climbed in. It’s not just the thinking component or the creative component that has changed. It’s the operational component that’s changed. So even trying to bring organization to chaos is being plagued. So, things are falling off the mat so I love clients; they want this level of evolution, so long as they don’t experience the pain. They want the change but don’t want to feel it. So, when the change is done then they’ll buy it, whereas we’re the ones that have to make the change. And the change isn’t “from tomorrow we are all kumbaya-ing”. All we can say is “from tomorrow, everyone is
in this bucket, and this is how we're operating”. And we've got to ask the client for a little bit of tolerance, which is never cool, especially in such a short-term world we live in. Everybody wants results now, not prepared to wait. What’s interesting is if you look at any product development, any R and D space everything is called beta, so it’s all in prototyping until the thing is 100%, then you cross over to go to market. We’re living live on our own evolution in the global market. We don’t get to live it on the side until it’s perfected. Now you take a character like Clyde. What I love about Clyde is he lives in the beta world. He is a perfectionist, he loves this 100%, and this is why he’s at sixes and sevens at the moment, because this is live. This is not a beta, we don’t get to stuff around until it is a Rolls Royce. We are fixing this thing as we go. We’re still living, I would still like to believe on the edge of chaos. I wouldn’t like to believe we’re in chaos. Maybe people would think differently, but it’s about managing that edge of chaos for us to get this right.

Lara: Okay so my last one, and maybe the simplest one, but maybe not... what should we start doing, and what should we stop doing to make this thing work?

Fraser: I’ve said it out loud, and I think a lot of people think I’m from Mars and not from Venus, but this is simply because I forewarned people. I mean, I pride myself on being a very pragmatic or logical person, maybe it’s my engineering background. So I can try and envisage the 14th hill and shout the warnings here whereas most people in the creative space, being right brain want to wait until the 14th hill before dealing with the 14th hill. I want to preempt that now. There’s two key ingredients that we need to work very very hard on. One is the attitude of the people, and two is to dive in, make your presence felt, but the attitude is more around “yes, my world has been disrupted, I’m facing East not West anymore” but it’s genuinely about a cool attitude and giving it a try. And it’s okay to come to us every now and then and say, “you know, this is not working”. I will like that you tried it, but the end goal needs to remain intact. Now, what I loved about Global is that they chose that integration is an overtraded word, like innovation. It is more about collaboration between people. We need to get more people to believe in the spirit of collaboration. It’s like I always say, “receive well, do well and hand over well” or work in a collective thought space. Lots of people like to covet their ideas instead of getting someone else to sense check them. So, it is, unfortunately, all people dynamic, so to do more of is to keep working hard at getting people to be more tolerant. Because obviously some people are brighter than others, some get it quicker, some were crying for integration, some were asking who is disrupting and others come in dragging their lunchbox, or they’re less tolerant to those who are coming in.

Now, we still have this fear, and it’s more about our business in general, but it’s become more and more evident in integration. When we call meetings about integration, when we bring in nine or ten of us to have an open chat, only two of
us have an open chat. Me because I'm ballsy enough, and maybe someone else who's ballsy enough, and most people will be like "yeah, it seems to be working" but they're not saying what they should be saying. The whole attitude of course correcting, they're not coming to the fore with what could be a very material issue, so we might go a two or more months longer than we have to before that is unearthed to course correct. So, we are wasting an enormous amount of time, which is increasing the amount of frustration in the business, prolonging the edge of chaos before we get into a more harmonious space where we're a bit more chilled. So, it's just really up to the people factor. I don't think infrastructurally we would change things. For a hundred years now in advertising, no one has had enough time to do something until we have to do it again, and in our business, we never stop just to chat, to go, four or five of us to ask "how is everything going, what are the major issues? Okay this is what we all agree, cool." We say "no no, we're cool, let's move forward." We don't do that until the shit hits the fan, then the big bad CEO calls everyone in the room and says "what the fuck?"

But I can't think of anything that is more profound, but what is cool is that we're blessed with people like Rand and Clyde, who are instinctively anal retentive, where they monitor detail, document, plot, chart the hell out of stuff, and I thank God, every day that they're here, because they'll come tell me that there are things we could do better, and I will tell them "do it. Sanctioned. Go." Then you've got Clyde who's doing his business analyst phase and he will come and tell me we're losing 13.7 hours on how to get this thing done when we used to get 4. So, what are we going to do? Do it. So, things are happening all the time. But then you get the others where we go "Come here" and then just say "enough now, hey. Either get in or get out." It's, you do need the different skill sets. I love the diversity of the agency. Diversity is not for everybody, right. But everybody starts to feel I wish we had more of them but the rest of them... but we need that weirdness that gives us a better chance at success, I think. But we will prevail. We will be one of the most integrated agencies before long. Then we're going to step up. We're going to bring in additional disciplines into the mix. Obviously to increase the complexity and at the same time enrich it. Because even if we're professing to give you the best strategy to complete the objective, we still don't have PR viewing it. We have digital media, not necessarily media per se. So we have some holes in our armour, but on the clients that we have right now, those disciplines are sought elsewhere. And it is interesting to see how we shine in certain meeting because of our ecosystems, so it is interesting that where we are going is proof enough that we're on the right track and that all we have to do when we get this bit right is add in these other bits and go to the next level of evolution.

Lara: Okay, thank you Fraser. That was awesome. Very comprehensive as well.
Interview with Lyle Martin, copywriter at McCann World Group.

Digitally inclined copywriter

Haha, okay, so Lyle, in your opinion, or what you know of the situation, why was the decision made to integrate the traditional and digital teams at McCann?

Well, we didn't get much context, but I feel like the decision was made, well thought of because that's the traditional way everything is going in the world. I mean no one is looking at print ads and radio anymore; it's all digital and online so that was the obvious choice to make. But in this case, it also feels like the sense of the above the line team at McCann was just losing people, and because I feel like McCann doesn't really care about hiring people - because they want to keep their overheads low because they want to make more profit, or, money situations so, they decided to just shove everyone together even if it wasn't necessarily the best choice. But, yeah.

Alright, so please can you explain the implementation process for this integration. So, what did they do, what measures did they put in place, what actions were taken?

In terms of implementation, so, well we weren't officially told beforehand. I had mentor sessions with Mick, our chief creative officer, and it was mentioned in that that we're going to be integrated soon. And that was that until Shirlaine, the HR lady just called me down to sign a piece of paper that says we're going to be integrated and I'm still a creative copywriter, but not digital, in the digital department. It's now one department and I just bring my digitally inclined copywriting skills. So, there was no real process to it other than 'this is what's happening, just sign here, cause, yeah'.

Cool, so tell me a little bit about what's changed for you.

Well, what has changed for me is I'm taking on more responsibilities where I feel like it's not spread evenly between the above the line creatives, especially the writers. So, I'm doing a bit of their work and my, pretty much digital stuff, because
they don’t really get it right the first time when it comes to digital work. So, it’s a lot more pressure, a lot more stress on me, and I feel like I’m being judged more on my ability to do traditional advertising when it comes to writing, and yeah, because I mean new management really only focuses on what they know, so the traditional advertising only.

Lara: So, do you feel that the judgement criteria for you has changed in terms of your deliverables?

Lyle: Yeah, completely. Especially, like, it impacts not just your professional output because you’re taking on a lot more pressure, but also internally in a personal aspect because uh, what is that saying? ‘If you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, you’re going to think it’s an idiot its whole life?’ Like, I chose digital for a reason cause that’s what I’m good at, so I’m being judged and well managed on traditional advertising criteria.

Lara: What does successful integration look like? What is integration? What should it be?

Lyle: In my mind it would be, cool, you have creatives who studied above the line and worked in above the line, and you have creatives who know digital and work in digital, and you put them together. But, that’s what they focus on, they just work more succinct and more with each other, it’s not like I as a digital copywriter come in and do print ads, or radio ads or TV ads, and I don’t expect a above the line copywriter to do link ads for Facebook or website copy because, again, you’re just going to be tripping up people who know a certain way of doing things and then kind of disrupting that with asking for different requirements. It’s just kind of fucked at the end of the day.

Lara: So, what do you feel McCann is working towards? What is their vision of integration?

Lyle: To me, their vision – Fraser, our CEO and Mick both – said that digital is at the core of everything we do, and that’s what I feel they want to do, but they don’t practice it. I mean we still use job bags for fuck sakes. It’s an archaic way of working, but just trying to put digital at the heart of everything, but not focusing on making that the main focus of our output. It just doesn’t work at all.
Lara: What challenges have actually emerged while they were trying to integrate these teams? What are the barriers to integration, especially from a people perspective or a work perspective?

Lyle: I don’t know about the broader agency, but I know the barriers that I’ve had to deal with was again being managed based off maybe something I’m not particularly good at, even though it’s still writing, it’s still traditional writing, which I was trained in, but didn’t work professionally in it. So, my manager’s expectations of what he wants from a copywriter is different to what I can give him. So, in that sense it’s just more work, more hours, less sleep, less fun in general.

Lara: So, if you’re doing a lot of the traditional work that the other team is specialized in, why are they not or are they taking on digital jobs as well, and if they’re not, why do you think that is?

Lyle: Well, two of the other writers who do come from traditional or above the line advertising or writing have attempted to do digital work, but it’s not necessarily right the first time, so I guess client service just ends up giving it me just because I can get it out quicker, I can get it out right. There’s specifics with digital especially when it comes to Facebook link ads, there’s character limits which they don’t really know how it works, and how the headline needs to speak to the link description and so on and so forth.

Lara: What impact has integration had on your deliverables so far?

Lyle: My deliverables, it’s just added onto my plate, and being the only digital writer was already stressful enough, but I mean I got to a work where I could manage that on its own, but then adding a layer of I also need to help out with proactive ideas... I mean, every Monday we had proactive ideas, then Tuesdays and Thursdays was proactive Kulula radio ideas, and then every Wednesday was reviews for our ideas. So it was just purely digital work was already too much, or just enough, and adding that extra layer where my digital work wasn’t being spread across above the line advertising, or their creatives just was a shit show. I mean I am just one person at the end of the day, I can only manage so much before it becomes too much.

Lara: So, in the sense that there’s been a failed attempt for us to work together, when we talk about general work, what sort of impact has it had quality-wise?
Lyle: Oh no, the quality is definitely dropping, especially when it comes to my... what I present to my creative manager because it's more above the line stuff, and he doesn't really focus on digital work because he's not from that origin. It's not up to par at all, and quality overall is just dropping I feel, because we're not pushing the digital side of how can we innovate and incorporate the digital world and utilise all the tools as best we could.

Lara: So, in terms of timelines? Do you think it's slowed us down, or having more hands?

Lyle: I don't think it's slowed us down, but I do think that even though there is more work, the timelines are not being lengthened, and we still have to meet client expectations because we make promises before actually looking at the brief properly, and then things come in as urgent and last minute, which only puts more pressure on the creative team as a whole, not just digital or above the line, but all of us are put under pressure, because no one takes into consideration that actually this is more work and we just need to get more people in at the end of the day.

Lara: So, what should we start doing and what should we stop doing to make this thing work?

Lyle: We should start employing more people firstly, I feel.

Lara: What kind of people?

Lyle: More creatives. I don't know about how client service side is taking on the pressure, but we had a content studio not so long ago. You guys hired a bunch of interns just for purely that and now they're all just designing because we're lacking those resources, and having three writers is just putting more pressure on people because there's too much work and not enough creatives which leads back to the point of saying I feel the main reason or integrating was just to save money and still get work out.

Lara: And what should we stop doing?
Lyle: We should stop doing integration the way we’re doing it.

Lara: Is that it? Okay, thank you Lion.
Interview with Ronel Gerber, the operations manager at McCann World Group. Okay, Ro, thanks for doing this. My first question, why was the decision made to integrate the traditional and digital teams at McCann?

Ronel: The main reason was a business one. Because of the fact that we’ve been selling an integrated solution of advertising for more than three years, they needed to actually implement it. Because before this, digital as well as traditional were operating as separate entities even though we are in the same building, we had different P&L’s, we had different ways of working, we basically ran two different businesses, and they actually needed to come together to start delivering a better product.

Lara: So, would you say it was pressure from clients mostly?

Ronel: No, I actually think it was internal pressure. I don’t think clients minded. I don’t think clients see that part of advertising. They don’t know that digital comes in at the last minute. They maybe complain about it if they feel it’s not there, but they’ll never know that it came in when it did.

Lara: So, my second question, please explain the implementation process used to integrate the teams. What measures, actions were taken, if any.

Ronel: The digital team was made aware of the changes before the rest of the agency because they were the most affected. And that was done by our direct manager to show us how we are going to be moved and then an announcement was made, then we were all kind of left to our own devices.

Lara: So, my third question, what does successful integration look like, and what should or is McCann working towards?

Ronel: I can tell you what it’s not. It’s not everyone having the exact same skillset. The blue-sky goal for integration is making sure that who needs to be in a room is in the room. Who needs to be part of a process or a pitch or a campaign is involved at the right time, so the problem with that however is that the people that control that is client service, and our client service actually don’t know enough to know what they need. That’s the main issue. So, the next filter on that is making sure
that operations or traffic actually know what they're doing, so they can manage those situations. But again, traffic is very much a traditional thing, it's not really something you find in a lot of digital agencies. It's a bit of a catch 22. If I can say what they should be doing, the first port of call is honestly training client service on all disciplines. Training client services to ask the right questions towards clients that they understand what they need and who they need to bring in, because if that first part isn't right, it's going to be a shit storm.

Lara: So, what would the dream state of integration look like? What is integration done well?

Ronel: Integration done well is when you can deliver a complete 360 campaign without anyone being pissed off.

Lara: Okay cool, so what would you say McCann is working towards though? Do you think everyone is being educated on that? Do you think they've communicated that?

Ronel: No. No one knows what integration actually means. That's why there's this big confusion at the moment, because everyone thinks integration means everyone can do everything, and that's actually not the case. You do need specialists, you do need generalists. You need a good balance of both. You do need key people to do everything and know about everything. That doesn't mean that you're going to have your TV producer project manage a website, that is not how it works but but you do need her to be aware of the principles that go into that. It's ways of working, everyone working in the same manner, with the same mandate and striving for the same goals. I don't think that's something that has been communicated, that end goal is not there.

Lara: So, what actually happened? What did they do to integrate?

Ronel: Actual measures that they put in place? They changed reporting lines. P and L's fell away, so that means profit and loss centres got amalgamated which had a big effect on decisions that were made across the business. And they are trying to amalgamate some skillsets within the creative department. So, where traditional copywriters do help out on the digital side... and then up-skillling. Within my department itself, I'm trying to upskill them to understand digital that if someone asks a question and if I'm not there or whatever, that they actually understand the practices. Second to that, it's also necessary that, and I know this sounds horrible, but that in a couple of years' time, the traditional people aren't
going to have jobs, so it's up skilling them to actually understand and know what they can do in five years' time. Further than that, there was a meeting that this whole thing got announced. We or I have had a couple of catch up sessions with different directors where it was talked about, feelings were tested in terms of how people feel about integration, but a proper structure change management process was not followed.

Lara: Alright, so what challenges have emerged in the face of integration? What are the barriers that we've seen rear their heads when it comes to integration? What have been the biggest problems in trying to make this thing work?

Ronel: People not understanding. It goes both ways. Digital doesn't understand why so much effort and thinking and all kinds of stuff goes into traditional, and the same the other way around, I can actually summarize this for you. Traditional is based on ideas, it's not fluff but it's emotive. It's about how the ad makes you feel. Digital is based on KPIs, stats, deliverables. Like what is our benchmark, what do we need to reach, how do we get there? That is the biggest disconnect. That is the two types of people that we are throwing in a room together, where you have the one that's like the creative product, and how does this ad make you feel, and if it makes you feel this way, that's why it will sell more, and the digital stance on that is like, I'm sorry dude, if you are clicking through, and there's something in your fucking cart, that's when you're going to buy. So, it's a complete disconnect of how people see the world.

Lara: So, who needs to be learning? Who needs to be catching up from an education perspective?

Ronel: I think both. There is a big space for emotive. I think we can see that it is definitely rising again with every fucking financial house in South Africa having an emotive ad on TV at the moment, and people are responding to that, people want that again. And there is complete reason for digital as well. We're not supposed to be bullshitting our clients anymore like we did. There needs to be set KPIs, there needs to be set deliverables, but we need to find a way to marry the two, and that's something that is actually also part of the integration blue sky, is that we get to a place where we respect both talents enough that everyone realizes that both have merits. And your craft doesn't have to suffer, and it doesn't have to be non-emotive just because it's digital. There is space for both, but I think the biggest thing there is we've become a burn and churn industry, and that's not because of integration, it's because of the way we've been demoted from partners to suppliers. Making a pretty picture and move on. So, I'm not actually sure if integration will ever be solved without us solving our client relationships first.
Lara: And you spoke a little bit about respecting each other's discipline. Why do you think that's not happening? Do you think there is a level of disrespect between the teams?

Ronel: It's because I think we are in an ego driven industry. And I think that if you have the sun shine on someone else, it's that very teenage mind-set of I can't do well if someone else is doing well. I can only do well if I make sure someone else is doing bad. And we foster that because we are such an awards driven industry. And we literally give people fucking gold statues if they do better than someone else. That's why.

Lara: And then within the agency as well, you know when we are working towards delivering something together, why are we not working together? Why are we working against each other? Do you think it was because of the whole separate businesses, separate P and Ls, separate objectives thing? And now that it's integrated?

Ronel: I think it's more than that, hey. I think it's that there were star children, and there were favourites. They were favourites for good reason. There were people that were bringing in money, and people that were burning money. It's as simple as that. Digital was making money and traditional was burning money. Because the digital side was run better. We operated as a business, and not just a little creative team trying to crack ideas. There's a big difference between setting parameters before engaging with the client and throwing everything creative that you have at a problem that you don't even know you're getting paid to solve.

Lara: So now that we've integrated, which business approach/model have we kept? The digital or are we caught between two worlds?

Ronel: No, I kak everyone out that doesn't have a CE. I've found this across the board. Traditional have gotten away with murder because of the fact that they (Account management or idea management) have dictated to operations what should be on a quote, where that's complete bullshit. That's not how it works. You have to interrogate what the client actually needs and wants. Then you have to look at the retainer. Like what are we actually getting paid to do? And that methodology is something that is being instilled now, and it's been hard but the two-other people in the building that do quotes have been asking the right questions, so that's a good start. But yeah, like at the end of the day, cool, we are a creative industry, but we're still a business.
Lara: So, you think the other side of the business, especially the creatives have to adjust their way of working now that we’re business focused instead of just creative where we weren’t before? It’s not just about their ideas; it’s about the business.

Ronel: Ya, but that’s not really the creatives fault. It’s their leaders fault. Like, if you set the parameters for your team, then they know what parameters to work on. But if your parameters are just give creative ideas the whole time, then you’re not setting the rules of engagement properly. Like if you’re giving them “Cool guys, we’re under burning on client X, let’s come up with a couple of awesome proactive ideas, great stuff, we’ll sell one. Fantastic” We can still make money, because we’re under burning on an account, but if you’re already fucking through your retainer for the year and you’re still shitting out proactive, it’s a stupid business idea. That’s the balance that needs to be found and the only place that comes from is leadership. It’s not going to be an art director that makes that decision.

Lara: So, would you say there would have to be adjustments to members of leadership and management? How are they handling that?

Ronel: Yes! And Bad! I honestly don’t know if these conversations are being had, but I don’t think so. I understand that your mandate is awards, but awards within what parameters? I understand your mandate is selling stuff, cool go sell stuff, that is pretty fucking standard just go do that. Your parameters are making money for the business while delivering good creative work, so it all slots in together, but I don’t know if at a leadership level that synergy has been understood or explained or mandated, because they’re all rushing off to their own respective little goals, but I don’t know if they actually see that their goals are actually interlined.

Lara: So, would you say there has been a failure to communicate a lot of the things about integration on all levels?

Ronel: Ya, because it hasn’t been communicated to leadership. If it’s not solidified there, it will never be solidified lower down. If leadership doesn’t have a vision and an objective, then everyone under them is going to assume what their objective is and work towards that. So you assume the objective of your direct report or direct lead and you work towards that. And because of the degrees of separation, your objective and thinking is a level down and a level disjointed so that’s why the whole agency is more disjointed, because of the fact that no one is actually communicating where we’re going and what we’re doing. What does this picture
look like? I haven’t heard a single person in leadership tell me “this is what integration looks like”.

Lara: So, my next question is what impact has integration had on the work and deliverables? How has it affected the product at the end of the day?

Ronel: We’re lucky enough that we’ve gotten burn and churn clients, where it’s like get the work in, do the adjustments, get the work out. And I think as much as we’re all bitching and moaning about this new client, it’s actually our saving grace. Things are taking a lot longer.

Lara: Why is that?

Ronel: Because everyone has to talk to each other now, more and more and more, it’s ridiculous. Everyone has an opinion and everyone’s opinion has to be heard. It doesn’t matter if you’re right or wrong, no one is actually saying “this is the right way to do it, so let’s do it”. Because everyone is actually unsure, and that’s the issue. Everyone is operating out of fear.

Lara: What are they scared of?

Ronel: I think being fired. I think because we’re such a small industry, and it’s such a reputation game, everyone is treadling lightly around each other because everyone knows they’re not going to be there forever, and everyone knows that they are 90% certain to know someone else, who someone at your current agency knows. So, the possibility that someone is going to phone someone you know or currently work with for a reference is large. It’s something that you can’t really get around, so everyone is scared of their own reputation and ego, and getting fired, or being the lesser, the person that’s not bringing stuff to the party.

Lara: So what other ways has this affected the work and creative product, even the strategic product.

Ronel: The strategic product, we’re heading off in one direction without thinking through everything. I think we’re selling 360 strategies without thinking them through.
Lara: When you say they’re not thought through, are there components missing?

Ronel: Yes. You’re not going to find a 360 strategist. It doesn’t exist. But the problem is because everyone has this ownership problem, when you don’t know something you’re not going up to someone to ask for input, this I show I see it but can you give me input? People are like "look at this and tell me what you think". That isn’t giving anyone pure accountability or ownership or letting them live their specialty. That’s how it works and that’s the issue. It’s not only a company thing, it’s a client thing because clients don’t want to pay for three strategists. They want to pay for one, so we have not found a way around that yet. I’m pretty sure it’s not as hard as we think it is, but ya. For example, we have shopper, traditional and digital. And I still don’t know what shopper is, I’ll be completely honest, but there is no loss of ego to actually say I need your help with X, Y and Z at the right time.

Lara: Can you elaborate a bit more about the ‘at the right time’ thing, because it’s come up quite a bit.

Ronel: It’s about you have to do initial thought. You can’t hand something over if there’s nothing, its common sense but you have to gauge it that you give yourself enough time, as well as the other person to both do good work. That’s where time management comes in. It’s not a company issue, it’s a personal issue. If you don’t know how to manage your own time that is what fucks the process. I know that if I have a conversation with you, my manager, my ex-manager and a developer, I can gauge that this is where everyone’s strengths lie, and this is what I can get from everyone. This is what I’ve done so far, these are the broad strokes and now I can get you to input on that. But if I come to you and say to you “Hey Lara, King Price think that they want a strategy, how long do you think that will take?” What are you going to say to me? You’re going to say like “Okay, I don’t know, maybe three days” it depends on what’s in the strategy, right? It’s comes back to setting the right parameters, setting the expectations. Whoever owns that product or project or whatever should be able to take that accountability. But I think that’s the next problem, is that people will rather not decide, make a decision and not take responsibility, than make a decision and run with it. And that comes back to the fact that everyone is operating in fear. Because it’s a lot easier to hide when things are convoluted.

Lara: Do you think that’s because of integration, because now we have this thing to hide behind?
Ronel: I think it's always been there in traditional. I think it's a lot easier for digital to hide or be blamed now, either way. I actually think there is a chance that it has decreased the efficiency of the agency.

Lara: Okay cool, so I have one more question, what should we start doing and stop doing to make this thing work?

Ronel: Let's start with what to stop doing, stop blaming people. Stop being, I want to say childish. Enforce accountability. Enforce parameters of working. Make it a mandate across the business that if you do not know what you are working towards, don't do it. We have this mantra of "receive well, do well, handover well" but no one does it. Make people accountable for what they should be. Respect each other, respect the different disciplines and understand just because someone is different and works different and has different ideas than you don't make them bad. It just makes them different. I think we do need proper change management. I think we need a process were we take department by department and think and talk about ways of working where it's not just like "your part of the creative team now". It should be as part of the creative team, how do you like to work? How do you want to be managed? What style of management will improve effectiveness and a better creative product? I don't think those conversations are being had. I think finance should have that conversation. And then, I don't know how we'll do that, but stop making people feel scared. Like the fear mongering and the feelings of inadequacy that are being fostered, that needs to stop.

Lara: Do you know where that's coming from? Something that's instigating that, or maybe a source?

Ronel: I think it's the attitude from middle management. Because I think they're scared. They know that they're being watched very closely, and it upsets them. More than that, I think the whole structure, the biggest department in our building is creative, but the whole structure there, I haven't touched on, but the structure of the department is the biggest issue because there's nowhere to grow to. They have given people titles left, right and centre that mean nothing, and there's no clear reporting lines, no clear growth, no career paths. There's one CD, there's not a single art director left. Like, our structure and growth plan for our own creative, which at the end of the day is what we sell, it is non-existent. So, if I could say there's one place they need to start, it's fixing that. Fix that, fix the heart of the agency, then it will be pretty easy to solve the rest. Because if you set the parameters of working for the main thing, then you're off to the races.

Lara: Okay, thank you so much.
Lara: Interview with Terence Raft, the Executive Creative Director at McCann World Group. Alright T, thank you so much for doing this with me.

Terence: Aww, for you, anything.

Lara: Okay, so I think – my first question is ‘Why was the decision made to integrate the traditional and digital teams at McCann?’

Terence: Because globally, McCann is seen as a holistic agency, a whole agency. We were the only place that operated with the digital separate, and we didn’t want that to become – the truth is that we... when I started there two years ago, we were 15% of the total agency’s revenue, right? We are now 49%.

Lara: “Digital?”

Terence: Digital. Of which 60% is social, right. Of that 60%, I think we are – I can’t remember the exact number, but I know that it’s 60 or 70% profitable? So, we were starting to overtake the other side of things. The other thing was that Nick was getting flak from abroad. Guys had to do integration, integration, integration, and I spoke to a guy by the name of Clint Bryce. Clint Bryce is one of the – ugh, he’s a legend. Google him. Do you know him?

Lara: Uh uh.

Terence: I worked with him at, what’s that place called? Quirk! He was ECD, and I was CD, and um, since then he’s been trying to do integration for Ogilvy. He worked there for I don’t know how many years trying to break through and it didn’t kind of work. Then I got him in and I said ‘Do you know what, why don’t you come and do a talk for us, right, on the obstacles involved in integration and the complexities involved’. And he was like ‘you know, we can’t do this in one sitting. We’ve got to do, like, a few’. And I thought let me go to Cindy and say to him, well maybe this is something we can embark on, like a workshop. At least if we know what the problems are, like generally, through all the agencies, we can tackle this thing. ‘No no, that’s the worst thing we can do, is bring in, like, a third party, and try and get them to solve it.’ It’s a general problem throughout. You can’t go to integration when you are simply looking at the word integration to
mean integrate two different parties but it's much more than that — much more complex than that. And we need to — if we want to do it, we need to first — the people at the top need to understand what integration is. Because if you go and ask every person at an agency "What is integration?" everyone will give you a different answer.

Lara: 100%

Terence: There's not "Okay guys, so this is what integration means". Integration doesn't mean just going to meetings together. It doesn't mean, like, Jadu reporting to fucking Eric or Bruce. That's not integration. Integration... Pacio is a perfect example of successful integration. Why? Because she knew nothing when I started there. Fuck all. Nothing, nothing, nothing. She made it her mission to understand what we do. She understands Facebook better than I do now. She knows exactly what's going on, but no one had to tell her. She went and she did it. She is a good example of an integrated client service person. She will be able to go when the client says: "Right, we want to sell this product, right. We've got X amount of money". We go back, we say: "With that money, we can get the biggest bang for your buck doing it this way". Digital is merely another channel of exposing a product to the public. That's all it is. It's another channel. We, at McCann they've almost created this monster that they're trying to tame, alright. They don't know anything about it. They don't know what the monster eats... they don't know where it shits or sleeps. They know nothing about it. But they're trying to integrate it, they're trying to fucking tame it. They're trying to get it to get it to sit, stay. It doesn't work. It doesn't work. Relevance is a big part of integration, because relevance, like I spent, still to this day, at least half an hour a day, every day. Trolling the web. Whatever, just whatever's going on. Whether it's above the line, below the line, whatever it is, I still make it a mission because I can't tell my team what to do if I don't know how to do it. Like, with Brad, I don't know anything about code. I know when code's bad. I know when code works, I know how all that shit works. I can't write code, but I can still say to Brad: "Listen, let's do this" and I know it can happen because I know for a fact. Not just "Ah, fuck Brad, just...". No. That's like we're bringing in billboard advertising for the first time. Nobody's ever done billboard, outdoor. Is outdoor another integration problem? Same thing. Same as, like fucking, I don't know — bus stop advertising. Something brand new, right. It's a new channel that we need to understand on how to use in order to offer the client the better bang for their buck. "This is what we think based on the strategy, we think you must use X". Not putting people together. That is not integration.

Lara: 100%. Okay, cool T. so the next question is: Please explain the implementation process used to integrate the teams, the measures that were taken, the actions that were taken, just to integrate — like, what did they actually do, in their opinion, to integrate us?
Terence: They moved us here. They've put people into teams. They've put creatives under management that knew nothing about what we do. There's a reporting structure, well I can't even call it structure, it's not. There's a reporting line that says that Nelia must go to Bruce if Jaco is not available, and he gives the ultimate approval, Bruce. Why? For what reason? Nelia had a panic attack. She was completely freaking out because she was getting feedback, like, they didn't even know what she was doing. And she was just thrown into this thing. I was like "show them". This integration is a problem, it's great on a piece of paper. Nobody understands it. Every time we go into a meeting with Nick he says "Right guys, integration...this is who you report to...everyone clear? Okay cool". No, because it's different from the meeting before. The meeting before was like "Okay, Jabo has to report to Bruce". The next meeting is "But Jabo can sign off digital". So, what is it? And Nelia is one of those people that, or, most fucking employees there...they want to know. I said to Shilaine, just by starting with an organogram, even a PDF, this is what it looks like, this is how it works, this is what you need to do. No plan. Everything is hearsay. Everything is based on the person's subjective point of view, not an objective decision. It's based on a subjective point of view. So, what's integration to me is not integration to the next person. Everyone's different, there's no clear thing. All they did was put us together and say "Right. Go". We're then operating as a separate, successful team, or hub within McCann Johannesburg as a digital team, they broke that whole thing apart, threw them into different reporting lines, but the people they're reporting to don't understand what we do. Big problem.

Lara: Okay cool, so my next one, Terence: What does successful integration look like, and what do you think they're working towards. What do you think their kind of, end vision is?

Terence: I think they don't even know what their end goal is, because they don't know what integration is - You can't solve a problem. Like Einstein once said "You cannot solve a problem going into it with the same mind-set with which it was created". Like, you can't go in there not knowing about digital but wanting to integrate it. First understand it and how the thing works. It's not like traditional media or above the line, where it's simple brief, execution of an ad, a bit of copy, proof, go. We have very different, or digital has very different like a roll out. Some of it's based - well, all of it's meant to be based on strategy. So important. Like, we cannot - why strategy is important is because we are - we can be measured. That is the difference between above the line and digital, we can be measured. Not like a magazine ad that's like 'so, you printed 5 million copies of the magazine. On average, we think maybe 30% of people will see the ad. No. Not with us. We will tell you exactly who, what, when, how, and where they are, looked at that ad, or clicked on it. They don't understand that. L'Oreal - perfect example. Integration would have - successful integration - would have meant
that that case study done by Mick; he would have been able to understand what the key successful outcome of that campaign was. The sales that were generated, the amount of people that watched the video to the end, on and on. None of that's in there. So, we've got a case study about a digital campaign that was really successful, but has none of the results. They've made it successful. In it, besides the fact that when the voice over is talking about black people, you've got a white woman standing in the doorway with blonde hair. That's how bad it is. If you can't even get that right, its fucked, they'll laugh at us. I said to Fraser: "You don't know how many job's I've done that you could have won fucking numerous awards on if the other guys actually knew what it was that we did. You know that? That's why it's like 'Ah Ya, let's just do a case study. Waste what, 40 grand, 50 grand on a piece of shit that means nothing. So successful integration is, like I said earlier, it's a channel. It's merely a channel. Look, it's a little bit more complex than average, but it is still a method of marketing. You market via digital. So, we haven't got money for this. We're going to go this route. That's the best way to get bang for your buck. It's a channel. People keep forgetting that. And Social Medial posts, they, like for some reason Eric and Bruce and them just don't get it. They don't get... they think a post on Facebook is the same as posting a picture of your chick fucking topless. Whatever. That's what they think it is. That's why when I took the guys to Bronte - that's when I said to them "You've got to treat every single post with its own objectives like it's a print ad, because that's what it is. It is merely a post. Just because it doesn't look like a print ad, doesn't mean it doesn't need the same attention. You're going to get more results on a good fucking post than you will out of what's its name. They don't understand it. It's a joke.

Lara: What do you think makes us different to them though? I mean, I personally have always been of the opinion that being digitally trained, you're trained to think differently. It's like a very post-modern...

Terence: It's relevant. It's current. That's where we are. It's not about anything but relevance. That's why I said, I need to keep on top of the game all the time in order for me to be able to give suggestions, give direction, come up with ideas. If I don't then what's the point? I can speak until I'm blue in the face, like they always think of another way out of the idea. No, it's the right idea because of this, this, this and this. I don't just come up with shit in my mind. We need to go through the process of strategy. Back to that L'Oreal campaign. If it wasn't for your strategy, we wouldn't even have that campaign. That is not even mentioned. Your strategy was so succinct and to the point, there was no arguing the fact. I mean, Allan tried once and you shut him out, and he took it, because he knew it was right. We went through the whole process and it was like this is how it had to be, you know. That left us at a point, where that was the greatest call Paula could have made was "Let's do the strat pres first. Then get them to buy into that, then we can go ahead with the creative." Strat is another problem, it's that integration thing. You've got people doing — that are from an above the line background
doing strategy for social media. They think social media is a – I don’t know. It makes me bonkers. It makes me mad. They think social media is exactly that – just something you do outside. Like “I know, we’ll have a Facebook page and...” For what reason? Where is the data that shows me that this is what I need? That this is why I need a Facebook page because most of my fucking audience is online all the time. Okay, great they’re on Facebook all the time, great okay that’s why we’re doing it. Not just because. It’s not that. It’s much more than that. And that’s why the strategy is so important. Like for them to be able to develop a strategy and integrated strategy without having knowledge of what we do is a lie. It is no longer truth well told, it becomes lies well sold.

Lara: No, I agree with you, T. Let me ask you, like why do you think the above the line strategists treat things that are digital channels so frivolously? Like, things like social media, why do they view it that way?

Terence: Because they don’t understand it. The best line of defence is attack, always, or to ignore something, or reduce its importance. They don’t understand what it is that we do. And, its back to where Paola was. That chick blows my mind, hey. Like, she is a fucking powerhouse I said to Fraser; like ‘You should model – everyone there should be modelled on the way Paola does shit.’ She knows every job that she works on inside out, better than fucking anybody. Her briefs are good, sometimes they’re a bit sketchy but she tries her best, always. She doesn’t just shit stuff out and then go “here”. She tries the best she can and she’s constantly learning all the time. And that’s why – that other crowd. You can’t have people leading strategy that don’t understand what digital is at all. Mick doesn’t even know what a fucking carousel ad is. Really. It’s a joke. He’s right at the top, he doesn’t know what a carousel is. Come on dude really. At least try. That’s what we have access to Lynda.com for. You can learn social media in half an hour. If you just pay attention and are actually willing, you’ll have a brief understanding of what it’s all about and the importance of it. But if you don’t? Shame.

Lara: So T, talk to me about the problems of integration that we have experienced. Like, what challenges have emerged during this whole thing, and what sort of barriers have been put in place, you know, people issues, whatever it may be.

Terence: Once again, you cannot tell people to do something, or to integrate just sitting next to each other. It is not that, and the biggest problems are that the management does not understand digital. They are still on the mind-set that because I put A in next to fucking whoever, that’s integration. Because she has to report to someone who knows nothing about digital is wrong. How can you? And then ask that person to deliver amazing work and want to go to you and say
"Listen, check here. Check how cool this is?" and for that person to really understand what it is that they're showing them, but understanding where it is going to be used, how it's going to be used, why it was done like it was. If you don't know any of that you're simply going to base it on a subjective point of view. It's never objective, it's always subjective now.

Lara: So based on the relevant stuff, right, like we've talked a little bit about, it's important the digital teams do stay relevant, and we make it our mission to really learn the new formats, and learn the new algorithms, and see what's changing and what's new, and what we can do. What is the thing behind the other team? What is the barrier for them to not be like us? What makes us different to them, really?

Terence: Because it's all about relevance. We live what we do, right? So, we are on social media all the time, we are on Facebook all the time. We are constantly on the web all the time. That is what we do. The funny thing is the guys that don't understand it are equally on the web as much as us. They go onto Facebook as much as we do. They go onto different sites the same as we do. But they're not processing what they're looking at the same way that we do. We look at it and go "Fuck that's clever because this, this, this and that. You can see that they targeted...". It becomes like a standard for us. To look at something from a digital point of view, and look at it and appreciate it for what it is as opposed to just going "well...let's just have some social". It makes me angry.

Lara: So talk to me about that anger. Have you experienced, like, maybe inter-team politics, or there's this animosity, or the ways of working between the teams, I think, talk to me a little bit about that.

Terence: I mean, you know more than anybody how passionate I am about what I do, and sitting in a room with people that are critiquing something that they know nothing about is heart-breaking. Because they don't realize that this is not about them. This is about the youngsters that are coming to them and doing the shit. You are fucking with their careers. This is what they do and then you go and telling them "No, this is shit, we're not going to use this, just because you don't understand it. That whole team - Mick, plus Bruce and Eric, and Dallas are in a corner now. They've got their back up against the wall, it's almost to the point now where you've tried, well I tried – didn't work. You tried – didn't work. They're not willing to listen or try to understand, or at least ask a question. My biggest thing is a stupid person trying to act clever. That is the worst kind of person – the most dangerous kind of person – it's a stupid person trying to act clever. Rather say – I have more respect for a person who says "I don't understand, just explain it to me". Dude, I'll take all day explaining it to you if you really want to hear. Like, I
don't mind. The fact that you actually say that you want to is a giant leap forward. You only know what you know, and you can't give an opinion or a view on something if you don't have any background or any knowledge on it. It's like me saying, "Well, I could have redesi..." 

[Pause until 25:30]

Lara: So you were saying you're willing to teach someone, you know, as long as they show the interest and they want to learn instead of pretending with this whole façade that they know what's going on...

Terence: Back to a fish. A fish will always rot from the head down, because if your whole team – and all the marketing now is digital. It is the most cost-effective way of taking a brand message to a user, or person, or individual. It's the most cost-effective way. Why would you want to not understand that? It's in its most basic form, understand that, then at least you've taken a giant leap forward. They will not even fucking go there.

Lara: So talk to me about the psychology of that. Like, what is the kind of mental block someone like a Dallas would have, someone like a Bruce would have...

Terence: It's almost got to the point where they're so comfortable – all of them – doing what they've been doing year after year, and now, like I said, they've got themselves into a corner where it's become so daunting for them to try and understand. It's almost frowned upon and laughed upon, what we do. I don't think they know enough about that we've grown, what 35% in two years of the total agency's revenue? Surely, you've got to fucking wake up to that? So where would it have been in two years' time? We would have taken 75% of that. And even now that's not a wakeup call. The only option that you have is to attack what you don't understand and defend what you do. Simple.

Lara: So what sort of impact has integration had on the sort of work, and the deliverables, and our day to day, right? If we can talk a little bit about what it has done to the work – trying to integrate and all of that...

Terence: Use Kulula as a good example. Kulula, they came up with a good campaign – or, not a good campaign. They came up with a campaign. And we were last on the
list, as always to say "Okay right, we just need two slides on digital, the campaign". Of what? Why? "Oh no...keep it simple". Like, they don't want to know the intricacies and the depth to which it goes to put up a post. Try and understand what Ashlyn does. I said to Shane "Creative training is the biggest failure to launch ever. It is nothing. Nobody sees any value in it. It is cancelled 9 out of 10 times, always, and when it is on, it is with people that have no relevance to us." I don't care about fucking production houses. We know they exist. We know there's good guys that can do photography and cinematography and whatever. I don't want to know about that. Tell me what I don't know. Show me something that is going to inspire me. Walk out of there and be like "fuck me!" I said "Do you want successful creative training? Let Lara and Ashlyn run it. Let Ashlyn — I always say she's the second most intelligent, now she's the most intelligent because I'm gone. But she has got such an amazing way of looking at things, right. Because she is so intelligent, it threatens or makes them look dumb. Instead of saying "Hey Ash, we really respect the way you look at things, and you've got such a good creative mind" even though she isn't a designer, she's just got it, and they don't want to acknowledge that because that makes them look dumb, or look irrelevant. They are so scared, like Mick is so out of touch with everything. Even the above the line stuff is bad. To date I still haven't seen Bruce ever put something on the table and go "This is what I did". Never once, but yet he's ECD and all the creatives must report to him. One rule: You are only as good as your last job. That is it. Not what you did in 1948, and the awards you got for radio. No. Show me your last job. If everyone can just work like that, everything would change. Look what it did for our team. I really battled, like in the beginning, to find a way to make everyone become proud of what they did. You're only as good as your last job. When that becomes a mind-set, then no one wants to be the one delivering kak work. Once you start consistently doing good work, it becomes second nature. Good work, not difficult, hey. Amazing work, a little bit of effort. Good work should be the standard. We're fucking McCann, a global agency. Second largest agency group in the world, and we're still pussyfooting around with crap. We've completely lost sight of everything. It's become an individually based — people with individual agendas. There's no single agenda. There's no "Guys, this is where we're going". No. Just like that. And no one understands how to bring it all together. I said to Fraser "I'm sorry man, I wish you, and I know Mick's your mate, but if you have given me those reins, just for a year, I could have sorted that place out in no time. Get people believing in their work, not because I think I'm brilliant, but I understand them. I take the time and I understand what it's like to be a struggling creative". It's hard. The worst kind of thing a young creative can have is bad leadership. Nobody that gives you an objective view on what you've done, as opposed to a subjective view because you don't understand it. It's just sad, because it's not difficult to fix. It's really not. You want to do integration? Spell it out for the team. You're just saying "okay now we're integrated, now we're an agency" when you haven't got any buffer period where the existing digital team has a time to understand what it means to go into this. For the above the line team to understand what it means to go into this. You've just laid it on the line, and you said "Now we're integrated". Explain what integration is. Put three lines up so we can all see what you mean.
by it. What is the objective here? When you say integration, sure. When you say 'car crash' how many different kinds of car crashes are there? So if a car crashes it's not the same. It's different. When you ask every person what their first interpretation of a car crash is, it's all different. When you explain that a car crash is two vehicles colliding into each other – doesn't matter how, doesn't matter where – that is the essence of what it is. But everyone's perception of it is different, so everyone is going to understand it to be different when it's not really that difficult. Just make it clear for people to understand. I know it's fucking ripe coming from me, because no one understood besides how my team works, and it falls on deaf ears. I said to Bruce and Eric so many times, you guys just need to try and understand. When Bruce told me that his current wife, he met at a digital agency, like, way back when. I was like “What? You worked at a digital agency?” “Ya”. “Doing what?” “I was a designer, doing creative”. Like, working on what? “No, sites and...” I mean, come on, really? You worked for a digital agency and you still don’t get it? That’s fucking shocking. Come on, you must at least have some understanding of what it is we do? So that’s the perfect example. And Eric always comes to me and says “I need your help on this...”. Not at number 99.999 come to me and say “listen we need 2 pages for the Kukui press”. Of what? “No, like, just social media posts, or this...” Why? Where’s the strategy behind it? You cannot do any digital campaign without a strat. And it’s not the same strat as the other strat. It’s a different strat altogether.

Lara: Talk to me a little bit about why they exclude digital strategy, why they only kind of include any member of the digital team at number 99. You know, we’re not upfront, we’re not leading campaigns...

Terence: Everything that you’ve asked me comes back to the same thing. Relevance and understanding of what it is we do.

Lara: But who centralizes that control? Who’s making the call to exclude digital until final hour?

Terence: I don’t think it’s final call. I think it’s just because they don’t understand it at all, it’s always been the illegitimate child. It always seems to be that thing that comes at 99. “Okay, now we’ve got the campaign idea, we’ve got this, we’ve got that, now pull in digital”. It’s not the same thing. The tone of the message is different. The way you present the message is different. How people interact – how people are able to interact with that communication – they’re able to respond to it, they’re able to share it, they’re able to do so many things with it, that that should be the first thing you think about. Almost the whole thing needs to be reversed, and you start with digital. Because digital requires a very robust and accurate strat that we work from. I think it was maybe once or twice that we had to back-strat stuff, you
and I. 90% of the time you came up with a strat, and you said “that’s what I have”, and we did it. It’s respecting what digital strategy is. They don’t get it, hey.

Lara: That’s not an integrated approach, right? For them to go and do their thing and then come back to us at the end...

Terence: That’s what I said about “What is integration?”

Lara: Because the work’s not integrated if we’re coming in at the last minute, just plug in a little bit according to what we’ve done, but they didn’t include us up front, so we’re seen as execution where we should be doing the thinking as well, together.

Terence: Exactly. They’re almost telling us that – like when I was down in Cape Town with the Design Indaba. This last one and they were trying to put together the stuff for this campaign for Kulula, the night before, I got the call. “Terence, we want to do this, this, this and this”. Why do you want to do that? What’s your reasoning behind it? Not your personal view on it. What is your strategic reasoning for wanting me to do this, this, this and this? There isn’t. It’s a personal – the above the line guys are looking at this from... back to “You only know what you know”. So, they don’t know what goes into that. They need to understand that it’s a very different process. You cannot churn out the same fucking strat that you do above line for all clients. They do the same target market, and some of the pics – it’s the same thing. Some of those things I can recite, and I’ve got bad ADD. I can recite it, like, come on, really? Bullshit baffles brains, always. When Dallas is presenting, he uses all these big words that he got from global, and he talks so fast that the client does not understand. But because they don’t understand, they don’t want to also feel that they... to them it’s like all these big words and more and more reams and reams of information. Never once is there a concluding slide that says “Based on this – this is the problem, this is who we’re talking to, and this is how we’re going to solve it”. One slide. Like, if I look at your stuff, right, I can easily know what the problem is, who am I talking to and how am I going to do it. Because you’ve identified that this platform is the best thing to use, or the people that we’re targeting, these are their habits, and that’s why we’re doing it like this. Not because you think it’s cool, or because you’re just regurgitating from before. No. Everyone is different. They need to understand that digital strategy is at the centre of everything. You work from there, out. Not from out, in. That’s what’s happening. We’re pulled in at the last minute, why? Because they don’t understand. If you had to go and show them a press that you did for L’Oreal, they won’t understand. If you had to say we did it because of cognitive dissonance... What’s that? They don’t get it.
Lara: That's like basic psychology; it's not even digital confusing them anymore. So, what's happening to the quality of work, then?

Terence: You can't even judge it on quality. It's just on pure relevance. Doesn't matter how cool it looks. If it's not relevant it's shit, it's crap. You've wasted all your time. Trying to come up with creative to solve a problem that you don't understand what the problem is, and you don't understand who you're talking to, and you don't understand the habits of who you're talking to. I always say the 'who' out of the 'what, who, why and how' is the most important thing. 90% of your press should be on who we are talking to and what the habits are of those people. Where do they go online, what do they do...? You can't do anything unless you understand that person. And I'll keep referring back to L'Oreal. That target market was so difficult. We really had to understand those people in order to do what we did. If we didn't have a good strat to work from, it doesn't matter what creative you do. So, a mate of mine, we came up with a way of looking at work. There are two ways. There's one that's like, the 'wow', and the other one is like 'huh? Wow...'. When you look at something, it takes some time for you to think about it, but when you realize what it is, it's like 'that's clever', as opposed to something that's visually impactful lasts for two seconds in your brain. It looks cool, but it doesn't matter. So that's how I came to look at stuff. I look at it and go "It looks interesting, but when you go deeper into it you can see that this is like, really clever". The fact that we didn't even push the product on L'Oreal, they didn't even understand that. That whole thing about, they asked us to sell Revitalift, never once did we say that is the cure to the problem. Never once did any of those three women talk about it. All they said was "If we could find something that got rid of the crow's feet, or whatever, that would be cool. I'd be interested". We didn't even have the product at the end. All it did was have L'Oreal. That is all it had. The first thing that they would have done – the above the line guys – "Revitalift is a ..............................". Come on man. Why are you doing that? Because you don't understand who you're talking to. You don't understand that black women, or black people in general see L'Oreal as a white colonial brand. Such subtleties that came from all that research that made us do what we did. It wasn't about how amazing it looks. It was that we had to speak to people on an emotional, truthful level. There was no bullshit there. Not one going "This stuff is cool, hey. This stuff works like a bomb". No. We never said that. So surely that must be a good indication of strategy drives creative, drives results. 65% increase in sales in the second week of the campaign. Fuck me. That's unheard of. But they didn't even put that in the case study.

I couldn't understand how all of those stats were missed completely. The one thing they did put in was video views or something. Then they still talked about that the manifesto was the driving video that made people watch the other three. There were actually four.
Lara: Even that little up front piece, with the intro. I didn't even recognize my own strategy. I authored the thing, I didn't even know that was mine because they just botched it so badly.

Terence: Creative now is a strategically calculated result. There's a difference between what we do and what an artist does. We are commercial artists. So, it's like, we want sales. Getting people to do something, it's not just like a piece of art, like "Ohh, that's so nice." No. It needs to do something. It needs to meet an objective. They're still looking at it from a personal point of view where it's like "Hmm, I don't like green, hey". Tell me why you don't like green. Fuck you. Fuck you and green. Take out the personal shit and tell me why you don't like green? Is it because it's not on brand? Is it because it doesn't evoke the right emotions? Is it because it clashes with some of the other colours on the screen? No. Because you don't like green, I don't give a fuck.

Lara: So T, what should McCann start doing and stop doing to make this integration work?

Terence: Start learning and stop dictating. Simple. You cannot run an agency through dictatorship. If you actually, the person right at the actually top knows what's going on, and has the ability to say "you do this...no, that's not cool", but now it's like you doing it because it's your position. It affords you the opportunity to break down somebody and their work without understanding what it is they're showing you. Stop having a go at people. Start learning. Learn all the time before you can do anything. Learning is the only thing you have. It's the only thing that keeps me going. Like these guys in the States. The target markets are so complex for what I'm doing, because we have the Nigerian diaspora in America that are sending money home to families in Nigeria, right? Two very different people. So, we need to understand the person that is sending home the money, and the person in the village in the middle of fucking nowhere that needs the money. What is making them choose our service? Even though we might have one USP, the way we present it to the people in Nigeria in the middle of fucking nowhere is very different to the way we present to somebody sitting in Texas. That all comes out of strategy. If you don't understand who you're talking to, you can't come up with a solution. I have not seen a single pres, not even one, that has come out of the above the line team where they have actually focused on the person. Who are we talking to? Not loosely "It could be from age 5 to 500, could be black or white, could be a fucking girl or guy". What kind of fucking thing is that?

Lara: No psychographics, nothing.
Terence: That psychographics is an interesting concept, hey? Did you see that thing I sent through?

Lara: No, send it to me?

Terence: He does this thing called the Corbett Report. On YouTube, he’s got a channel. This guy’s really good. He does this thing on Psychographics, and the think behind it, and just how, that is the next step. It’s like you are understanding that user, or that individual at every point in their life. You are penetrating without even knowing. You know them so well. You know that if they’re standing in an aisle and choosing toilet paper or tissues, you know what they’re going to choose based on who they are. The older woman is going to choose something that she has been using for the past 100 years, whereas a younger person is going to choose a design of box that looks better, because they want to know that it looks cool in the toilet that they’ve got. They have a different psychology of purchasing the same product. The psychology is completely different, and if you don’t understand it, what are you doing? You might as well fucking lucky dip it. But I’m glad you raised that. It’s why they’re losing. Do you know how many people I’ve shown that to? I said, you’ve got to understand, psychographics is a completely new, well, not a new, but a drilled down understanding of people and habits. We are no longer a digital agency or service. We are a technology company.

Lara: What we should be...

Terence: What we should be, because we have the ability to come up with an idea and execute, and create a means of technology to drive it. We don’t have to use Facebook. We can create whatever we want. Of course, it has to be relevant to whoever we’re talking to, but we are no longer just “this is how many channels we’ve got, this is how we’re going to use it”. No. We can create our own technology that drives it. And if it’s good enough, people will use it. People want that, they want to see shit that they’ve never interacted with before, or something that is so relevant to them that it almost, you’ve got to step away. They want it. But if we don’t understand that, we’ll keep pushing our print ads until we’re blue in the face, and putting the print ads into Facebook posts and wonder why we’ve got one like.

And Cityca, they’re always talking about “Thumb stopping content”, you know that thing we did. I said to Eric and them “You wake up in the morning, what’s the first thing you’re doing? You pick up your phone, right? You get, like a whole lot of stuff from posts from friends, you’re going through your phone. What do you actually stop on? What promoted bit of marketing or advertising on one of those
posts do you actually stop on? None? Okay, great, that’s a good start. At least you know that. Now, what does it take to make you actually stop on it? That’s how difficult our job is. Scroll through Facebook. I can’t even remember the last time I actually clicked on a promoted ad. Maybe it’s because of what I do, that I don’t but I think the only things I’ve done is our stuff, and I’m just checking.

Lara: But I mean how much other stuff are we competing with online because it’s more relevant, because I’d rather see pictures of you DJ-ing than a noodles advert.

Terence: Another good example is what you did for L’Oreal, that…what’s it Hair…?

Lara: Hair obsession, yeah.

Terence: We went through a whole thing, came up with campaigns. What would the final result be? Something that had nothing to do with hair. People were just taken aback by this weird design, psychedelic thing that did whatever, and we just put the product into this really cool looking thing. It did really well, and that’s because we went through the whole process, and the client understood. We know now that all of this effort that we’re doing is not going to get what we need. We need to create attention with a chick with blonde curly/wavy hair. This thing didn’t even have hair in it. It was just a psychedelic thing that went like this with the colours, and it did really well. That just goes to show that every market is different, every objective of every post is different. They don’t understand that. Facebook is Facebook, just put it on Facebook.

Lara: Awesome T, thank you hey!

Terence: Are you done?

Lara: Ya, that’s my questions hey

Terence: If there’s anything else, just let me know. Has it been a help?

Lara: Ya, huge. Very insightful.
28 August 2017
Mr Fraser Lamb
CEO
22 Westbrook Drive, Sandown

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Mr Lamb,

I, Lara Chatzkelowitz, an MA student of the University of Johannesburg, am writing to request permission to conduct research on McCann Worldgroup Johannesburg. I am currently studying the problems of integration that exist between digital and traditional specialist teams when it comes to holistic service delivery.

Five interviews will be conducted, approximately 30-40 minutes in duration each with key members of staff who have been affected by or tasked to lead the agency's integration.

The data and results of the study will remain confidential and will be used for educational purposes only. An electronic copy of the entire thesis can be made available to you after the study’s completion should you so request.

Should you agree to the study being conducted on your business, kindly sign below acknowledging your consent.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lara Chatzkelowitz

I, Fraser Lamb, CEO of McCann Worldgroup Johannesburg, give my consent for the study to commence:

Date: 29 August 2017
Signed at: McCann Worldgroup Johannesburg

[Signature]
LETTER OF CONSENT

Dissertation: An Exploration of the Integration Challenges Experienced by Advertising Agencies Between Digital and Traditional Specialist Teams

I, CLYDE MALCOLM, voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can decide to withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question without consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview and the data will then subsequently be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me verbally and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand and agree that participation involves a 30-40 minute recorded interview which will be transcribed for data collection.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from partaking in the research.

I understand that all and any information that I provide for this study will be treated confidentially and in any report of the results of the research, my identity will remain completely anonymous.

Date: 12-09-2017

Signed at: SANDTON

Signed: [Signature]
LETTER OF CONSENT

Dissertation: An Exploration of the Integration Challenges Experienced by Advertising Agencies Between Digital and Traditional Specialist Teams

Aletia Fourie voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can decide to withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question without consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview and the data will then subsequently be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me verbally and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand and agree that participation involves a 30-40 minute recorded interview which will be transcribed for data collection.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from partaking in the research.

I understand that all and any information that I provide for this study will be treated confidentially and in any report of the results of the research, my identity will remain completely anonymous.

Date: 8 September 2017

Signed at: Sandton

Signed: 

Johannesburg
LETTER OF CONSENT

Dissertation: An Exploration of the Integration Challenges Experienced by Advertising Agencies Between Digital and Traditional Specialist Teams

I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can decide to withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question without consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview and the data will then subsequently be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me verbally and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand and agree that participation involves a 30-40 minute recorded interview which will be transcribed for data collection.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from partaking in the research.

I understand that all and any information that I provide for this study will be treated confidentially and in any report of the results of the research, my identity will remain completely anonymous.

Date: 8/9/2017

Signed at: Sandown.

Signed:
LETTER OF CONSENT

Dissertation: An Exploration of the Integration Challenges Experienced by Advertising Agencies Between Digital and Traditional Specialist Teams

I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can decide to withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question without consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview and the data will then subsequently be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me verbally and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand and agree that participation involves a 30-40 minute recorded interview which will be transcribed for data collection.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from partaking in the research.

I understand that all and any information that I provide for this study will be treated confidentially and in any report of the results of the research, my identity will remain completely anonymous.

Date: 8/9/2017

Signed at: 7 Carol Crescent, waverly, JHB

Signed:
LETTER OF CONSENT

Dissertation: An Exploration of the Integration Challenges Experienced by Advertising Agencies Between Digital and Traditional Specialist Teams

I, Terence Raft, voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can decide to withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question without consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview and the data will then subsequently be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me verbally and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand and agree that participation involves a 30-40 minute recorded interview which will be transcribed for data collection.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from partaking in the research.

I understand that all and any information that I provide for this study will be treated confidentially and in any report of the results of the research, my identity will remain completely anonymous.

Date: 5 September 2017

Signed at: Morningside

Signed: ____________________________
LETTER OF CONSENT

Dissertation: An Exploration of the Integration Challenges Experienced by Advertising Agencies Between Digital and Traditional Specialist Teams

I, [NAME], voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can decide to withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question without consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview and the data will then subsequently be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me verbally and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand and agree that participation involves a 30-40 minute recorded interview which will be transcribed for data collection.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from partaking in the research.

I understand that all and any information that I provide for this study will be treated confidentially and in any report of the results of the research, my identity will remain completely anonymous.

Date: 06/07/2017

Signed at: BRYANSTON

Signed: [Signature]
LETTER OF CONSENT

Dissertation: An Exploration of the Integration Challenges Experienced by Advertising Agencies Between Digital and Traditional Specialist Teams

I __________________________ voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can decide to withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question without consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview and the data will then subsequently be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me verbally and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand and agree that participation involves a 30-40 minute recorded interview which will be transcribed for data collection.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from partaking in the research.

I understand that all and any information that I provide for this study will be treated confidentially and in any report of the results of the research, my identity will remain completely anonymous.

Date: 8th September 2017

Signed at: McCann JHB

Signed: [Signature]
LETTER OF CONSENT

Dissertation: An Exploration of the Integration Challenges Experienced by Advertising Agencies Between Digital and Traditional Specialist Teams

I __________________ voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can decide to withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question without consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview and the data will then subsequently be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me verbally and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand and agree that participation involves a 30-40 minute recorded interview which will be transcribed for data collection.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from partaking in the research.

I understand that all and any information that I provide for this study will be treated confidentially and in any report of the results of the research, my identity will remain completely anonymous.

Date: 7/09/2017

Signed at: ____________________________________________

Signed: ____________________________________________

____________________________