

## MFA Perspective on Accountability.

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Today, we have been invited here to talk to you about the MFA's perspective on accountability and identify some challenges, opportunities, and requirements.

So, today I am not wearing a digital hat per se, there are plenty of specialists here today and many opportunities for discussion and questions with the panel later on.

Beside, when talking about accountability we cannot isolate ourselves into one corner as *all the elements are intrinsically bound by the consumer* and they are the only reason any of us are here doing what we do.

- It is their behaviour that influences and shapes our industry.
- It is their behaviour and connection with a brand or service that needs to be understood.

There are certainly many layers involved in delivering the holy grail of accountability.

Firstly, the macro view. In a truly holistic fashion, marketers should be seeking answers on understanding what elements of the communication mix are delivering the results – not just media, but PR, Direct Mail, Instore, events - the entire spectrum.

Every connection should be put in place for a reason and they are all intended to support the message of the brand yet seldom do we know how they worked individually or collectively.

### Question:

Shouldn't it be incumbent on the advertiser to want to know as much as possible about their influence and impact on their consumers to be sure that they are engaged with them in a positive and effective way?

The micro view is that we need to ensure each of the campaigns components provide a rich and relevant source of data to help evaluate its performance and that there are measures of verification to prove that the advertiser gets what he paid for.

Question:

Shouldn't it also be incumbent on media companies as the channels of this relationship to want to better understand their respective impacts on the big picture and in isolation in order to demonstrate their own value?

Challenges

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The macro view:

In talking with some of our industry CEO's there appears to only be a scattering of marketers they recognise as having a passionate concern about measuring and evaluating all the elements of the campaign and even fewer that attempt to consolidate these learnings into a single report that attempts to identify what worked and why it worked.

Unfortunately there are still many clients reluctant to provide access to their data and this makes it near impossible to make a true connection between activity and results.

The responsibility of Brand Managers can be a very broad role and they certainly have increasing demands placed on their time with the increase of connection points in their portfolio, so these time pressures can have a strong impact on their time and ability to remain on a rigorous path of investigating. If there is *no corporate governance or policy* or even *resources* in place, the commitment to interrogation can be lost.

The micro view:

Agencies are always looking for a degree of braveness from their clients, someone willing to take that leap of faith into uncharted waters.

How else can we learn and identify the potentials out there..... how else can we continue to be inspired and keep looking forward if we don't have some bold and passionate pioneers amongst us?

Absolutely we need to continue believing in..... and encouraging this need to break new ground otherwise we run the risk of being mundane and repetitive.

But, it's not quite that simplistic.

- It's a tough case to get a bold and risky concept approved by the board
- it's a tough call to justify the investment when you don't have any concept of what could be achieved and
- it will probably be the last time you get to do it if you can't identify what worked and .....importantly .....what didn't.

I can't tell you how many times we have sat in meetings (*with people who shall remain nameless*) that have responded to our calling with .....

*'well nobody else in the world is doing it so why should we?'*

That is not the attitude we can afford to tolerate any longer – in fact when you consider the size of our market we have a great advantage to evolve more rapidly – why can't we be the pioneers ?

I may stand corrected, but to my recollection, there has not been one instant in my six years at the MFA, where we have received a phone call from a media group or body, saying

‘we want to be more accountable.....

what do we need to do..... and can you help us’.

Certainly the MFA has around 16 seats on various technical and board committees and our involvement is very well respected. BUT this has only been achieved after countless presentations, discussions and a fair amount of foot stamping, so we have really had to push our way into these boardrooms and these debates.

So I suppose overall, acceptance is our biggest challenge today and once we cross this hurdle, we can truly start to move forward.

## Opportunities

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- With Marketers
  - embracing the need to implement broader and richer methods of analysing and evaluating activity - We estimate that around 35 - 40% of all marketing activity is not measured in any way, which is a dangerous figure if are talking about a \$30billion industry.
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  - investing in research that seeks a better understanding of all activations, in their own right..... and as an integrated result - We believe that 2% and up to 10% for smaller clients from the communication budgets should be invested in measuring ROI.

Remember, you can't manage what you don't measure

- investing in resources like Campaign Managers to manage the process and work with all stakeholders to collate and analyse the results
  
- With media companies'
  - understanding that accountability is at the core of every decision and investment made, like it or not - it is fact. Whilst many decisions are based on micro level data at this stage, it still has an impact on decisions being made.
  
  - Pushing the envelope in seeking continual innovations and improvements in our measurement capabilities to be sure we can truly capture what our consumers are doing and how they are engaging with all the opportunities available to them.
  
- We all need to
  - Ensure these developments are treated with priority and given sufficient or ideally dedicated resources if we want to move as quickly as our consumer are.
  
  - We need to start thinking and preparing NOW for what is coming in the future. We can't wait until content distribution via widgets .....and..... i phone apps..... for example..... reach critical mass before we put it on the agenda to find out who, where and how this is being viewed

There is no doubt that the media opportunities available today are endless and as rapidly as new environments are born and tables shifting with regards to content creation and ownership we still seem to be struggling to keep pace with the accountability. For something so important, it still receives lip service at best.

The opportunities, we believe is to see the marketing community embracing and driving this need for a holistic approach.

There needs to be.....-recognition .....support for.....and commitment to - delivering valuable insights across the entire communication program .....not only in terms of consumer understanding but also with information transparency and verification

## Requirements

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Taking a minute to steal the theme of “Evolution” from our 2009 Awards program (which by the way entries close June 25).

Charles Darwin once said

*“In the struggle for survival, the fittest win out at the expense of their rivals*

*because they succeed in adapting themselves best to their environment”.*

How relevant that statement is for us all today?

Evolution is vital to our industry, the ongoing pursuit of excellence in delivering our clients with information that is rich, valuable and insightful must be on all our agenda’s.

We must work in a collaborative and unified manner that keeps the two core elements at heart – the client and the consumer!

Importance of verification

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You can't begin to imagine the volume of information and data that any agency must navigate their way through when making their decisions. You can however, probably imagine just how creative the media sales person can be with their numbers when trying to sell their wares.

Any proposal that comes across the desk of a media strategist will likely be considered for the ideas put forward ...and the cost, but rarely will they hang their hats on the 'sales pitch data' unless it is something that can be proved. Which is why I am cashing in on this chance to make a call to the industry to take caution with claims any publisher makes without being audited – what are they hiding?

What does this verification service mean to us and our members?

It is about having confidence with what you are buying, because.....

you know that the publishers have nothing to hide

you know they want to be accountable in what you are buying into

they invest time and money to ensuring they are delivering best practice

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to mention that the MFA has long been an avid supporter of the services provided by the ABA and we proudly work alongside the organisation and its various members in the many committees that exist. As with all initiatives that come from the ABA, the concept of web site verification has been managed in a very collaborative and timely fashion and we are really pleased to enjoy such a productive relationship with the organisation and its many committee representatives.

THANK YOU