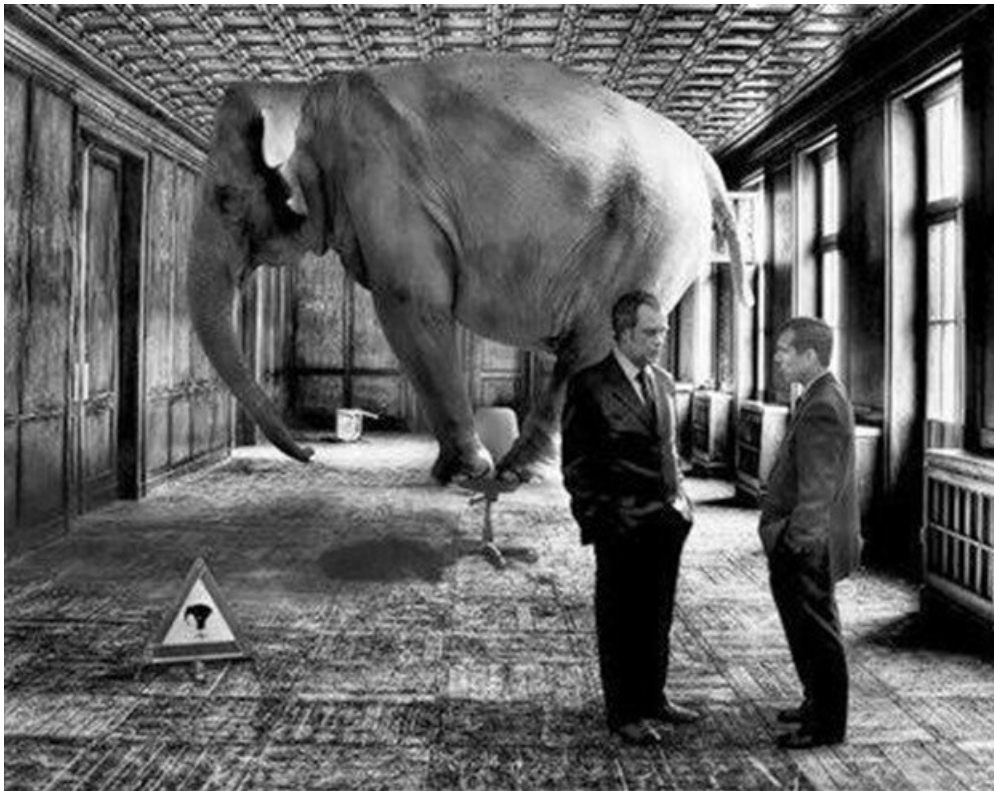


The elephant in the room and the 'Big 5' threats to the media agency

 By [Quinton Jones](#)

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Here, Quinton Jones writes about the elephant in the room and the 'Big 5' threats to the media agency: people; everyone is eating our lunch; the triopolisation of media; media DIY; and transparency...



[TM Media](#)

1. People

Okay, let me just deal with the elephant in the room first up. The SA media industry has some really great people, even some of the best people, on par with anywhere else in the world. They innovate, they don't compromise, and really push things forward. They, unfortunately, are the exception rather than the rule. Let's be honest there is a layer of cream floating on a whole lot of average in the middle, moving down to a layer of sludge at the very bottom. By sludgy bottom, I'm not talking about the less experienced. Nope, unfortunately, mediocrity does not cure over time, nor is it restricted to any particular level. Sometimes you get a whole lot of average masquerading as excellence, even as that savantic media rainmaker right at the top. Who knew.

Be outraged! How dare I say that! Hey, deep down you know it's true.

Think about it. This is the currency we trade in. Its people, computers and not much else. Only we can make sure that we bring the best in and keep them. Find great not good and mentor them like crazy!

2. Everyone is eating our lunch

It used to be that specialisation was limited to specialists. Consultants are really threatening big agencies. It's very clear how some of the global network media agencies are absolutely haemorrhaging at the moment that this is seriously hurting.

Ask Martin why he's not sleeping so good lately.

And now you have the pop-up agency. You know them well. These are the guys that normally have the quirky names – literally first word is a colour or verb and second one is an animal or a thing. Let's see... Blue Monkey, Red Banana, Jumping Bean. You get it. Okay, I'm taking the piss here, but you get my point. Yep, it seems that anyone with a laptop and a love for Facebook can be a digital/media agency. Gone are the days of specialisation and accreditation. There are literally hundreds. The barriers to entry are very low, and so are your standards and understanding, if you as a marketer or business owner think they are all the same.

3. The triopolisation of media

I'm sure that's not a word, but it describes what has to be a real threat – the fact that so much media and money is flowing into the holy trinity of media buys – TV, Google, Facebook.

Diversity is good. Fragmentation is good. This has to be broken – it's bad for the industry on so many levels – more next time.

4. Media DIY

Clients that are moving media and digital in-house. The explosion of agencies creates the perception that the solution is easy, the narrowing of focus channel options also might seem to back this up. Regardless of why, it's our fault. If the standard was high and they were getting what they want, they wouldn't do it.

5. Transparency

Nothing has damaged our industry more in the last five years. This is a real issue for me, and an issue that has to be dealt with properly.

It's a really stinky can of worms waiting to explode.

How many big network agencies have been caught with their hands in the cookie jar all over the globe? Don't think it's not happening here. Maybe there is a media Steinhoff out there just waiting to happen?

It's simple—make any deal you want, do anything you want. Make money! Trade! Trade for the client and not just for yourself. Make that extra million, but then just be honest.

“Mrs Client I can make an extra million rand from trading.”

“I'd like to share in this with you. Can we chat?”

If you are doing deals behind their back, deals that your clients would frown upon, or that you would be uncomfortable to discuss with them—then you are dishonest at best. Simple.

In closing...

A very important point six here could be **measurement**. Although Big 5 sounds way better than Big 6, so I've added this to the summary. This is important though. Clients are no longer satisfied with the old adage, "I know 50% of my spend is working, etc. etc.".

In fact neither are their bosses, the bean counters, who are looking at marketing with increasing scrutiny. We've moved from "How many did I reach?" to "How many did I sell, and did this actually work?". It's all about metrics across the business as a whole, and the contribution of all media to the collective picture. The business result is paramount. Get out of just the reach and frequency mindset and move to including your contribution to results. A back-to-basics approach is definitely a solid start.

ABOUT QUINTON JONES

Quinton Jones is director of TM Media, TM is future focused. Media of the future is predictive and data-led. It's about insights and bringing the cost of marketing down through intelligence. TM is a media agency that provides data driven media solutions using the analytics and insights that digital provides, and then matches this with a very creative approach to media solutions.

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