

What came first: the data or the chicken?

 By [Maria Berrios-Carter](#)

16 Mar 2020

I write this with small drops of blood falling from my eyeballs after reading all the 2020 trends jamming my social feeds.



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'How the science of data analysis is shaping the future', 'Optimising your CX report to improve ROI' and my favourite, 'How to maximise your content in 2020 using cognitive AI'.

What's happening to creative adland? And to the creative gods that reigned and brought terror to the boardroom tables with their complete disregard to conform, fit in with budgets or culture. Their only focus was to make the best damn creative piece of work. Period.

They worked in what often seemed like an outward chaotic mess with an inability to focus on spreadsheets or follow briefs. Yet inside, lurked razor-sharp minds that breathed the brand and instinctively knew the right strategy to adopt in order to get results. They called a spade a spade and were not easily influenced by data or the opinion of others. They shielded their ideas stubbornly because they knew they were right and were dam sure going to put up a good fight to prove it.

Driven by rich vats of vintage intuition

Remember conflict? Remember how creatives passionate about their ideas put up fights to protect their work? Some more irrational than others, like the time a computer was flung out of a third floor, or the creative director who told a client that if they wanted to, "produce the same old shit, don't waste my **"#@ing** time." These politically incorrect beasts fought to guard creativity against the common diuretic so often served by those with a fear of presenting something different, something fresh?



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You know why these men (this is the 90's people) reigned supreme? Because more often than not they were right. And

proved the numbers wrong. Let's not forget it was their vision and creativity that built brands like Coke, Nike, Adidas, Apple and Starbucks, way before data analysis and social media was an embryonic neuron waiting to uncoil inside some geeks brain.

They were driven by rich vats of vintage intuition and human insights and had the foresight and talent to pour these into award-winning campaigns.

Which brings me back to 'the optimisation of data analytic' and such things and opens up an interesting quandary. Data analysis, remember, needs something to analyse, so what came first?

Human nature is a timeless gift of certainty

Think about it, what good is all that great analytics processing power if you can't make a hypothesis on something that may not have been tackled before? How can one be creative and explore new grounds, new spaces if they have already been discovered?

The mining for insights is a quest as old as time, but as much as technology advances, human nature is a timeless gift of certainty. This is one space where intuition trumps data.



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Do I think these creative gods with their over-inflated egos and disregard for basic manners, should come back?

No. That bull was not ok. There's space for thoughtful debate, listening, manners and respect. What seems to have been lost, is the respect for the creative experience and our trust for intuition.



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I'm the first to admit that our digital era has been hugely beneficial and has certainly simplified and enriched so many aspects of our lives and industry. But the immediacy of the digital age has us rushing to produce stuff and forgetting why we are doing it. Just because digital allows us to react immediately doesn't mean we need to. We don't need digital communications to just fill a space; we need them to be impactful and meaningful.

So, perhaps, in 2020 we should go back to the basics, and allow creativity and the process of creativity once again, to be the core of what effective advertising has always been about: great ideas

ABOUT MARIA BERRIOS-CARTER

Maria Berrios-Carter is a senior copywriter at a Cape Town-based marketing agency. She loves the smell of freshly squeezed ideas in the morning and working with people who have a passion for their craft. Email Maria at mberrioscarter@gmail.com and connect with her on LinkedIn.

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