

# It's Marketing Magic.

OPINION

## Woolley Marketing: Local or global or what when it comes to brands?

In his regular column for Mumbrella, Trinity P3 founder and global CEO Darren Woolley examines the decision facing brands big and small.

September 9, 2021 8:05  
by **DARREN WOOLLEY**



Global brands. Local executions or global executions. It is all a matter of perspective. Yet again, last week I had that same conversation with a global brand director in Europe who was complaining what a challenge it is to manage a global brand across so many different markets, different cultures, different economies. A few years earlier they had gone to market to select a global creative agency as their global brand partner. Box ticked.

But two years later, local brand teams have been withdrawing from the global arrangement. Why? They have been demonstrating that the local office of the global agency lacks the capabilities they need or that there are better local agencies that are cheaper or both. At this, the global brand director was throwing his hands in the air and asking: "So what is the alternative? Appointing a different agency in each market?"



Cartoon by Dennis Flad, with permission (2021)

From an Australian advertising perspective, it can feel we are on the other end of this dilemma. How many global brands, with offices on the other side of the planet, run a global pitch for their creative agency, leaving the local agency office to adapt global work 80% of the time with a local promotion making up the other 20% of their remit? Yet the local client feels like they are paying global rates and (that's because they are, including the up to 15% of the fee for global co-ordination). While the local office of the global agency feels like they are too good to be rehashing the ordinary global work from their own head office to 'suit' the Australian market.

Mind you, increasingly there are Australian brands going to the global market and facing the same issue. Although often their first and biggest challenge is coping with the scale of these markets, rather than the discipline of managing a global brand.

Global versus local is yet another of those long-standing, polarised debates. On the one side we have our global brand disciples chanting 'one world, one brand' – a concept from the second half of the last century which arose under the influence of western cultural imperialism. Mostly CPG devotees, their faith is strong, as their leaders preach economies of scale through control of a consistent advertising execution and message.

On the other side we have the individualists of this century who, empowered by technology, talk about personalisation at scale and the strength of leveraging cultural norms to create relevant connections and engagement with their customers. They argue that while staying true to the underlying brand strategy, it is more important to execute and express this in the most relevant and meaningful way possible for any particular audience.

The fact is, of course, while the global brand director believed there were only two acceptable choices, there are actually many. The choices between rigorous consistency and responsive customisation or even personalisation are infinite, each coming with a variation on the ways of delivery.

There are plenty of successful innovations over the past two decades that demonstrate this. They include the rise of transcreation companies that take a brand advertising message and adapt it to suit each individual market and cultural segment. There are regional hubs that bring the brand discipline closer to the individual markets. **In-housing, particularly where there is a focus on performance marketing**, is becoming a norm. And marketing workflow platforms are increasing collaboration and compliance to brand disciplines through shared assets and brand templates.

ADVERTISEMENT

BVOD HAS  
**49%**  
BETTER  
RECALL  
THAN  
YOUTUBE

The challenge that remains for the industry is how to move on from the old, polarised global versus local debate, where the two potential answers looked simple but often neither proved acceptable. The multitude of options now available for any global brand director makes the choice far more nuanced.

What will work for one brand will not automatically work for another. There are no cookie-cutter approaches to solving the complexity of managing a global brand across multiple markets, with different economies, competitive sets, government regulations, and market and category maturities.

But that does not mean there is not a best fit solution. Simply defaulting to a tried and tested but flawed model because it is easy is never the best answer for any brand. And the bigger the brand, the greater the investment at risk.

The global brand director I talked to last week is using a frame from the last millennium to think about this problem. Today, technology advances, and a generation that has grown up working with them, make it possible to embrace any number of better models – each relying on brand discipline, but without the heavy hand of global control.



Darren Woolley is the founder and global CEO at Trinity P3. Woolley Marketing is a regular Mumbrella column.

GOT A TIP?

topics [DARREN WOOLLEY](#) [GLOBAL](#) [WOOLLEY MARKETING](#)

f Share

🐦 Tweet

in Share

RECALL  
THAN  
YOUTUBE

#### LATEST



Mumbrellacast Interview: Squarespace's David Lee on why in-housing creative isn't for everyone

aws

Amazon Web Services appoints new head of communications ANZ



Foundation retains media as Omnicom wins global remit for Mercedes-Benz



Helga's reworks campaign by Richards Rose via The Works



Twitter Australia's acting MD on TV, Spaces and Communities