

If you keep doing that you will go blind

 By [Damon Stapleton](#)

20 Mar 2019

"TV is dead. Have you seen that new John Lewis ad. Pretty cool."



Image © [Damon's Brain](#)

Somebody said this to me about two weeks ago. It kind of stuck in my head. Only in advertising could you say this and nobody would think you were weird. Except, it is pretty weird.

When I pointed out how strange that statement was, the person triumphantly said, "yes, but I saw it on Facebook." I went and got a coffee.

Last week, Nike released its powerful Dream Crazier spot. In a publication that praised the commercial, there was another article that said, yep, you guessed it, traditional advertising is dying because everything is changing.



#FairnessFirst: Nike 'dreams crazier' with Caster and Serena

Leigh Andrews 4 Mar 2019



I began to ask myself a few simple questions...

Where is the work that is replacing this kind of work? Everybody is talking about it, I just never see it. Also, what is actually changing?

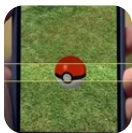
Look at the three commercials below. They span an entire decade. Ten years. They are all good stories with a human insight at the centre. Are they really that different? I mean, ten years in advertising is a lifetime. The answer is no. Because, good stories are timeless. That's why they are good stories:

2019

2012

2010

This got me thinking about our obsession with change. It gives us a weird amnesia about what has worked and what hasn't in advertising. We are always searching for the next thing, in case we are not seen as contemporary or modern. Remember the frenzy around Pokemon Go? It was going to change the world. Google glasses, too. Anybody remember Vine? And just last week, Amazon discontinued dash buttons.



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I remember being in Cannes and somebody in cool trainers saying they were the future.

“ Nobody remembers what anybody said yesterday. We just keep moving forward. I understand that this happens with innovation. And innovation is energetic and sexy. What isn't sexy is stuff that is timeless. Things that don't change. That's a bit boring. So, we don't really talk about it. ”

Towards the end of last year, Mark Ritson wrote [an article](#) about marketers being obsessed with the future. He used the phrase '**the pornography of change**'. This has really stuck in my head. I think it is an excellent way of explaining our obsession with new stuff. VR headsets etc.



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Bronwyn Williams 17 Aug 2018



Inherently, in advertising, we believe 'the new' will always be the correct answer.

I also think a lot of what comes and goes is the delivery mechanism. The platform. This is changing a lot and will keep changing. How stuff gets to you and what data that stuff can generate. What hasn't changed is it has to make you feel something. As the late great David Abbott once said, it doesn't matter how fast s#!t reaches you, it's still s#!t.

Perhaps, you don't want to look at film because you think that is old school. OK. For the hell of it, go back to 2007 and look at the [Tap Project](#). Now, look at few ideas from 2010. Go look at T-Mobile Dance, or [The Zimbabwean](#), Droga 5's Jay-Z Decoded in 2011, [Dove Sketches](#) in 2013 and then look at Fearless Girl, a recent piece of brilliant work.



#FairnessFirst: Golden 'Fearless Girl' says yes, she McCann!

Leigh Andrews 30 Jul 2018



What you will see is a whole lot of good work. You will also see how when you have a great idea, time doesn't make much difference. A great idea is a great idea. That's why they have value.

Delivery and how things integrate is the place where there are many shifting tectonic plates. And this will continue to escalate rapidly.

However, what that delivery mechanism serves you has not changed half as much as people make out. If you want a person's time, you better have something to give them. That was true yesterday and will be truer tomorrow.

We are a business that is constantly looking at the future with good reason. However, occasionally we should learn from our past about what is unchanging.

Last week WPP's Mark Read said this:

“ We need to invest more in creativity. We've disappeared down the rabbit hole of optimisation, but a fantastic idea can multiply a client's budget by three to five times. ”

He is right, although Les Binet and Peter Field would claim it is even more effective than that. What he is saying though is clear. Over the last couple of years, advertising went a bit crazy. Some people thought we were selling something else besides ideas and creativity that helps business grow.

My question is, what else besides creativity can do that to a client's budget? My next question is, why did anybody ever move away from creativity if it can do that?

The simple answer is, **people thought efficiency and effectiveness** were the same thing. There are many examples right now in ad land of this blindness. For some, it will prove fatal.

It would seem a good story is still a good story. A great idea will always be a great idea.

I am not sure that will ever change.

“A communicator must be concerned with unchanging man, with his obsessive drive to survive, to be admired, to succeed, to love, to take care of his own. It is insight into human nature that is the key to the communicator's skill.”—
Bill Bernbach

ABOUT DAMON STAPLETON

Damon is regional chief creative officer for DDB in New Zealand and Australia. Before that, ECD at Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, before that, group ECD of TBWA Hunt Lascaris and global ECD of Standard Bank. He has won over 500 awards internationally, including a D&AD Black Pencil, Cannes Grand Prix, Grand Clio, ADC Black Cube and most effective ad in the world by Warc 100. Damon is now regional chief creative officer for DDB in New Zealand and Australia...

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