

A VIEW FROM SUE UNERMAN

Facing down the difficulties on the horizon for 2018

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SUE UNERMAN, CHIEF TRANSFORMATION OFFICER 02 JAN 2018

Bridge divides this year through the power of creativity.

Are you feeling positive about 2018? A small poll of business leaders gives mixed results. With Brexit consequences looming and uncertain negotiations on the horizon there is much insecurity and business leaders don't like too many variables and the uncertainty that follows.

David Wilding of Twitter was out talking to media and agency heads as 2017 wrapped up and reports many accounts of gloom about prospects for the year ahead.

The nation is, of course, divided, that's obvious. Exactly how it is divided is more complicated. There are people who voted Brexit or remain. There are those who are positive about the possibilities ahead (however they voted) and those mired in despair

about the consequences (however they voted).

As artificial intelligence and machine learning continue to progress there's fear about job losses and about change.

Machine learning. There is of course plenty of hype about this. In fact, the [Gartner Hype Cycle](#) has machine learning just about at the peak of inflated expectations and at least a couple of years from the plateau of productivity.

There's plenty of room to test, learn, apply. Where we have jobs done by humans that can be done by robots faster and better we will make that transition in 2018. Instead of having humans doing robotic jobs we can empower them to make a difference.

So this is another UK business divide, one clearly reflected in the debates in Campaign and marketing titles. Two tribes, technophobes and technophiles.

Michael Hayman, who is co-founder of Seven Hills and co-author of "Mission, how the best in business break through", gave a rousing speech, at The Female Lead's December gathering, where he suggested that the divide in Britain could be boiled down to one simple divide. The divide between optimists and pessimists.

Whichever tribe you belong to, you would be an idiot to underestimate the difficulties coming in 2018. There's a great deal of change once again on the horizon and many unknowns.

There are going to be problems to solve.

Problems that we haven't faced before in exactly the form they're going to come at us.

There's only one real resource that we have for combating those problems.

Creativity. Ideas that work in new ways to solve difficulties that we can't predict.

Not creativity in the way that it has been defined by “Mad men” in the past.

Not exclusive creativity. Creativity in everyone.

We’ve a long tradition at MediaCom of training everybody in creativity. We believe that everyone has a creative streak that can be developed and trained just like a muscle.

At MediaCom we believe in the power of creativity to drive competitive advantage.

We believe that:

Creativity powers great work that grows our clients.

Creativity belongs to everyone, not a creative department

Creativity is human insight fuelled

Creativity is data fuelled

Creativity is open access and comes from the collaboration of many different agencies and partners

Creativity works in every environment in media where the consumers are

Creativity inspires desire and can also close the sale and prompt purchase

Creativity comes when you go off the beaten track

Best way to face 2018?

Be creative. With creative ideas we can drive real advantage in uncertain times.

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