

The Future of Creative Agencies

Marketing Rooted in Experience, Meaning and Culture

Alexandre Weber

1. Introduction: The World Has Changed — So Must the Agency

Creative agencies are navigating a rapidly shifting landscape. Brands are no longer simply looking to advertise — they want to create connection, impact, and cultural value. The creative agency of the future does not sell 'ads'; it delivers a holistic creative service: branding, games, immersive experiences, innovative products, and much more.

This roadmap outlines an ambitious vision for evolving toward an integrated creative agency model — one that is strategic, technology-driven, and unwaveringly focused on value creation for clients.

2. Core Thesis: Advertising Is Just One Form of Creativity

The agency of tomorrow must no longer position itself as an 'advertising' shop, but as a cross-disciplinary creative agency — capable of solving business, cultural, and relational challenges through creativity in all its forms:

- Branding
- Cultural and editorial content
- Games, objects, products
- Immersive and/or interactive experiences
- Advertising campaigns... when truly relevant

This positioning allows the agency to offer chosen creative solutions rather than imposing advertising as a default.

3. The Decline: “Interruption Marketing Is Over”

While interruption marketing (intrusive formats like TV ads or pop-ups) is not entirely dead, it is in steep decline:

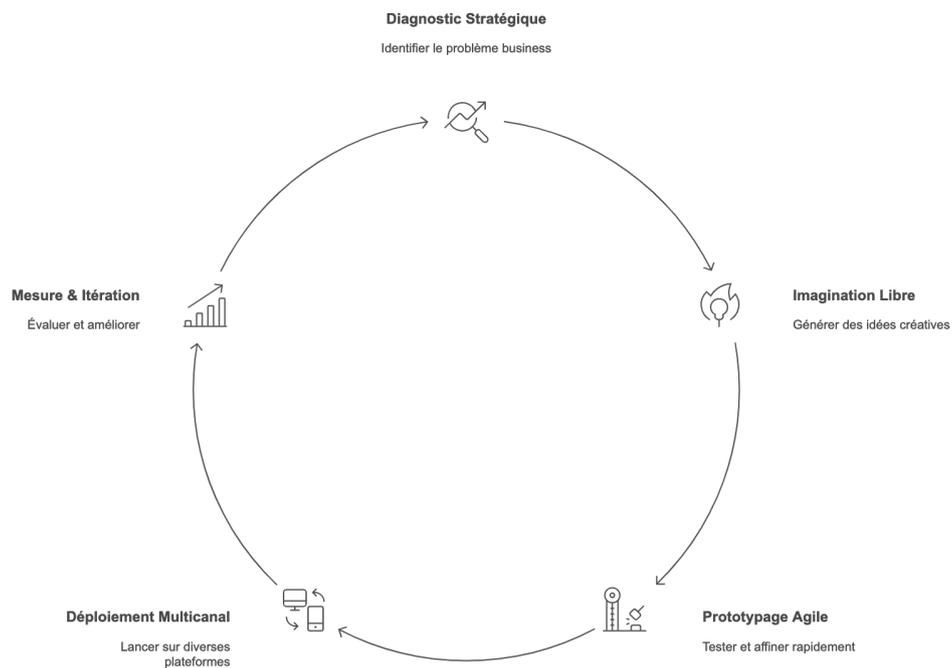
- Explosion in ad blocker usage
- Growing rejection of forced formats
- Mass migration to ad-free platforms (Netflix, YouTube Premium, etc.)
- Rising expectations around personalization, value, and experience

Brands must now create content that people choose to consume, rather than interrupting them. Implication: the focus must shift toward immersive experiences, value-added content, and a creative strategy genuinely aligned with audience desires.

4. The Integrated Creative Service Model

A new process for the creative agency:

- Strategic diagnosis: understand the real business problem
- Open imagination: all creative forms are on the table
- Agile prototyping: test fast, refine intelligently
- Multi-channel deployment: media, product, space, digital
- Measurement & iteration: creative, business, and cultural KPIs



5. Key Service Offerings

Offering	Client Benefit	Examples
Brand Studio	Strong identity, coherent brand strategy	Naming, storytelling, brand platform
Creative Innovation Lab	Unique, experiential solutions	Games, objects, performances, cultural activations
Content Factory	Agile, multi-channel production	Films, short formats, audio, digital
Media & Impact Hub	Strategic and creative amplification	Digital media, influence, cultural targeting

6. Key Trends to Integrate in 2026

Creative agencies operate in an environment where the expectations of brands, consumers, and talent are changing profoundly. To stay relevant, agencies must anticipate and integrate the deep-rooted trends redefining their craft. Here are the four major dynamics to embrace now.

1. An AI-Forward Culture: AI in Service of Creation, Not a Replacement

Integrating artificial intelligence is not about automating creativity — it's about amplifying it. Agencies that embrace generative AI tools (text, image, data, insights) build more agile processes, multiply their prototyping capacity, and can explore far more creative options.

2. Creative–Media Fusion: Conceiving Ideas with Their Channels

34% of CMOs plan to integrate their creative and media divisions, because they can no longer afford to operate in silos. Media is no longer just a carrier: it is part of the idea itself. This fusion delivers greater relevance, faster execution, and more coherent, innovative campaigns (see the Buzzman/Tyers case study).

3. Structural Agility: Thinking in Micro-Campaigns

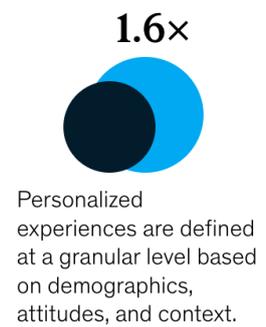
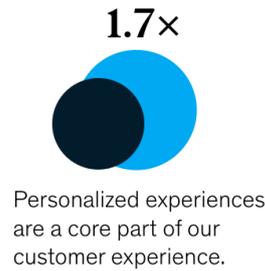
Major platforms demand short, reactive formats adapted to real-time feedback. The best-performing agencies now function as continuous experimentation labs: they iterate rapidly based on market response and data, launch targeted tests, and adjust strategy as they go. This logic requires breaking free from the 'one-shot' culture and establishing a continuous creative backlog.

4. Immersive Experience as the Universal Brand Language

Augmented reality, hybrid spaces, digitally enhanced physical objects, gaming, interactive formats — the boundaries between content, experience, and product are dissolving. Brands are seeking to build entire universes, not just messages. Agencies must become architects of these experiences, thinking design, spatiality, and emotion from the very genesis of each project.

These trends are not optional. They redefine how ideas are born, how they spread, and how they live in the world. Embracing them is what guarantees long-term cultural, technological, and strategic relevance.

Infuse creativity with analytics



Source: McKinsey

7. Case Study: Buzzman & the Acquisition of Tyers

Buzzman, a renowned French creative agency, illustrated the evolution of the agency model with the strategic acquisition of media agency Tyers in December 2024.

Objective of the Deal

To integrate full media capability in order to offer clients a 360° solution, combining creative firepower with intelligent distribution.

Why It's Strategic

- Tyers had already been collaborating informally with Buzzman for several years on hybrid campaigns (Krispy Kreme, Columbus Café...)
- By integrating Tyers, Buzzman gained internal capacity to plan, buy, and optimize media plans
- This strengthens coherence between creative idea and distribution strategy

Expected Outcome

Greater responsiveness, performance, and cross-media coherence. A structure that combines agile creative thinking with internalized media strategy — moving away from the sequential model where you 'make an ad' and then 'figure out where to run it.' Where the idea will be distributed must now be considered from the very first creative phase, as the medium itself becomes an extension of the idea.

7b. Case Study: Citibank & the Success of Citi Bike

Citi Bike is an emblematic example of what marketing can become when a brand stops interrupting... and starts integrating into people's real lives.

From Bank to Urban Mobility

In 2013, Citibank invested \$41 million to sponsor a bike-share service in New York City. The result: the creation of Citi Bike, a now-iconic active mobility network in the city. Through this partnership, the brand didn't simply put its logo on bicycles — it inserted itself into the daily lives of millions of urban residents.

A Marketing Move That Transcends Advertising

- Citibank tripled its spontaneous brand awareness in New York in under two years
- The campaign is cited as one of the most profitable in the brand's history (source: Fast Company, The Financial Brand)
- Citi Bike became a cultural symbol of New York City, far beyond simple brand placement

Why This Is a Foundational Case

This is not advertising. It is a brand act. Citi doesn't say 'look at us' — it says 'we are with you in your everyday life.' The brand becomes a concrete, useful, and memorable urban experience.

The marketing of tomorrow doesn't shout louder. It creates services, objects, and experiences that integrate into people's habits. A strong idea can deploy itself in the real world and produce value well beyond a screen or a billboard.

8. Transformation Roadmap

Entering a new agency model is not simple. It is built with method, commitment, and concrete milestones. Here is how a creative agency can begin this strategic shift:

Phase 1: Define the Vision and Align Internally

- Clarify the strategic positioning and new offerings (Brand Studio, Media Hub, Innovation Lab...)
- Co-build the transformation with teams: vision workshops, agency manifesto, collective objectives
- Train staff on new challenges: strategy, innovation, media, creative AI

Phase 2: Launch Pilots and Build on Existing Strengths

- Identify 2–3 clients open to testing innovative formats (experiential, brand content, cultural product)
- Create proofs of concept with small, cross-disciplinary project teams
- Establish an agile experimentation unit inspired by growth hacking: test & learn fast

Phase 3: Rethink the Commercial Approach

- Revamp presentations, pitches, and brief-response methods
- Develop an 'impact, solution, transformation'-oriented discourse
- Position as a strategic partner, not merely an advertising executor

Phase 4: Steer the Transformation with Data

Define hybrid KPIs:

- Business: revenue per client, collaboration tenure, share of total budget
- Creative: campaign awareness, virality, industry recognition
- Cultural: societal impact, influence, organic engagement
- Create a quarterly dashboard to track transformation progress

Phase 5: Document, Communicate, Adjust

- Share successes (and failures) both internally and externally
- Create a transformation journal
- Re-adjust the roadmap every 3 to 6 months with teams and partners

The transformation of a creative agency is not a one-off project — it is a living process. It must be iterative, collaborative, and embodied at every level of the organization. This is how strong, distinctive, and lasting culture is built.

9. Conclusion

The agency no longer sells advertising — it sells ideas. Creative responses to the real problems brands face. This positioning — more strategic, more technological, and more cultural — is the key to building lasting differentiation in a saturated market.

Annexes & Sources

Interruption Marketing

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Creative + Media Integration & Agility

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