

BORDERLESS  
CONNECTED  
MADE IN  
AFRICA

*Building Our Future  
on Our Terms*





# *Local Creativity AND Continental Thinking*

Our industry is poised to get closer to its audiences more than ever before. We know how to get messages in front of them. Now it's about making those messages truly connect with their lives. Culture is moving at lightspeed, and the agencies that keep pace will set the standard.

## *Culture isn't a trend, it's a battleground.*

In Sub-Saharan Africa, culture isn't curated, it's contested. Youth-led protests, artistic censorship and narrative decolonization are reshaping identity in real time, across generations.

Brands can't just tap into the moment; they must understand what's at stake and decide how to really commit.

Real cultural relevance means more than fluency in slang; it means sensitivity to struggle. It means bold, local storytelling, and intuitive connection to earn a place in hearts and minds.

What's more, the most compelling, honest creativity is rarely solo. It's collective. Music groups, arts collectives, fashion crews and digital circles are creating culture together. These collectives and ecosystems are just as important as influencers, yet they're rarely tapped into.

But, we work in a sector that has deliberately distanced itself from grassroots creativity. One that thinks the formats and the approaches of thirty years ago can achieve the same results today, that the role of a creative is that of a factory.

Youth crave relevance, speed and authentic values that resonate. What it takes to earn and keep attention, has changed. Our audiences are among the most active social media users in the world, giving brands an incredible opportunity to connect, engage, and lead in real time.

## *People don't move the way we want them to*

Yes, social media is driven by entertainment, but that's just the surface. In growingly shoppable feeds, customer journeys are native and complex; more buying takes place through social here than anywhere else in the world. We're more likely to refer to WhatsApp for a recommendation than Google.

As a sector, we have a huge opportunity to think beyond disciplines and create more connected, collaborative ways of working. By breaking down the walls between us, we can unlock bigger ideas and make brands more accessible, relevant, and engaging to the people who matter most; their customers.

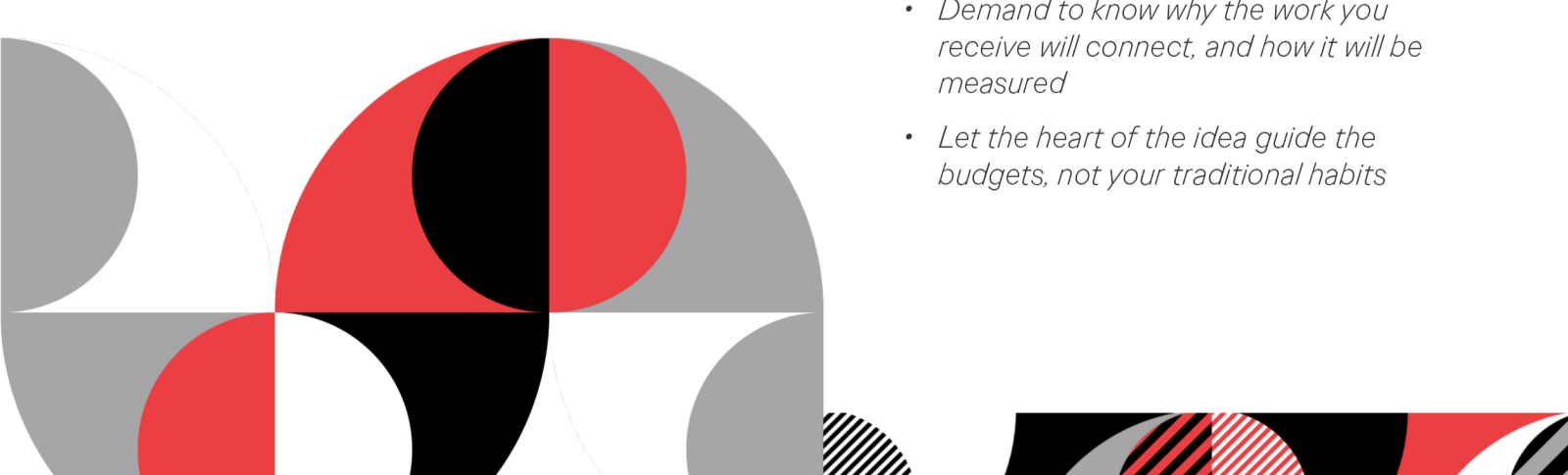
We need bolder decisions in planning and greater leadership, so not every answer starts with a manifesto, a film script and a billboard.

### *What this means for agencies:*

- *Reforge relationships, reconnect with grassroots creativity*
- *Respect culture and the analogue, give it the space and recognition it deserves*
- *Converge multi-disciplinary teams, in physical spaces to make the most of the creative at hand*

### *What this means for brands:*

- *Understand what relevancy looks like for your brand and embrace it by doing, not just saying*
- *Demand to know why the work you receive will connect, and how it will be measured*
- *Let the heart of the idea guide the budgets, not your traditional habits*





**\$4B+**

*The African creative economy is growing faster than any other sector, now reaching more than \$4bn annually*

*In 2024, our music industry grew by 22.6%, the fastest globally*

**70%**



*Across SSA, over 70% of web traffic is mobile-based*

*By 2030 social commerce is expected to reach almost \$9.5bn in Africa*

**2030**



# Local Solutions to Local Problems

MYDAWA's First Boda shows what happens when a brand and agency team up to solve a real-world problem with cultural smarts and creative heart. Born of deep local insight and understanding, it's purpose-first, not product-first; building trust, relevance, and in this case literally saving lives. Designed to scale easily across borders while keeping its cultural edge,



→ [View case](#)

It's a powerful reminder that when brands show up meaningfully, people take notice. And action.

88% SUBURBS REACHED

## Bridging creative divides

HerFolio burst onto the scene at Nairobi Design Week as the Ogilvy Africa Network's game-changer for gender equity in creativity. Rooted in local insight and a real understanding of the barriers grassroots talent face, it gives female designers, musicians, and artists a stage to showcase their brilliance, build agency-world access, and shake up the creative industry. Built for scale across markets while staying relevant and effective, it's a model for how Ogilvy-driven, purpose-led initiatives can travel without losing their soul.



Ogilvy africa × Ogilvy75

Calling all African women in creative!





# *Human Empathy AND AI's Scalability*

AI is outpacing adoption predictions everywhere, and sub-Saharan Africa is no exception. But as experimentation ramps up, it can't come at the cost of creative integrity. We need to make conscious choices about how we use AI: to support the humanity in our work, not dilute it.



## *Let people do the heavy feeling*

Here's the thing. AI is brilliant at helping us move faster, scale smarter, and tailor messaging across markets and bandwidths. And in Africa, where resources are stretched and timelines are tight, that's a powerful advantage. AI should absolutely be used to test, optimize, translate, resize, and reversion. But it should never lead the thinking.

Strategy, cultural nuance, emotional intelligence, humour, tension; those are human jobs. Because when you're building for places like Accra, Lagos, Nairobi, or Kinshasa, nuance matters. AI can map behaviour, but it can't feel. It can refine meaning, but it can't create it. Truly relevant brands in our region need more than just data—they need thinking grounded in lived context.

That's why we believe people and platforms need to work in concert, not competition. Each empowering the other through the right process. AI can support, but only culture can lead.

### *What this means for agencies:*

- *Protect your creativity—don't join a race to the bottom*
- *Collaborate with clients to test, learn, and evolve*
- *Build your AI ecosystem before it builds itself without you*

## *Let AI do the heavy lifting*

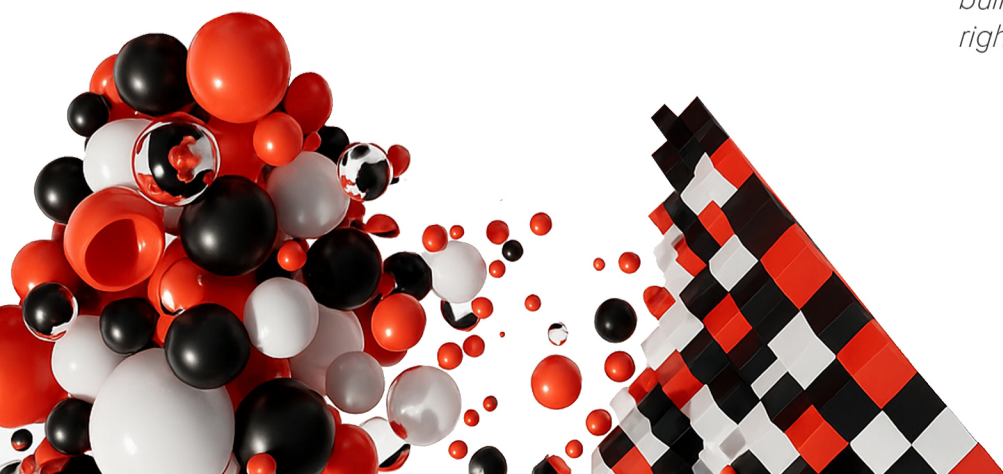
Today, what we make needs to live across more channels, formats, and moments than ever before. AI shouldn't replace excellence—but it can help scale it. A strong idea, strategy, media plan or PR piece powered by AI, can become 30 executions in different formats and languages instantly. It's there to sharpen workflow, not shortcut the thinking.

Strategy doesn't end at launch anymore, it evolves in real-time. With AI, we can learn, adapt, and improve as we go. Think A-B-C-D-E testing in the moment, not a postmortem. When used well, AI helps us build campaigns that learn as they run.

And with the speed it brings, we can finally stop debating short vs. long format. The opportunity is in blending both; fast formats that grab attention, anchored by deeper emotional arcs that leave a mark. AI helps us expand great ideas across formats and deliver them dynamically.

### *What this means for brands:*

- *Create safe spaces to experiment inside your business*
- *Start with test cases and scale what works*
- *Don't be tempted by speed alone; AI may give you many answers, build the skill to choose the right one.*



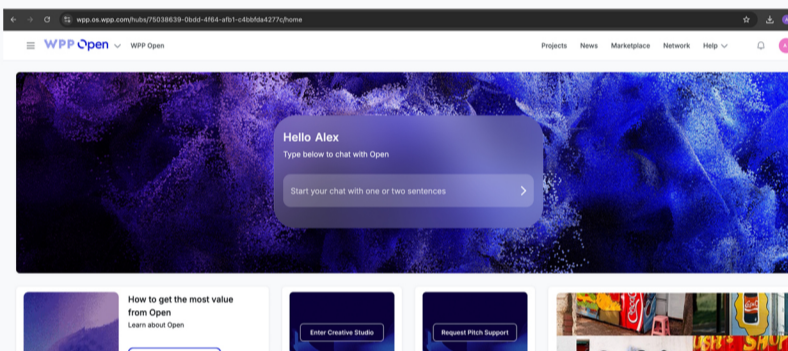
# *From Tool to Teammate*

WPP Open

Across the continent, AI is already helping creatives unblock, strategists sharpen, and designers move faster.

It's not replacing talent, it's removing friction. WPP Open is our AI operating system. Our future desktop. Constantly updating, this multifunctional dashboard is fitted with every major AI tool you know, and a few you don't. It helps teams co-create, brief faster, test smarter, and stay aligned. 80% of our people use these tools daily. And while we fiercely protect analogue creativity, we're also proudly one of the most AI-forward agencies on the continent.

*“ Treat AI like a teammate, not a shortcut, and it'll take your thinking further ”*



# *\$60B+*

*invested across Africa to boost AI capacity—from public, private, and philanthropic sectors*

*Africa's AI commission warns: without local input, algorithms risk deepening inequality and eroding rights*





## *Designed in Africa, for Africa*

---

### *Insights Engine*

*Insights Engine delivers rich, hyper-local cultural intelligence—empowering brands to unlock data-driven insights even in data-scarce African markets.*

---

### *InfluenceO*

*A global tool customized for Africa; InfluenceO is a sophisticated, AI-powered influencer marketing platform with a best-in-class database, simplified discovery, and more sophisticated management. Clients using InfluenceO have seen a 37% increase in performance.*

### *OBrio*

*AI-driven media intelligence platform that consolidates data across all channels into a single ROI metric. It's the one source of the truth about the impact of all your marketing dollars.*

---

### *Optimus*

*A next-generation, intelligent CRM system that consolidates lead generation, customer engagement, and marketing automation, enabling scalable growth and enhanced customer journey management.*

---

### *Feed 2.0*

*AI-enabled social intelligence and performance marketing engine that delivers real-time insights, enabling agile, data-driven content creation and distribution across the African continent.*



## *The Oxford Insights*

AI Readiness Index ranks Sub-Saharan Africa among the lowest globally in infrastructure readiness—indicating every tool, model and policy can be locally shaped now before scale emerges

**Deloitte.**



# *\$30B*

*AI could add over \$30 billion to Sub-Saharan Africa's economy, according to Google—demonstrating massive opportunity for value capture, but only if shaped here, by Africans*





# *Agile Executions AND System Thinking*

The word agility gets thrown around a lot in the agency world. Usually it means doing more, for less, faster. But for us, agility isn't about working weekends (though we're as 24/7 as anyone). It's about smarter, more connected collaboration, powered by systems thinking. This lets us design campaigns as varied, multifaceted, and far-reaching as the audiences we serve.



## *Go slow, to go fast*

We understand the pressure of uncertain economies and rapid change. The instinct to push harder in hopes of a different outcome. Trust us, we've been there. But often, the smartest move is to pause and ask, "Okay, now what?"

Staying true to your brand now requires reinvention. New ways of thinking. New ways of working. Culture moves fast and multi-month pitch cycles won't keep up. With AI empowered systems moving even faster, campaigns risk being out of date before they're even live.

## *Lead from the front*

When a brand stops chasing trends and starts setting the tone, agility becomes easier. Then you're not scrambling to catch the next meme, you're building a world others want to play in. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the most agile brands aren't the ones reacting; they're the ones with a clear Point of View and a clear purpose that creators, communities and conversations can rally around.

Real agility is about staying rooted in a powerful idea while evolving everything else around it. For clients that means committing to outcomes, not outputs. For agencies it means building campaigns, products and platforms that are designed to flex, shrink, grow and shift without ever losing their core purpose or identity.

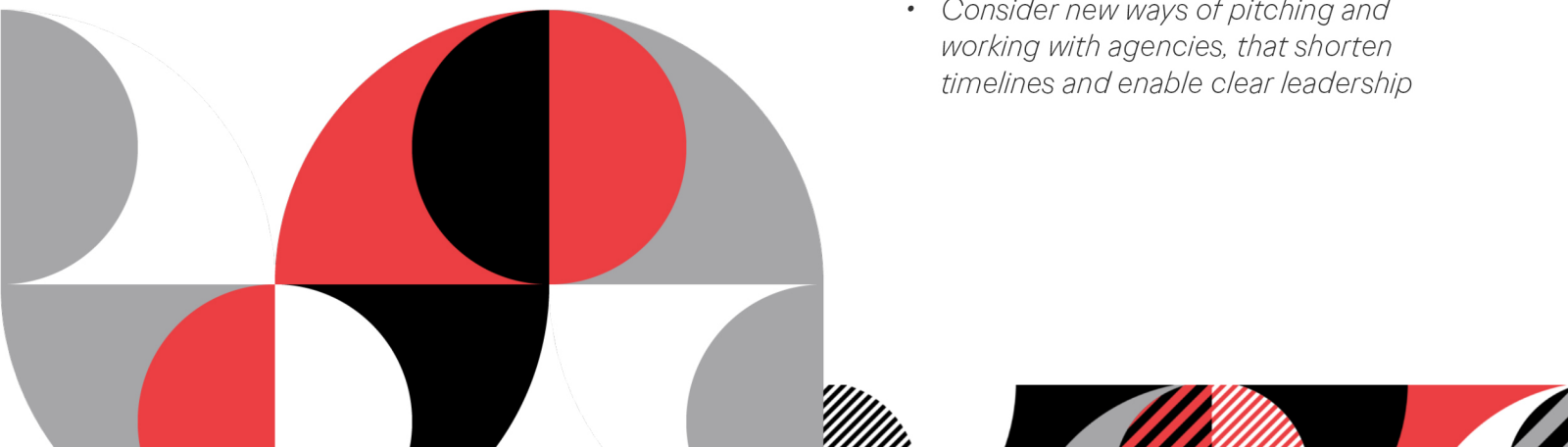
Let's take brand purpose as an example. None of this works unless you've aligned on something bigger than deliverables. We must believe in the brand's role, the problem we're solving, and the change we're building towards. Once you know (and believe) what you stand for, everything else can adapt.

Making this real means rethinking how we pitch, plan, and partner. It means making sure the boldness we start with survives to the finish. And while tools alone don't make great work, the right ones help us get there. Not lighter versions of global platforms, but tools made for our context; our bandwidth, our data, our creators. Tools that mine African insight, scale African work, and measure African impact.

### *What this means for agencies:*

- *Focus on earning attention, not just paying for reach*
- *Build the tech to track, test, and adapt in real time*
- *Build multi-disciplinary capabilities and ways of working that enable holistic answers*

### *What this means for brands:*

- *If you don't have a clearly articulated purpose, work with a trusted partner to craft it*
  - *Require your agencies to do, as well as say, on your behalf*
  - *Consider new ways of pitching and working with agencies, that shorten timelines and enable clear leadership*
- 



## *Partnerships with Purpose*

Partnering on social impact initiatives. The Ogilvy Africa Network has partnered with Brands on a Mission to develop an open architecture model that uses their complimentary expertise to develop comprehensive frameworks, tools, and services that enable brands to create meaningful social change while achieving business objectives.



Ogilvy  
.africa



BRANDS  
— ON A —  
MISSION

*Brands On A Mission and The Ogilvy Africa Network announce collaboration to standardise impact measurement in Sub-Saharan Africa.*

*Africa is no longer waiting for the future. It's shaping it. And in the journey to 2030, Ogilvy Africa will meet that momentum with a new operating system. The Quantum Model.*

Traditional, binary thinking is necessary, but no longer enough. To succeed in the future you need to be local and global, fast and thoughtful, creative and data-driven, nimble and scalable. When the world is no longer binary, built in zeros and ones, our work cannot be a zero-sum game.

The operating model for this world we call Quantum, embraces complexity. It allows us to hold multiple truths at once, to operate across markets, mediums and mindsets—simultaneously, not sequentially. From grassroots collectives to global conglomerates, from instinct to intelligence, from culture to code.

We believe the future belongs to those who break boundaries without losing depth. Borderless. Connected. Made in Africa.

We're modelling the Ogilvy Africa Network to thrive in this future. We hope this thinking sparks something in you, and we can build what's next. **Together.**



**Vikas Mehta**  
Regional CEO.  
Ogilvy Africa Network



Ogilvy.africa