

The lessons we've learnt from the digital industry in the last 20 years

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Let me take you back 20 years, to 1995. The industry barely existed and emerging **digital** agencies were still working on CD-ROM, as it was before the real advent of the commercial internet. There was certainly no real concept of **social** media, mobile and e-commerce as we think of them today.

So, what we have learnt over the last 20 years?

Originally, **brands** weren't sure what to do with the internet, and viewed it as an add-on to their main communications functions. Now of course, many shape their business models around the internet and this is a huge shift, but many **brands** are still getting to grips with all things **digital**.

Yet, while it's still quite common for **brands** to always be chasing the next big thing, what we have learnt as an agency is that you need to chase new technology in an appropriate way. Connected devices for example is a big issue at the moment, but few **brands** actually have the mobile presence and strategy in place to support them. New technology should really only be adopted when the appropriate platforms are in place and mature and pervasive. Yes, aim to be a pioneer, but have your house in order first.

Next to the internet, mobile and **social** media are the two other biggest changes which have changed the way society operates, hugely. There are so many avenues to go down from **social** media to 3D printing, that businesses need to know where to focus and this is going to be really important for the future.

With the current skills shortage also looming, this is also a big challenge for the future of **digital**. It is a heavy burden on all agencies and businesses to create their own **digital** competencies, as the skills are not readily available. This **digital** skills shortage is starting to prevent businesses from fulfilling their potential and actually stopping the country from becoming a **digital** leader – ultimately impacting GDP.

As we have seen from the past, **digital** is only set to grow and grow and while this is not a recruitment problem, businesses do have to develop their own **digital** competences to help stay ahead of this curve; the problem is, unfortunately, many don't know how to do it.

So what does the future hold? The truth is, we don't know. But what we do know, is that those businesses who do not learn to transform **digitally** will suffer. From Amaze's point of view, by being fleet of foot, pragmatic and logical, we can help shape the future of **digital** business.

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