

# How to get the balance right between global efficiency and local effectiveness

OPINION

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This is a challenge that faces many global businesses. Here are three ways advertisers can address the problem to ensure they successfully achieve the optimal balance between global efficiency and local effectiveness.

## From Geography to Culture

Global organisations have tended to divide up the world's markets by geographic region. Historically, this made perfect sense, but increasingly, companies are questioning whether it still does. Markets that are physically

close to each other might in fact be very different. There are strong arguments for looking into grouping markets by other criteria – seeing beyond national differences and recreating a map based on culture and personality. These criteria could be based on consumer demographics (e.g. income levels), stage of technological development (which might influence media choice), cultural similarities or even shared psychology (which could help maximise the effectiveness of messaging).

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## Establishing the Right Speed for Corporate Change

Change is difficult. Change in large organisations is especially difficult (but also necessary). Often, change which happens too fast can be extremely disruptive. In this day and age, many organisations are dealing with their own legacy of change. In order to change an organisation without breaking it, we need to be as mindful of how we handle the process of change, as we are in determining what changes need to be made. We also need staff and stakeholder buy-in. One way of getting an organisation's people to embrace change may be to reverse the company structure, i.e. getting people who work global to work local and vice versa, eliminating the notion of “us vs them” and enabling change from within.

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## Global and Local, Working in Harmony

One of the key challenges faced by any multi-market organisation is getting the balance right between global control and local freedom. In establishing where this balance should be, it's important to remember the very different roles they play, and the ways in which they can potentially hinder each other. The centre's expertise lies in scaling ideas, and it needs enough control to achieve this. The local markets are where new ideas will develop, and they must have enough freedom to allow this to happen. An interesting compromise exists in developing – or simply identifying – “lead design markets”, where new ideas are most likely to come from. The global team will customise the way it works with these markets to allow ideas to flourish; and in return these markets will act as key enablers, helping to achieve buy-in as new ideas are scaled around the world. In short, the goal of many organisations striving to achieve a harmonious global / local relationship is to have a central evangelist role with strong local ownership.

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