



every person we have is capable of delivering our very best standard of work, to the client's advantage." The process also makes for greater transparency in the client/agency relationship, Minnaar insists.

Lessing informs that at The Nest, the boundaries between responsibilities are frequently blurred. Therefore, while each person at a large agency has a specific job description, creatives at The Nest often find themselves sitting in on strategy meetings, and vice versa. "We are able to have our entire team sit in on a briefing, and the result is each person has a far stronger understanding of the client's specific business problem," he says.

That's understandable – consider how, in most larger agencies, the creative gets a strategist's version of the challenge, instead of hearing it firsthand. They consequently have a keener insight about what it will take to solve the business problem. Moreover, every person in the agency is involved in each campaign. This requires that they develop skills in a multitude of areas, something which can only serve them well.

Minnaar has also seen this type of ma-

trix develop at Halo, and believes that the participation of all staff members is enormously motivating. "There's a sense of ownership, accountability and pride in everything we do," she enthuses.

Of course, there's a flipside. At a smaller agency, there are fewer resources – and occasionally, clients view this as a drawback. "In the agency world, perceived size carries weight. There's the idea that because you're small, you can't deliver on strategic requirements, or that you have lesser creative abilities beyond DTP," Minnaar laments. But perception is something one can fight, and Halo has worked hard to develop its own models heavily underlined by integration. "Clients can therefore see that there has been careful consideration at a strategic level."

Lessing also reports that potential clients have raised their eyebrows at The Nest's apparent lack of track record; often, they're looking for an agency that has an established history and the size that allows it negotiating clout when it comes to buying media.

But just as often, Collins remarks, they try their luck at the larger agencies only

to find that they're fighting alongside other clients for a share of the top dogs' attention – and if they're waiting for a queue in the traffic system, there's a very real chance they'll miss their deadlines. Or else, quality may be compromised in favour of a rush job. "Our clients are consistently astounded by the level of attention they receive. Before we're appointed, they may wonder whether we can handle their size, but once we've signed working agreements, they're impressed by how we tailor resource around their specific needs. Obviously, as we grow, we will have to put systems in place, and clients will have to start writing briefs together with the suits in order to commit to a scope of work and a respectable delivery time."

But that needn't bring an end to the small agency culture which these owners feel sets them apart. With 35 staff members, Hamiltons Advertising has successfully made the leap from 'small' to 'medium' – yet, according to MD Lisa Currey, it remains very much the "Ham Fam", with team members meeting up for drinks and taking part in teambuilding on

Appily married

As Anice Hassim sees it, the app (application software that enables you to do all those smart things on an iPad) is about to do to online what online did to traditional media.)

And they don't like it, reacting defensively, competing instead of cooperating and trying to package it in terms they understand – audience ratings, prime time, clicks.

"Most people don't realize what is coming and it is devastatingly fast," says Hassim, filled with evangelical zeal. "The reality is that apps are a new medium. They have their own sensibilities like print and TV do. Not like anything that has gone before. An app

is resonant with humans at a level that technology has never been. It's intuitive. What is why a three year old can pick up an iPad and start playing with it."

It changes the dynamics of business. An example: a bank offers a new free app that is of value to customers, say a domestic budgeting tool. They give something in return: loyalty, their custom, their names for a mailing list. The traditional buy-sell relationship is not part of this transaction.

Ad agencies don't realise their supply chain is changing too. Technology has commoditised the creativity process. Big agencies should see themselves as choreographers of the process.. what



Anice Hassim

you can't do any more is say to the client that campaign will cost you R5m and then sub contract the app to an engineer for R500 000. "App-dev people can work very happily in a multidisciplinary team." **AR**