

# The Future of Marketing: Interview with Andrea Terrassa, Global COO Dentsu Creative and COO Dentsu Americas

Francisco J. Quevedo  
Rutgers University, USA

## *Abstract*

*In the context of the 5th Annual RBS Marketing Summit, we interviewed the opening keynote speaker, Andrea Terrassa, Global COO of Dentsu Creative and COO of Dentsu Americas, to get her insights into “The Future of Marketing”, the event’s central topic. Dentsu is an \$8.4 billion Japanese global advertising powerhouse “designed for what’s next” as they proudly claim. She says that creativity is at a crossroads; CMOs are focusing on the things they can control. That’s why one of the big concerns for brands this year, and in the years to come, will be owning and connecting with their audience in a world with so much disruption and distraction. Whether it’s keeping up with new technology, or responding to changing consumer behavior, agility is an essential quality for the marketers of today and tomorrow.*

We stole a few minutes from Andrea’s extremely busy schedule to get her insights into the future of Marketing and to set the stage for the 5<sup>th</sup> RBS Annual Summit held in Piscataway on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 2023, where she was the Opening Keynote Speaker. What follows is our interview:

*Andrea, today's global elite must navigate an increasingly complex world, with higher-than-ever pressure to demonstrate the value they deliver to consumers, their sales channels and to the business itself. These challenges include overwhelming globalization and evolving customer demands, the need to react quickly to market disruptions and trends, and leveraging technology to remain agile, while minimizing risk and maximizing financial results. How do you see the present and the future of Marketing?*

## Interview with Andrea Terrassa

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We are at a crossroads in our industry in so many ways; from how we harness the rapid advances in technology and AI that we are seeing, to the role of marketing as both a force for social good and economic growth. Dentsu Creative's latest Global CMO Report, 'Creativity at a Crossroads', shows that amidst the volatilities of the modern world, such as climate change, inflation, and geopolitical instability, CMOs are focusing on the things they can control. That's why one of the big concerns for brands this year, and in the years to come, will be owning and connecting with their audience in a world with so much disruption and distraction. Whether it's keeping up with new technology, or responding to changing consumer behavior, agility is an essential quality for the marketers of today and tomorrow.

*What are the most important trends and challenges, viewed from your professional perspective?*

The drive towards greater integration, speed, agility and growth are the challenges that take up a large part of my time. *Dentsu Creative* launched in 2022 as an entirely new global creative network, uniting our creative agencies and expanding our capabilities in Entertainment, Earned Attention and Experience. This consolidation is part of a broader strategy to simplify every element of client engagement, allowing us to respond to the demand from brands for a single creative proposition that breaks down agency silos and seamlessly connects talent around the right opportunities at the right time.

Brands are recognizing that to drive growth in the modern world, they need that level of speed and flexibility from their agency partners. This is why integration is so important to us at *Dentsu* and why, alongside my role as Global COO of *Dentsu Creative*, I was recently appointed COO for *Dentsu Americas*, where I will have a focus on creating greater synergies between regions, brands and all of the *Dentsu* skills and specialties.

*Already, digital marketing makes up two thirds of total advertising expenditure; is that future more and more digital?*

The future is more integrated marketing, where the boundaries between different marketing channels will continue to blur. Of course, digital is at the heart of that, but it's interesting to see how old and new forms of marketing are colliding and integrating as the media landscape evolves. Take the recent launch of ad-supported tiers by some of the major streaming platforms like *Netflix* and *Disney+*. With the rapid growth of streaming in the last decade, some in the industry predicted that traditional TV advertising would wither and die as audiences moved elsewhere. Instead, we now see an appetite for the same kind of advertising – just in the digital world of streaming. It's a

great example of how the boundaries are blurring, and of how marketing and media are becoming more and more integrated.

*Some speak of the end of classical brick and mortar retail in favor of e-Commerce; do you see retail adapting, surviving or disappearing?*

It goes back to the idea of ‘winning the audience’. Our latest Global CMO Report found that 79% of CMOs agree that we are now living in a world where “advertising is easier to ignore”. There is so much noise out there, and so many options for consumers to choose from, that brands must find ways of connecting to their audience in the spaces and places that matter most to them. For bricks and mortar retailers, that means offering the kind of experience that their audience cannot find elsewhere, and that have real cultural resonance. Of course, ecommerce has disrupted retail in every possible way, but there is still a future for physical retailers if they can find powerful new ways to reconnect with their audiences, both online and offline.

*Could you please tell us how you and Dentsu are shaping the future of Marketing?*

I’ve spoken about *Dentsu*’s unique structure and our integrated approach to building brands, collaboration and creativity. In terms of the new tools, technologies and platforms that will shape the future of marketing, we are innovating all the time to ensure we are driving competitive advantage for our clients. For example, *Dentsu* recently launched a new paid search tool which uses generative AI to boost the volume of creative messaging and ad copy, speed up creative experimentation and cut down on the time required to perform optimization tasks. It’s just one example of how we are harnessing the enormous potential of AI to drive growth for our clients, particularly in sectors like retail where there is a huge volume of ad copy, product array and assortment. With tools like this, we can make those tasks quicker and more efficient, freeing our people up to focus on the emotional, human-to-human communications that we know are still the most impactful.

*On a final note, if you were to counsel any of your kids wanting to follow on your footsteps (imagine the challenge!), what would you advise them to study and cultivate?*

I think everyone needs to follow their own path when it comes to their career and pursue the things that interest them and give them joy. There is no one route into any job – it’s a journey of discovery that will take you in different directions at different times. If you trust your own talents and show

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a willingness to learn from others along the way, it can take you to where you want to be.

### Executive's Bio

*Andrea Terrassa is the Global COO of Dentsu Creative and COO of Dentsu Americas. She is a transformational leader with an unwavering belief in the power of creativity and humanity. She has been integral to the unification of over 100 agencies into a single, global creative network. Since launching in 2022, Dentsu Creative has received countless awards, from the Iridium Effie to Cannes Lions Agency of the Year. More importantly though, Dentsu Creative has attracted some of the best talent in the business. And when it comes to people, no one is more committed than Andrea as her impact is felt far and wide. She believes that it is the role of Operations to engineer an environment where complexity and uncertainty are minimized such that people can do the best work of their lives. "The brightest minds unleashed to do their best work is the powerful combination that invites our clients to bring their biggest challenges to Dentsu," she says. A proud Latina and active supporter of women and minorities, notably as a founding member of the Women's Purpose Community and 50/50 Women on Boards' NYC Leadership Committee, Andrea works tirelessly to make this industry inviting for all. She holds an MBA from Columbia Business School and lives in New Jersey with her husband and three children. Dentsu Creative is "a new global creative network built for today and tomorrow, designed to transform brands and business through the power of modern creativity. We deliver ideas that create, not borrow from, culture; ideas that change society, accelerating growth from good, and we invent the future through ideas made possible by technology, made personal by data, and made magical through emotion..." says its website. Dentsu is an \$8.4 billion Japanese global advertising powerhouse "designed for what's next" as it proudly claims. Under Andrea's leadership, Dentsu Creative just won the Industry Craft Lions Grand Prix and the Pharma Lions Grand Prix, among 29 prizes received in the Cannes Lions 2023 Awards Festival.*

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### Interviewer

*Francisco J. Quevedo is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Rutgers University and a consummated author, having published literally thousands of articles in print and digital media in the US, Venezuela, Panama, and Costa Rica, having been published 10 times in academic circles since 2019; he has worked corporate and done consulting for some 45 years, teaching college for 12. A 1978 graduate from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, he got his MBA, CAGSB, and doctorate degrees at Pace University of New York.  
email: francisco.quevedo@rutgers.edu*

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