

# AANA's New-Found Form

by **Rebecca Villinger** XS-Media 01 May 2001



The **Australian Association of National Advertisers** has launched an independent television production estimating format, believed to be in response to alleged dubious billing practices of agencies and television commercial production houses.

The alleged practices were brought to the attention of the AANA by the **Screen Producers' Association of Australia** last October after some of its members complained. Among the alleged acts of unprofessional practices were delayed settlement of invoices and concealing agency producer fees.

The new electronic estimate form, which was created in conjunction with TV production auditing service P3TV, is provided free of charge to AANA members. It provides a detailed cost breakdown of each stage of commercial production costs, and agency summaries of costs.

## An Agency Form + Film Company Detailed Breakdown

P3TV was launched last year by Darren Woolley, who was previously creative director at J Walter Thompson. The company aims to provide the benefits of traditional advertising agency forms, which are a one-page summary of costs, with the advantages of the detailed breakdown traditionally employed by film companies.

AANA general manager Sara Morton-Stone says the new format represents a major industry breakthrough in achieving optimal transparency in the critical areas of TV production costs.

An independent form with a standard template would allow for the identification of discrepancies and variances between competitive quotes. -- AANA GM Sara Morton-Stone



"As well as highlighting one area of benefit that can flow from an industry association, this initiative is notable for its timeliness," points out Morton-Stone. "In an era of increasing focus on openness and accountability, this initiative has the potential to quell concerns -- substantiated or otherwise -- in an area that has, historically, been short on a uniform transparent approach."

## Comparing Apples with Apples

Morton-Stone explains that in the past, television commercial production estimating had been a frustrating process: "You get a number of quotes in front of you that are presented differently. You're not comparing apples with apples, and you can't really compare cost centres within your overall production budget."

An independent form with a standard template would allow for the identification of discrepancies and variances between competitive quotes, she says.

## P3TV's Woolley Has Cred + Experience

According to Morton-Stone, P3TV was chosen because its founder, Woolley, had a solid reputation and extensive experience from an agency perspective. "He brought a three-dimensional approach to the project," she says. "He had already developed the basis of the standard form and offered us very kindly to share it with AANA's members. It all seemed to dovetail in very well indeed.

"There's no doubt that those alleged practices acted as a catalyst, but that's not to say that, separate to that, we saw a general need for a form such as this to help advertisers."

## Cost Savings Free Up Money for More Media Spend

Morton-Stone hopes advertisers and media buyers will now feel more confident about investing in television commercials. She points out that if there are cost savings to be had, there is potential to free up a greater percentage of the advertising budget, which would result in increased media spending.

AANA board member Paul Nix of Procter & Gamble agrees: "Anything that simplifies the complexities of television production costs is a step forward, and I truly believe that this initiative will be of enormous benefit to advertisers."

The electronic form, which the AANA believes will promote greater fairness and transparency in costing television commercials, is also available to members on the AANA Web site.

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