

AGENCIES DROWN IN A SEA OF SAMENESS

IN THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF RANTS, DARREN WOOLLEY ASKS HOW CAN YOU WIN A PITCH WHEN THE CLIENT CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER YOUR NAME? THE FACT IS, HE WRITES, YOU CAN'T.



There is a belief that most marketers will know three agencies: the one they are with; the one they last worked with; and one other. While

simplistic, it is largely true.

If you are in a pitch, the challenge is usually to become the third agency on this list, unless you are the incumbent – first on the list. This is the first hurdle most agencies fall over.

Credentials documents typically look the same and presentations often sound the same. The proof is in the fact that at the end of the chemistry meetings with five or six agencies, many marketers are left confused and bewildered. They will remember the name of the agency that stood out and the one that crashed.

For the rest in the process, agency names are forgotten and are usually identified by descriptors of the staff representing the agency, such as "the agency with the strategy guy with the red spectacles", or "the one with the account girl in the striped blue shirt".

Why? Because in trying to be different, many agencies end up all being the same.

We see hundreds of agency credentials presentations, from media agencies, creative agencies, digital agencies, etc. And time after time we see the same messages delivered in the same way over and over again.

Get your credentials presentation out and have a look. While I know most will customise their presentation to suit the client – more on this later – somewhere, you will most likely have:



Agencies are struggling to differentiate themselves when presenting to marketers.

- A circular image with either communication channels or disciplines arranged around the edge and either the brand, the consumer or the client in the middle;

- A map showing that you are either independent or part of a national/regional/global network;

- A list of client logos randomly arranged;

- A statement saying you are media neutral, integrated, collaborative and results focused.

You are not alone. Many of the credentials presentations we see are all the same with a checklist of the things the agency thinks the client wants to see.

And this is the problem with the customised credentials presentation. It is often reduced to being a list of what you think the client wants to see and rarely reflects who you are as an organisation, what you believe in and what you have to offer.

Many marketers will remember the name of the agency that stood out and the one that crashed.

On the basis of a rational list of structure, services, experience and process there is often little to differentiate one agency from another.

Think of all the CVs you are sent from people looking for a job at your agency. Which ones stand out? They all have personal details, experience and skills, but what makes one immediately stand out and stay with you over all of the others?

Instead of simply a list of features, think of credentials as an opportunity to introduce your agency to the marketer and make sure that when it is read or the meeting is done they have a very clear idea of who you are.

It may not win you every pitch, but it is more likely you will be remembered. <