# TOP 50

# MARKETING MANAGEMENT POSTS OF 2015

trinity P3™

# What the world is saying about the *Top 50 Marketing Management Posts*:

*Darren's book of blog posts is an essential read for any marketer who wants to open their mind to what could be. His points of view often challenge our way of thinking. He provides perspectives that deviate from the status quo, which can initiate some very productive discussions. I have had the pleasure of conversation and debate with Darren over the years and I am richer for it.*

Susan Charles, Vice-President, Association of Canadian Advertisers

*Darren's strength is that he always acknowledges the elephant in the room. In so doing, he provides vibrant, provocative, action-oriented ideas, alternatives, solutions and thought-leadership on the expanding remit that is marketing. If change is the constant, Darren's posts are a valuable tool for currency and content for today's marketers.*

Sunita Gloster, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Association of National Advertisers

*One of the biggest challenges we face as entrepreneurs and innovators is understanding how to make our ideas resonate. We tend to have no shortage of ideas, but we struggle to tell the story of how they are going to be useful in the world and why they will matter to people. Marketing is the way we communicate how our ideas translate to value for people in a marketplace. This is more than a book from a 'pitch doctor'. Darren and his team are at the epicentre of thought-leadership and practical application in marketing today and tomorrow. A must-read.*

Lee Tonitto, BCOM MBA MAICD FAMI CPM, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Marketing Institute

*The posts by Darren Woolley and the TrinityP3 team are critical insights. First of all, they provide a glimpse of a unique place in the world – Asia – yet are truly universal. The collections of top posts give professionals in our industry fantastic food for thought as we go about our hectic lives. He and the team are truly well-respected experts and their intelligence is world-class.*

Sopan Shah, VP Procurement, InterContinental Hotels Group

# THE AUTHORS

**Darren Woolley**[1] is the founder and Global CEO of TrinityP3[2]. With his background as an analytical scientist and creative problem-solver, Darren brings unique insights and learnings to the marketing process. He is considered a global thought-leader on agency remuneration, search and selection, and relationship optimisation.

**Anton Buchner**[3] is a Senior Consultant with TrinityP3. Anton is an innovative lateral thinker with a passion for refocusing business teams and strategies; creating visionary, data-driven communication plans; and making sense of a more complex digital marketing environment.

**Mike Morgan**[4] is the founder and Director of High Profile Enterprises[5] and the Content Director for TrinityP3. Mike has been collaborating with TrinityP3 on a content marketing, SEO and social media strategy since early 2011.

**Stephan Argent**[6] is the CEO of Argedia Group[7], based in Toronto, Canada, and a member of the Marketing FIRST Forum[8], the global consulting collective co-founded by TrinityP3.

**Clive Duncan**[9] is a Senior Consultant with TrinityP3. As a director and DOP, he has an appreciation of the value of great creative and outstanding production values, while also recognising the importance of delivering value-for-money solutions to the advertiser.

1 trinityp3.com/people/management-team/darren-woolley
2 trinityp3.com
3 trinityp3.com/people/consulting-team/anton-buchner
4 trinityp3.com/people/consulting-team/mike-morgan
5 highprofileenterprises.com
6 ca.linkedin.com/in/stephanargent
7 argedia.com
8 www.m1f.org
9 trinityp3.com/people/consulting-team/clive-duncan

**David Little**[10] has been working in procurement category management for 13 years within FMCG, telecoms and consulting. He has a particular interest in marketing categories, procurement leadership, and helping others develop their procurement skills.

**David Angell**[11] is the General Manager of the fast-growing Melbourne market and the national Head of Media at TrinityP3. In these roles, David brings his media-specific, broader commercial and relationship expertise to bear on a diverse range of projects, with one core objective – achieving beneficial results for our clients.

**Anita Zanesco**[12] is a Senior Consultant with TrinityP3. Anita brings a unique blend of insights, creativity and understanding to the communications industry, particularly in the areas of talent management, agency process and new business pitch management.

**Beate Duesterwald**[13] is a Senior Consultant with TrinityP3. Beate has over 18 years' experience in helping clients translate their business objectives into compelling digital marketing strategies.

**Kathy Hatzis**[14] was formerly the Client Business Director at TrinityP3. Kathy specialises in delivering maximum marketing efficiencies and effectiveness for CMOs and their leadership teams.

**Zoé Freeman**[15] is a Senior Consultant with TrinityP3. Zoé is a dynamic professional with 15 years' experience in digital marketing and a unique combination of technical knowledge, business acumen, and marketing and management skills.

**Nathan Hodges**[16] is TrinityP3's General Manager. Nathan applies his knowledge and creativity to the specific challenges of marketing management, with a particular focus on team dynamics and behavioural change.

10 linkedin.com/pub/david-little/6/b1b/151

11 trinityp3.com/people/management-team/david-angell

12 trinityp3.com/people/consulting-team/anita-zanesco

13 trinityp3.com/people/consulting-team/beate-duesterwald

14 au.linkedin.com/pub/kathy-hatzis/32/b3b/332

15 trinityp3.com/people/consulting-team/zoe-freeman

16 trinityp3.com/people/management-team/nathan-hodges

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# INTRODUCTION

2015. It is now 15 years since I started TrinityP3 in Melbourne. Back then it was simply P3 and had me working at a shared desk in an office in Southbank.

So firstly, I would like to thank all of the people who have worked with TrinityP3 and helped it grow over the years – you know who you are – along with a big thank you to our many clients here in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world. It is you, and your trust in us to help you solve the increasingly complex and difficult situations you face, that feed our enthusiasm and energy, and contribute to the many ideas and observations you will read about in this book.

Secondly, I want to thank the TrinityP3 team of consultants we have today. Over the years, the team has grown and evolved. It now represents some of the best strategic and problem-solving talent I have had the pleasure to work with, each one a subject-matter expert in their own right. When we are working together on a client problem, we are unbeatable.

Most gratifying is the number of posts in the top 50 written by the TrinityP3 consultants, past and present, including Nathan Hodges, David Angell, Anton Buchner, Anita Zanesco, Clive Duncan, Beate Duesterwald, Zoé Freeman and Kathy Hatzis.

There is also Mike Morgan, who has been instrumental in our SEO and social media efforts, and in authoring content. Stephan Argent is a good friend and a fellow founder of the Marketing FIRST Forum, while David Little is a long-time procurement supporter of TrinityP3.

I also want to thank all of those marketers, advertisers, procurement professionals and agencies who took the time to provide feedback on the first two editions of *Top 50 Marketing Management Posts*.

Looking back across all three editions, this book is definitely becoming a compendium of the top issues and topics that have caught our attention in the past 12 months, and those that have prompted interest and engagement from you – the marketing, advertising, media and procurement professionals around the globe.

Today, the TrinityP3 blog has more than 900 posts covering a wide range of marketing management topics and is read by more than 150,000 people each year, a number that continues to grow. We are grateful to everyone who participates and engages in the conversation, either by commenting on our posts or sharing our content with their colleagues and friends.

This year, when we reviewed the blog posts with the highest readership during 2015 to prepare this new edition, we were pleasantly surprised to find that 33 posts from the 2013 book and 32 from the 2014 book continue to enjoy huge popularity. We have listed these below so that if there is a post you are interested in, you can either read it in one of the books, which are available from most online bookstores, or on the TrinityP3 blog.

Thank you again to Paul Smitz for sub-editing and proofing to make us all seem a little more intelligent. Thank you to Lyndell Correll for the design and production management and the finished art. Thank you also to our printer, Blue Star Print.

And, again, a big thank you to our ever-expanding group of clients at TrinityP3, especially those who have continued to work with us over the years. It is through your engagement and support that we are able to develop and provide greater insights and share the trends, to help in some small way to improve the advertising, media, digital, data and marketing process for all.

Thank you also to all of our readers, commentators, and those who share our content with others.

This is the best of our 15th year. We look forward to writing and publishing more in the coming year.

Thank you.

Darren Woolley, founder and CEO

TrinityP3 Marketing Management Consultants

**Evergreen marketing management posts of 2013**

1. Defining the scope of advertising agency services to determine agency compensation – 7 September 2011
2. How many billable hours are there in a year? – 22 March 2007
3. Of the three types of collaboration, which type do you need? – 5 October 2012
4. A step-by-step approach to calculating ad agency resource rates and head hour costs – 22 October 2012
5. 12 innovative media options you may not see proposed by your media agency – 18 June 2012
6. Two different ways to assess and evaluate agency performance – 1 February 2013
7. How to build effective marketing workshops – 8 February 2013
8. How to calculate your agency head hour rates – 13 April 2011
9. iQuit from the advertising industry of Singapore – 20 January 2011
10. Some of the differences between traditional and digital media planning and buying – 1 June 2012
11. Replacing ATL and BTL with content and channel – 1 July 2010
12. The importance of overhead in agency compensation – 14 July 2011
13. The importance of chemistry meetings in the advertising agency selection process – 7 December 2011
14. Three ways to make sure that social media expert is really an expert – 7 December 2012
15. Do you want a digital agency or a technology partner? – 22 February 2013
16. What is included in your advertising agency overhead cost and what is not? – 31 August 2012
17. The world's worst advertising agency scope of work – 14 May 2012
18. Media negotiations and media buying benchmarking – 9 December 2011
19. Nine kinds of agency pitch process, and counting – 29 July 2013
20. Why in-house advertising services work … and why they don't – 25 February 2013
21. When should an advertiser pay pitch fees when selecting a new advertising agency? – 9 January 2012

22. How the scientific method can be used to 'test and learn' marketing strategy – 16 December 2011
23. 10 trends in strategic marketing management for 2013 – 21 January 2013
24. Why digital marketing should replace KPIs with EPIs – 28 September 2012
25. Why it is time to remove creative agencies from the production process – 13 March 2013
26. Ways to strengthen your collaboration culture – 26 October 2012
27. Advertising's slow road to value-based pricing – 23 January 2013
28. Eight high-risk SEO strategies your agency might be using – 26 June 2013
29. 12 trends in strategic marketing management for 2012 – 23 January 2012
30. Five things that will make your company strategy stick – 17 December 2012
31. Content marketing 101: five basic principles – 12 April 2013
32. How to tell a story about yourself without sounding like an egomaniac – 31 October 2012
33. Why marketers should stop paying agencies for ideas – 15 February 2013

**Evergreen marketing management posts of 2014**

1. Top-down or bottom-up budgeting: Which approach is best? – 21 February 2014
2. Five brands that have successfully reinvented themselves in the digital age – 24 February 2014
3. Five top trends for call centres and the pricing model dilemma – 18 September 2013
4. 10 brands that have successfully reinvented themselves – 6 November 2013
5. The role of marketing procurement: a procurement leader perspective – 13 June 2012
6. How many KPIs are optimal to drive agency performance? – 2 September 2013
7. Let's put the creative agency selection process out of its (and our) misery – 6 August 2014
8. The important differences between scope of work and schedule of work – 4 December 2013
9. Did you want collaboration, cooperation or coordination with that marketing process? – 27 August 2012
10. Six things every marketer should know about great pitch consulting – 9 September 2013
11. Why SLAs are not relevant to marketing services contracts – 24 August 2008
12. The hidden flaws in agency timesheets and retainers – 23 May 2014
13. Top 10 considerations when selecting a new media agency – 23 November 2011
14. 10 ways in which marketing and procurement can work together for better results – 17 March 2014
15. Is it any wonder there is so much confusion over marketing technology? – 28 May 2014
16. How to avoid the 10 classic strategic decision-making traps – 12 February 2014
17. Marketing is increasingly about doing less, not more – 19 March 2014
18. Defining the changing role of the advertising agency – 31 May 2013

19. A simple way to check your advertising agency fees – 16 April 2014
20. 10 sponsorship principles that procurement must consider – 17 February 2014
21. Is advertising agency compensation trapped in a cost-based model? – 7 August 2013
22. How procurement grades marketing expenditure strategically – 25 October 2013
23. A more efficient process for selecting the perfect agency – 9 September 2013
24. 10 things procurement needs to know about digital marketing – 7 February 2014
25. Who does your media agency really work for? – 18 October 2013
26. Eight ways to spot a bad client (before it is too late) – 3 March 2014
27. How do your agency rates stack up and why? – 2 April 2014
28. Have media rebates and kickbacks killed media-neutral planning? – 3 February 2014
29. Five ways agencies can bamboozle procurement about their compensation – 27 June 2014
30. Are digital agency pricing models stuck in the 90s? – 25 September 2013
31. Five questions to ask agencies in the new marketing landscape – 26 May 2014
32. The difference between agency confidence and arrogance in a pitch – 23 April 2014

# POST 1

## Trading desks, demand side platforms and programmatic buying explained

**Posted 8 September 2014 by Darren Woolley**

Programmatic buying, trading desks, ad exchanges, real time bidding, demand side platforms and the like feature heavily in the trade press[1] and in marketing departments around the world, because of issues including transparency in regards to cost and profits, data ownership, and accountability regarding ad-placement environments. We have written about the issues surrounding this in a previous post[2], but for the marketers who are increasingly involved in this area (in fact, anyone with a digital media budget), it is highly important to understand how this whole thing works.

In a video I uploaded to YouTube[3], I explain the whole process in plain language, introducing the elements and concepts involved – a transcript is supplied below. The video is clearly useful, because thousands of people have viewed it. Other useful videos on this topic include *200ms: the Life of a Programmatic RTB Ad Impression* by MediaCrossing[4]; *Display Advertising Basics (DSPs, RTB, Ad Exchanges, DMPs)*, a 20-minute video by Pete Kluge[5];

1 adnews.com.au/news/use-of-agency-trading-desks-declines-15
2 trinityp3.com/2013/12/real-time-bidding
3 youtube.com/watch?v=eOD3qL_2J_Q
4 youtube.com/watch?v=rTg9l4d8MU4
5 youtube.com/watch?v=xnX1nxMM_R0

*How an Ad Is Served with Real Time Bidding (RTB)* by IAB[6]; and *Real Time Bidding 101* by AcuityAds[7].

**Transcript**

***What are trading desks, demand side platforms and programmatic buying?***

If you are working in media, advertising and marketing, I am sure you have heard of terms like demand side platforms, trading desks, real time bidding, programmatic buying and the like. You have probably also heard there is quite a bit of controversy about them due to issues like transparency and quality control. And like many, you are probably not completely sure what it all means.

Well, this is not a dummies guide to digital media, but I think it is worthwhile trying to explain what this is all about in plain English. So here we go.

***Internet advertising***

Digital or internet advertising, like all advertising, is about getting your message to the right people, in the right place, at the right time. In most other media, you plan and commit to placing your ad in a certain place, be it on television at a specific time in a specific program, where you hope the audience will see it, or in a magazine where you hope they will read and notice it. But the internet is different in that your ad only appears when the web page the person is looking for is loaded onto their computer or tablet or mobile, and your ad is placed or 'served' there.

Making sense so far?

It means that the same person could load the same web page five times in a row and get five different ads and only one of them is yours. This is real time. It is not like your ad is sitting on the internet waiting for the right people to come along and see it. You have to go and find those people.

Now imagine how many web pages are being loaded into browsers on computers or mobiles phones or tablets every minute of every day. Billions. There is so much opportunity to reach your audience online because there is so much inventory available.

***Demand side platforms***

The inventory is owned by the site owners or publishers, who sell through any one of a number of ad exchanges. To manage and access

6 youtube.com/watch?v=-Glgi9RRuJs

7 youtube.com/watch?v=-DiIsrJUsRU

transactions across multiple ad exchanges, they have developed demand side platforms, or DSPs, a system designed to give you access and facilitate these transactions.

Access to these DSPs is provided to the users, including agencies, media buyers and even the client, through a trading desk. So the DSP is really just a way to access the inventory through a trading desk from an ad exchange.

Keeping up?

***Real time bidding and programmatic buying***

The transactions happen within the ad exchange in real time, giving rise to real time bidding, or RTB, because there is bidding for the opportunities available when they appear. And when I say real time, I mean it. This transaction happens in milliseconds.

There is no way this can be a manual process, which is why it is called programmatic buying. The platforms and systems use data on the online audience to optimise delivery, thereby getting the best deal on a trade-by-trade basis to deliver the required audience.

Sounds good, right?

***So why are some advertisers unhappy with this?***

There are a number of reasons. The first is that because the transactions happen in a real time trading environment, they are difficult to benchmark.

Second, this is compounded by the fact that the agencies are not always completely transparent. You see, there is a dispute about both pricing and data ownership, and this makes advertisers suspicious of what else is happening.

And last, but by no means least, there is a concern that with all of this automation, ads could end up being served to inappropriate websites like pornography, gambling or perhaps an outlaw bikie gang, where the content and association is damaging to the brand.

***We can help you***

If you are interested in or concerned about these issues and are not sure who to talk to, talk to us at TrinityP3. We do not sell media, but we do provide our clients with understanding and peace of mind.

# POST 2

## How an inbound marketing strategy can double your revenue

**Posted 16 January 2015 by Mike Morgan**

In late 2010, Darren Woolley, MD of TrinityP3, decided to take an informed risk. He believed that the future of business was tied to inbound marketing strategies, in particular SEO (search engine optimisation), content marketing and social media. Out the window went traditional advertising, lead-generation services, cold calling and paid search engine marketing, and in early 2011, TrinityP3 embarked on an integrated inbound strategy. What follows are the results of this bold move – I will now give a blow-by-blow account of the strategies TrinityP3 used to more than double its revenue in just three years.

### The ROI for digital marketing

There has been a lot of debate recently about the return on investment for digital marketing strategies, particularly when it comes to content marketing and social media marketing. So at the end of 2014, we published a 27,000 word ultimate guide[1] to assist marketers in navigating the tricky waters of digital marketing. The fact is, many experienced marketers are struggling to identify the important metrics and to demonstrate real value from their efforts. There is so much conflicting information out there that it can be difficult to work out who really knows what they are talking about.

1 trinityp3.com/download-the-ultimate-guide-to-digital-in-a-data-driven-world

In May 2013 I published a post[2] which tracked the correlation between 300% website visitor growth and an increase in revenue of 38% for TrinityP3. Considering the GFC and tough conditions in the business environment at the time, this was a very useful demonstration of the effectiveness of inbound marketing when all the elements are managed carefully.

It is now time to update this case study and share with you what we have worked on, our processes and strategy, and what the results look like in real terms – increased revenue.

**So, we are sharing our 'secret sauce'**

Are we crazy to be giving away the step-by-step process to achieve B2B growth through inbound marketing? Not at all. If you are a regular reader of this blog, you will already understand our commitment to sharing knowledge. 'Knowledge is power' has been a philosophy of TrinityP3 right from the start (15 years ago). The new connected web offers exceptional opportunities to help others and to build a reputation for thought leadership by sharing insights.

More on that later. First up, I will share our analytics and financial results, and then I will give a comprehensive account of how we achieved this.

Let's look at TrinityP3's results at the beginning of the project. Despite Darren Woolley publishing a healthy amount of content between 2007 and the start of 2011, our blog was still unknown (it only had around 300 visitors per month). Social media efforts went largely unrewarded, and follower and connection numbers other than on LinkedIn were low – 200 followers on Twitter, no company following on LinkedIn, a handful of people on Facebook. Engagement was almost zero – no comments or mentions and very few shares.

**Growth in visitor numbers**

By applying an intensive inbound strategy, we have grown all of these figures significantly over the past three years. Here are the stats for visitor growth for the TrinityP3 website:

Year 1 – 272%

Year 2 – 232%

Year 3 – 45%.

(The third year saw slower growth because we were beginning to hit some pretty big numbers for a specialist niche site.)

In 2014, over 150,000 people visited the TrinityP3 website, compared with less than 6000 in 2010! A substantial proportion of these visitors

2 trinityp3.com/2013/05/website-visitor-growth

arrived via Google organic searches – I will explain the why and the how later when we look at the inbound marketing strategy. The growth in these visitors was as follows:

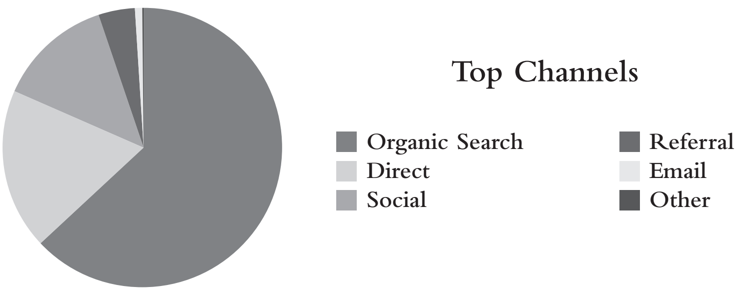
Year 1 – 284%

Year 2 – 170%

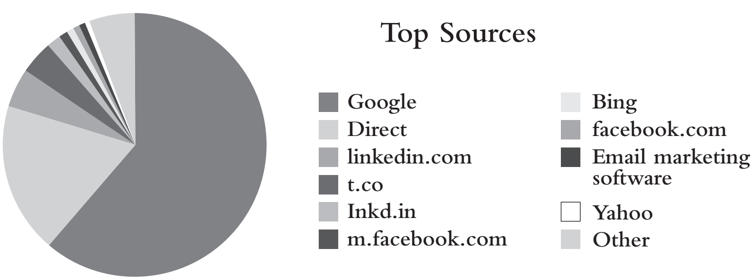
Year 3 – 77%.

(Remember that these are cumulative figures, meaning that overall three-year growth has been 1744%.)

And a useful number of visitors are resulting from social media and brand awareness, repeat visitors, dark social and unmeasured search traffic[3] in the direct traffic segment.




If we dig down in the actual sources, we can see who the big players are. Check out the difference between Google and its nearest rival, Bing. LinkedIn (linkedin.com and lnkd.in) is TrinityP3's best social performer, with Twitter (t.co) not too far behind – for those who still dismiss Twitter as the 'celebrity' channel, this might change your mind.




3 searchengineland.com/60-direct-traffic-actually-seo-195415

**Growth in revenue**

Let's look at billings based on the last three financial years:

2011/12 – billings grew by 21%

2012/13 – up 33%

2013/14 – up 35%.

After a negative result in 2010/11, this is a big turnaround.

Before you say 'Hey, that's not double, that's only 89%', you need to factor in compound interest (Darren kindly pointed this out after reviewing my first draft). The three-year growth percentage based on actual revenue is 115%.

It is interesting to observe that the reduction in percentage terms in visitor number growth did not have an impact on growth in revenue. The advantage of inbound marketing is that your efforts are cumulative. Every piece of remarkable content produced, each high-quality link earned, each citation you get, every social interaction, every SEO improvement, all add to the overall value of what is being created.

So let's take a look at how this strategy works.

**TrinityP3's winning inbound marketing strategy**

The basic premise is a combination of four connected and complementary strategies which each serve to boost the performance of the others.

***1. Search engine optimisation***

Any inbound or content marketing strategy that does not factor in SEO is doomed to fail. SEO must be the foundation, and a high level of understanding of this extremely complex and rapidly changing area is essential.

***2. Technical compliance***

This is very closely connected to SEO. Making sure your website is fast, efficient and offers a great user experience ensures a good reputation with search engines and visitors.

***3. Content marketing***

The production and optimisation of high-quality, in-depth content that satisfies your audience's needs is the engine room of a successful inbound strategy. If your content does not make the grade, or if you miss some of the critical optimisation points, then you may as well not bother.

***4. Social media amplification***

There are a couple of elements at play here: reach and engagement.

A large, highly motivated network will serve to promote your content for you. This advocacy takes some time to build and your strategy should constantly be reviewed, tested and adjusted.

**Search engine optimisation**

SEO is quite simply the art and science of achieving search engine visibility by implementing a range of tactics that contribute to higher page positions. There are several approaches to this, from high-risk to full guidelines compliance. With the TrinityP3 strategy, we have always been careful to stay well within Google's guidelines and have focused on quality and value rather than on tricks or hacks.

There are more than 200 ranking factors[4], and Google has stated that there are approximately 50 variations for each of these[5] (making 10,000 signals!). When this was announced, it may have had something to do with a signals bidding war with Bing, so we are really none the wiser about the veracity of this claim. But let's stick with 200 factors at this stage.

Over the past four years we have made many adjustments to our SEO strategy. Often Google will telegraph in an obscure way what it is about to implement and it is up to us to interpret these cryptic offerings and to follow the thought-leader discussions to make a decision on any changes to policy. Sometimes these changes are just as expected, and at other times the entire SEO industry goes into shock when a major update targets an unexpected area.

The easiest way to avoid being reactive is to examine each of your tactics and ask whether it is 100% ethical and whether what you are doing is adding value or an attempt to be manipulative.

The following are the key elements of our SEO strategy.

***1. URLs***

The URL of a page is very important. Every page on the site should have a clean, clear URL that describes what the page is about. It should not have capital letters, special characters, underscoring or dynamic characteristics. URLs that are overly long will also lead to problems. Unnecessary stop words (common words filtered out by search engines) should be removed too.

An ideal page URL will look like this for 'Agency search and selection':
trinityp3.com/agency-performance/agency-search-and-selection/
An ideal blog post URL will look like this one:
trinityp3.com/2014/10/benchmark-agency-compensation/

4 backlinko.com/google-ranking-factors

5 searchengineland.com/bing-10000-ranking-signals-google-55473

***2. Title tags***

Title tags, or SEO titles, are one of the key areas that search engines look to when establishing the theme of a particular page. There are a number of best-practice principles which must be followed in order to gain the maximum benefit from these.

The old 'Wild West' days of stuffing keywords into title tags will do nothing other than see you penalised for spammy behaviour, yet I still see many sites using the unhelpful 'keyword | keyword | keyword' formula in titles. This not only looks bad in search results, it also makes the page look spammy when shared on social media.

The title must accurately describe what the page is about. Relevance is the key here. It must be compelling – Does the title make you want to read more? – so short-form copywriting skills are valuable. It should also be less than 56 characters in length, including spaces. The length is actually calculated in pixels, so if you are using a lot more Ms than Is, then less characters may apply.

The earlier in the title tag your focus keyword appears, the better. So 'Agency search and selection – TrinityP3' is better than 'TrinityP3 – Agency search and selection'.

***3. Meta descriptions***

Again, this is not the place to play keyword manipulation games. There are way too many sites that make the mistake of trying to get multiple keywords into this field.

Think of your meta description as your selling space. This is where you get to entice potential visitors to click through to your page. You can ask questions, you can be provocative, you can create intrigue.

This is the meta description for the agency compensation benchmarking post I referenced in the 'URLs' section:

*How much should you be paying your agency? How do you calculate agency compensation when there are so many variables? Darren Woolley explains here:*

The meta description should always be less than 156 characters, including spaces, but more than 120. (The example above has 147 characters.)

***4. Heading structure***

Headings are another critical element that search engines look at when crawling a page. There is a hierarchy for these headings, and each one has a HTML tag to show the level of importance. H1 is the most important, then H2, then H3 and so on.

There should only ever be one H1 on any page and this should affirm what the title tag says. H2s and H3s should ideally be highly relevant and expand on the main topic.

The other advantage of this structured approach is that many visitors will first scan a page to get the overall theme from the subheadings. Then they will often decide to read specific sections or return to the start to read the page in full. So we are providing a very useful user experience with this.

If your subheadings can follow a narrative, this is very useful as well.

***5. Alt tags***

Search engine robots have a very limited understanding of images. This is changing slowly, and at some stage a large range of images will be recognisable, but it's not yet the case. So we have to tell them what the image is about.

Assuming the image you have selected is closely related to the topic of the page, this is relatively easy to do. Add a descriptive alt tag that tells search engines what the image is about and look at how closely it ties in with the page.

Missing alt tags are a common problem on many websites.

***6. Keyword research***

This is still one of the most important SEO skills, yet it is also one of the most overlooked SEO elements. If you don't have an understanding of the popularity of particular phrases, your content strategy will be hopelessly off-target.

There are a range of good keyword research tools available, but you can do a particularly good job using Google's AdWords keyword planner[6], Google Suggest[7] and Übersuggest[8]. You may be surprised to find that the phrase you thought everyone would use to search for your service or product is actually insider jargon and no-one other than your competitors use it.

Let's say you are investing in a major piece of content. Doesn't it make sense to ensure people are looking effectively for what you are creating? Good, solid keyword research is what leads to a valuable archive of evergreen content – content that does not date and which will continue to attract a substantial number of visitors from organic search.

***7. Topic selection***

Once the research has been done, a list of valuable targets can be

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6 google.com.au/adwords

7 google-suggest.tumblr.com

8 ubersuggest.org

created. This can be a topic-suggestion list, and the appropriate expert from the company can use this to craft new content. This helps with the 'But what should I write about?' content writing block and ensures that you are not wasting your time with content that has a very short life span.

***8. Reporting and measurement***

If you do not continually measure results, you have no idea whether what you are doing is working or not. Why would you invest all of this time and money if you cannot report growth and ROI?

For measurements, we use Google Analytics and Google Webmaster Tools. Monthly reporting focuses on the following key areas:

- visitors (sessions)
- users (unique visitors)
- pageviews
- time on page
- Google organic traffic
- direct traffic
- other sources and referrers
- locations
- mobile and tablet use
- social media results
- top-performing pages
- top blog posts
- top non-branded search queries.

We look for any anomalies in traffic trends and analyse the most successful content to inform future strategy.

The idea with all of these is to test, measure, analyse, report and then repeat the process. If a particular strategy is not bringing a return, then we can shift our focus to others. The data allows us to be agile in our approach.

***9. Links***

Our link-building strategy has been entirely passive. We focus on creating great content and we promote it effectively, and this is a large part of how we earn high-quality, relevant links.

As TrinityP3 is an influential participant in the advertising and marketing world, there is also a range of other opportunities in trade and media. In addition, Darren Woolley's gruelling speaking schedule ensures high brand presence, which leads to many more naturally obtained links.

Google's Penguin update[9] punished a large number of manipulative tactics used by many in the SEO field. Links from low-quality sites and repeated keyword-rich anchor text saw a massive number of websites penalised. This spelled the end of low-quality directories, comment spam, blog networks, spun content, article directories, forum signature spam and more as viable long-term strategies. It also led to the emergence of an entirely new industry – penalty removal.

***10. History and influence***

A business that has a long pedigree and that has owned a domain for a decent number of years will be looked upon as a trustworthy option in search. This is where authority comes into it. An authoritative site is created by a strong offline presence (media, trade and other citations), a highly visible and engaged social media presence, and the quality of the websites that link to it.

**Technical compliance**

All of the aforementioned signals are essential, but if you do not master this next requirement, your results may be disappointing. Technical compliance has become a foundation requirement. Simple mistakes will punish your rankings and your business results.

Google is looking for fast, clean, efficient websites that have high authority signals. So you better get the technical stuff right.

***1. SEO audits***

These have become a necessity. With the ever-changing landscape that is search, and with an increasing complexity of website code, platforms and browsers, plus the frantic pace of change, anyone who is not auditing regularly is at risk. Large numbers of crawl errors relating to previous versions of websites or the duplication that relates to previous URL structures can suddenly appear in Webmaster Tools, and then bam! Drop in trust, drop in page positions, drop in visibility, drop in business.

It is impossible for anyone to predict the nuances of web behaviour, so you need to be constantly monitoring and reacting to the information you are given. An SEO audit is essential[10].

***2. Monitoring Google***

Despite Google's public commitment to being fair and transparent, the reality is that the company's existence relies on advertising revenue. This

9 searchenginewatch.com/tag/google-penguin

10 See the post titled 'SEO audits – What are they and why should you use them?' on page 111 of this book.

revenue is protected by Google's ability to give the best possible results for any search. Too much transparency leads to hackers and spammers destroying the user experience, which eventually leads to people looking for alternatives (with a reduction in ad revenue).

In other words, what Google says may not always be what Google does. So we need to watch the experts who spend every second measuring across massive datasets to get an understanding of what are temporary or unintended aberrations and what are major unannounced shifts in policy.

Mozcast[11] measures and publishes the volatility of Google's results using a weather metaphor. This is one of many tools that track thousands of keywords to analyse when Google is making minor adjustments or major changes to the algorithm, and what these mean for different industries.

Tracking the right forums is useful as well. Unfortunately, many of these are overwhelmed by spammers trying to undo penalties that have crippled their businesses.

The important thing is to keep up with what is going on. I have seen way too many development/design/IT companies using outdated and dangerous practices simply because they are not keeping up with the play.

#### *3. Crawl errors*

I was recently called on to audit a new site for a district council. The IT people who drove the project had taken Google's Webmaster blog post around crawl errors literally; that is, letting pages go to a 404 page should not affect ranking[12].

The reality is that if you have a sudden influx of 'Not found' errors, or if there is a significant number of pages that go to a 404 page (not found), then the algorithm will make an assumption (if machines can make assumptions) that your site is not giving a very good user experience due to the number of broken pages encountered.

In the case of the district council site, it was cut down from 2000 pages to 400, but no 301 redirects were implemented to take search engine robots to the most appropriate page or to refer all of that valuable history and authority. So the site had a 25% drop in traffic and questions were then asked about the investment in it.

Take my word for it – crawl errors do matter.

#### *4. Duplication*

This is a beauty. Duplication used to be (and still is for some black-hatters) an easy hack for multiple search engine positions. Publish the

11 mozcast.com

12 googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.co.nz/2011/05/do-404s-hurt-my-site.html

same content on multiple platforms, or have multiple pages on your site with basically the same content but different anchor links, and boom! Instant business.

Google's Panda update[13] hit this practice and eliminated many instances of the tactic, though certainly not all of them. The unintended consequence of this hunt for spammers was that the normal functions of many CMSs were hit by a drop in trust. Normal functions of websites, including archives, categories, tags and dynamic versions of pages, were suddenly a cause for concern.

Some platforms like WordPress had the advantage of plug-in developers who understood the intricacies of no-indexing certain taxonomies to avoid these issues. Others we have had to help with recommendations for each type of duplication issue.

The interesting thing with all of this is that Google does not care if your website is hit in its quest for quality in search results. Google makes the rules, and if you want traffic from that source you'd better adhere to the rules (spoken or not).

If duplication is an issue on your website, you need to fix it.

***5. PageSpeed***

This is a relatively new requirement in technical SEO. It became obvious that websites that loaded slowly, for whatever reason, were frustrating users. None of us wants to wait for more than a few milliseconds for a page to load. The unfortunate thing is that so many web developers and designers are focused on huge images and have no idea about how to manage the downside of these big statements. Big visuals and video take up big bandwidth.

Try running your website through Google Developers PageSpeed Insights[14]. You may be shocked by what you see. Common issues include compression, optimisation of images, browser caching, render blocking JavaScript, and CSS (cascading style sheets) above the fold.

A slow site will be dropped lower in page positions despite your awesome content.

***6. Bounce rate***

Google knows that bounce rates are not a particularly accurate measurement of visitor satisfaction (a 'bounce' is when a visitor visits just one page then leaves again). In fact, most high-quality blogs have a bounce rate of 80%-plus. This is because these visitors are arriving mainly due to

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13 marketingland.com/panda-4-1-changes-content-performance-strategy-103850

14 developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights

social media promotion – they see something interesting, they click, they read, they leave. Nothing wrong with that user experience.

So the more important metric is time on page. Did the visitor take the time to read and get to know the piece, or was it a quick and unsatisfying relationship?

We have all experienced those clickbait posts that take you to sites where, once you get there, you have to click a 'Next' button for each of the slides you have been coerced into viewing. In this case, low bounce rates = terrible user experience!

It is better to use a compelling call-to-action to take visitors to pages that will matter to them, rather than trick them for your data analyst's pleasure.

***7. Responsive design***

There is a choice to make. You could have a mobile website (after all, Facebook does), or you could have a responsive site that serves up the right design for each device and screen size.

Mobile sites, despite their economic benefits, are a tough task for SEO. You effectively have a duplicate site, and even if you change the metadata, the site will remain a nice copy of your main website. So responsive is the way to go.

But there is good responsive and bad responsive. Some of the top-rated website themes deliver a terrible mobile experience, so you need to work with a developer who understands how users interact on different devices.

This is in the technical compliance section because badly managed mobile sites will be subject to a duplication penalty.

***8. Servers and hosting***

The number-one nightmare. This is where you can feel completely helpless.

You have been recommended a good hosting company and you host your site with them. You choose a plan, one where you feel like you have gone above what your site needs for bandwidth – or, you let your developer host the site (and click the ticket on the way to a host you might have chosen). Then … disaster. Your website has gone, or intermittently you get a 'database error', or some other strange thing.

How can this be? You are paying the fees. These guys are supposed to know what they are doing. Your business relies on your website being available at least!

Server issues are one of the most fraught areas we deal with. The language is incomprehensible, response times poor, solutions vague.

You have to act quickly. As soon as there are issues with the server response or DNS (domain name system), you need to get right up in the face of your hosting company. If you have shared servers, do not accept any fob-off. If you have your own virtual servers, then there is no excuse.

**Content marketing**

Despite this being the third section of this inbound marketing outline, TrinityP3's content marketing strategy is the primary reason for all our outstanding results. Originally this was driven by content from Darren Woolley alone, but over time we have broadened the scope to take in experts from a range of fields and industries who all have something of interest to say to the TrinityP3 audience.

I'm sure you are all tired of hearing the old cliche 'Content is king'. But phrase it however you want, this is the essence of inbound marketing. Without extraordinary, unique content, you are going to be lost in that sea of ordinariness. So we set the bar high.

***1. Quality***

We have ignored or politely declined the incessant approaches from 'guest bloggers', from SEO outreachers, from PR firms, and from people who simply want to leverage TrinityP3's prominent online presence. Each of our contributors has either been invited or they are a TrinityP3 consultant with a high level of expertise in their area. To be published on TrinityP3's blog, you need the credentials and the insights to bring value to our audience.

And this is what it is all about. We can bring people to the website from search engines and social media by targeting particular topics, but building relationships and a loyal audience are many times more valuable. So the first priority of our content strategy is quality.

***2. The contributors***

Darren Woolley has written an astonishing 821 posts as of the publishing date of this post. Top contributors from within TrinityP3 are Anton Buchner on all things digital and data, Nathan Hodges on the pitch and strategic alignment, Clive Duncan on the world of TVCs and production, Anita Zanesco on the pitch and chemistry sessions, and Chris Sewell[15] on sustainability in business. I write about SEO, content marketing and social, and there are a number of other consultants who

15 au.linkedin.com/in/christophersewell

contribute periodically on their specialist fields.

From outside, we have contributions on marketing management from Marketing FIRST Forum[16] member Stephan Argent, Debra Giampoli[17] from Mondelez International, procurement professional David Little, storytelling-for-business expert Shawn Callahan[18], Andrew Armour[19] from Benchstone, Craig Hodges[20] from King Content, and a who's who of procurement, marketing and agency management.

This multi-author strategy has built our 'many voices' tone and allowed us to speak on a multitude of relevant topics.

***3. In-depth content***

You will not find a short, sharp post on the TrinityP3 blog. If you are here, you better be ready to be informed, in a comprehensive and fully researched way. Our commitment has always been to provide definitive information. Remember how I said that 'Knowledge is power' is our key philosophy? Well, that is what we set out to demonstrate.

Many times Darren has been approached by others in the industry who have asked, 'Why are you giving all of this information away for free? Your clients or your competitors will use this and your clients won't need you'. Of course, the reality with inbound is that the more expertise and the more knowledge you can demonstrate, the more trusted you become as a partner of choice. Those people who are holding back never get the chance to show their stuff.

The blog has become the go-to place for opinion, insights, step-by-step processes, solutions and much more. And the insights are not off-the-cuff. They are researched, tested, proven.

***4. Optimisation***

You may have an insight that the whole world needs to hear. It could be a game changer. But if you do not optimise your content correctly, then search engines will politely index but never show your content to anyone ever again.

This is the convergence of content marketing and intelligent content[21], expressed in this quote from content strategist Ann Rockley[22]:

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16 m1f.org

17 linkedin.com/pub/debra-giampoli/3/5a3/a51

18 linkedin.com/in/shawncallahan

19 benchstone.co.uk/Andrew-Armour

20 linkedin.com/in/craighodges1

21 contentmarketinginstitute.com/2015/01/evolution-content-marketing-include-intelligent-content

22 rockley.com

*'Intelligent content is not about the words or the images. Intelligent content is about how you create, manage and deliver your content. You can have the best content in the world, but if you can't get it out to your customers or prospects at the right time, in the right format, and on the device of their choosing, it doesn't matter how good your content is. Communicators spend too much time handcrafting content for a channel, then handcrafting that content over and over again for each additional channel. This isn't sustainable. We don't have the resources or the time, and we can't afford the cost of this error-prone process.'*

Learn how to optimise content or partner with someone who does this well:

- Keyword research – Are people interested in what you are saying? How can you use the right language to reach more people?
- The URL – Is it the best it can be?
- The title – Your number-one opportunity
- The meta description and/or structured data – Your opportunity to convince and convert
- Headings – Be smart about these: tell the story through subheadings and direct people to the section of their choice
- Images and graphics – Make them interesting, fun, unique, optimised
- Links: internal and outbound – Make these count.

The majority of TrinityP3's visitors come from optimised, evergreen content[23] that provides solutions. Each one of these posts is an asset that brings interested people from all around the globe to our site.

***5. Uniqueness***

There is such an avalanche of content being produced. Did you know that two million blog posts are published every day[24]? So how do you stand out in the maelstrom? How do you ensure your content is not just indexable but viewed as a desirable solution?

The answer is uniqueness. With so much content being produced, your opinions and research cannot be a close match to content found elsewhere.

Be different. Be challenging. Be provocative if need be. Develop a unique voice and style.

Don't recycle. Don't reword other people's content and call it your own. Don't be boring.

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23 trinityp3.com/2014/01/evergreen-marketing-management-posts

24 digitalbuzzblog.com/infographic-24-hours-on-the-internet

### *6. Solutions*

A big advantage for your content is when it supplies solutions for your industry's pain points or areas of confusion.

If we analyse TrinityP3's top posts[25], the majority of them explain specific processes or challenges. The most popular post of all time asks the question 'Top down or bottom up budgeting – Which approach is best?'[26].

Take a look at some of the other all-time winners:

- 'What are the biggest issues and challenges facing media today?'[27]
- 'Defining the scope of advertising agency services to determine agency compensation'[28]
- 'A step-by-step approach to calculating ad agency resource rates and head hour costs'[29]

These posts and others are evergreen. Also note how they are all solutions-focused.

### *7. The content schedule*

We have stuck to a publishing schedule of three posts per week since the beginning of the project. Sometimes we can run it pretty close to the bone, and there have been times when I have been burning the midnight oil to get a post ready at short notice if we are running low. The paradox is that the inbound marketing strategy has caused such an increase in leads and business that Darren and the consultants are often under the hammer time-wise as they are busy working on client business.

As a rule, we do like to have a good number of posts waiting in draft form and we select the most appropriate three at the end of the week prior to the next publication. That gives us a bit of time to create the social media introductions and to edit, proof and optimise each post. Final checks are made on the morning of posting, then we are good to go.

This commitment to deadlines and our content schedule sends some pretty powerful freshness signals to Google. The content is indexed and ranking highly within hours of publication.

### *8. Amplification*

It is not enough to simply hit 'Publish' and hope for the best. Rather, amplification is a crucial element of the content marketing process.

25 trinityp3.com/2015/01/trinityp3-turns-15

26 trinityp3.com/2014/02/top-down-or-bottom-up-budgeting

27 trinityp3.com/2013/03/challenges-facing-media-survey

28 trinityp3.com/2011/09/defining-the-scope-of-advertising-agency-services-to-determine-agency-compensation

29 trinityp3.com/2012/10/calculating-agency-resource-rates

As soon as the new post is published, it gets promoted across multiple LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Google+ pages. The combined reach of these pages is more than 120,000 people.

This social media promotion has a two-fold advantage. It allows great visibility and it sends powerful popularity signals to search engines. This adds to the speed of indexing and ensures the attainment of high page positions.

Retweets, shares and mentions all add to the reach of the content. If you take a look at the posts on TrinityP3, you will see a healthy amount of sharing. We have an engaged audience which shares our content on a regular basis. Look at the shares on Debra Giampoli's post 'Let's put the creative agency selection process out of its (and our) misery'[30] – 474 shares on LinkedIn alone.

To push things along, we also ping 89 search engines and submit each post manually to Google via Webmaster Tools.

***9. Print publications and e-books***

TrinityP3 published its first paperback and e-book at the end of 2013. *Top 50 Marketing Management Posts of 2013*[31] was extremely well received and sold out of its print run. So we repeated this a year later with *Top 50 Marketing Management Posts of 2014*[32] and it, too, is selling out fast.

This move into print has been really interesting. People still love the tactile joy of owning and reading a physical book – it's something to add to your bookshelf alongside all those essential marketing, business and strategy books. It has been a huge success, and we will continue to publish the aforementioned book annually.

We also published Senior Consultant Anton Buchner's comprehensive e-book on digital and data called *The Ultimate Guide to Digital Marketing in a Data-driven World*[33]. So far, 310 copies of this e-book have been downloaded since it was published at the beginning of November last year.

Here are some of the other content assets we have published which you can download from our website[34].

- Guides:
  - 'Marketing procurement health check'
  - 'Television advertising production governance guide'
- White papers:

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30 trinityp3.com/2014/08/creative-agency-shoot-out-selection-process

31 trinityp3.com/product/the-marketing-management-book-of-the-year-2013

32 trinityp3.com/product/the-marketing-management-book-of-the-year-2014

33 trinityp3.com/download-the-ultimate-guide-to-digital-in-a-data-driven-world

34 trinityp3.com/downloads

  - ‘Is the media industry all talk and no action?’
  - ‘Improving the search and selection process’
- Discussion papers:
  - ‘Is creativity valued? And if not, how should it be?’
  - ‘Marketing services supplier search and selection’
  - ‘Marketing in a recession’.

***10. Tools and innovation***

Darren Woolley has previously written about the three types of consulting[35] – Rocket Science, Grey Hair and Process. As part of a strategy designed to embrace all three, Rocket Science needed to be a strong point of difference between TrinityP3 and its competitors. So a number of tools and platforms were developed to help marketers achieve more efficiency, more-effective relationships and better results.

TrinityP3’s ‘Calculators’[36] is one of the most visited pages on the website. We also developed a free mobile business app[37] so marketers could check figures on the go.

Evalu8ing[38] is a true 360-degree relationship-management tool that helps identify problem areas and improve relationships. Unlike most online tools, this one allows you to evaluate the relationships between up to eight groups.

Ad Cost Checker[39] allows you to calculate and benchmark agency rates on the fly. The huge database that TrinityP3 uses for this tool means that you can very quickly see how close you are to industry standards. No more guesswork when it comes to marketing spend.

Watch this space, as there is more to come in 2015.

***11. Trade press and speaking engagements***

The past couple of years have seen rapidly increasing demand for Darren Woolley’s keynote appearances, presentations and panel discussions – the air miles getting clocked up are pretty impressive. The number of events is far too long to list here, so we have chosen a few of the more recent ones as examples:

- November 2014 – SAGE (Secrets of Agency Excellence) – Telling rooms full of agency management in Sydney and Melbourne that

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35 See the post titled ‘What type of marketing management consulting do you need?’ on page 177 of this book.

36 trinityp3.com/calculators

37 trinityp3.com/mobile_apps_for_business

38 evalu8ing.com

39 adcostchecker.com

most, if not all, are factories producing the collateral that fills the advertising space of most media, adding little or no value at all – just crap.

- October 2014 – Norway – ANSO Conference – Talking about bringing value back into marketing and advertising to 350 Norwegian marketers in Oslo, and finding that everyone has similar challenges and issues.
- March 2014 – Australia – Content Marketing Seminar – Filling a room with almost 300 marketers and agencies to discuss effective content marketing, then donating the funds raised to Charlie Teo's brain cancer research foundation, going on to replicate this in Melbourne and Singapore.
- April 2013 – Canada – Association of Canadian Advertisers – Talking to a group of major media advertisers about how the current remuneration model for their media agencies is failing to deliver real value and get universal agreement.

TrinityP3 has also been featured too many times to list on local and global advertising and marketing sites such as Mumbrella, AdNews, Campaign Brief, CMO, Warc and more. These have comprised both news pieces and op-eds.

**Social media amplification**

Social media has been a key strategy for TrinityP3, but the platforms used have continually changed over the past three years. There is still a large number of people in the industry who are a bit lost with social, and this is exemplified by the contrast between over- and under-sharing, and by the lack of a decent-sized network for many. Without a good-sized network, any engagement strategy will be ineffectual. These should not be numbers for numbers' sake but rather should be carefully considered and hand-selected.

Here is a quick run-down of the social platforms and how we are using them.

***1. LinkedIn***

LinkedIn is our number-one source of social media visitors to the website. Darren's personal LinkedIn network is 6649 as at 15 January 2015. The TrinityP3 company page has 778 followers.

The focus here is on sharing high-quality content from the TrinityP3 blog and from other relevant sources. Discussions are started in LinkedIn Groups that are related to the subject matter, and there is good engagement on posted content on the personal profile.

LinkedIn publishing drove a lot of visitors when it was first launched in 2014 and led to the re-emergence of a couple of archive posts which hit the monthly top 10s. As this progressed and a massive number of people began publishing, the view numbers declined sharply. I'm sure you have all seen, and begun to get irritated by, the number of people who 'have just published a post'. We will test this one again in 2015 to see whether it is worth pursuing.

***2. Twitter***

Twitter is not far behind LinkedIn, and this goes to show how effective it is as a content platform. We get a high number of people checking out blog posts from Twitter, which proves the importance of a well-thought-out and compelling title.

We use Hootsuite and Buffer to schedule a range of content daily across 12 Twitter accounts. The flagship content account is @TrinityP3[40] – this gets the highest influence scores. Every day we select content from TrinityP3 properties and from advertising-related sites around the world. Real mentions (not spam) are replied to and we still take the time to thank every person who shares our content (although we do it in blocks so we don't clog up the feed). This year we are developing a new engagement strategy to lift the levels, and we will be using a couple of new and innovative tools for data analysis and interaction.

Twitter has been a great way to connect with others at conferences and events. Following the event hashtag means that opinions and observations on the speaker are shared in real time and the conversation can be followed by others who are not at the event. The feed can get intense on these occasions, but the connection and sharing of views with others is invaluable.

***3. SlideShare***

SlideShare is a very strong channel for TrinityP3. The presentations get a very high number of views and the channel has 272 followers.

Here are a few of the most popular presentations[41]:

- 'Top 10 ways marketers waste money' – 8858 views
- 'Managing television advertising production costs' – 8324 views

40 twitter.com/TrinityP3

41 slideshare.net/darrenwoolley

- 'Top 10 tips for managing advertising production costs' – 7247 views
- 'Minimising the commoditising effect of marketing procurement' – 5740 views
- 'A collaborative approach to decoupling television advertising production' – 5514 views.

And there's this one, which has proven extremely popular:

- 'Digital agencies versus technology agencies' – 14,050 views.

***4. YouTube***

TrinityP3's YouTube channel[42] houses a combination of agency and client testimonials, speaking engagements, explainer videos, and a series of specially created interviews with TrinityP3 experts. One of the explainer videos that has been popular is *Trading Desks, Demand Side Platforms and Programmatic Buying Explained*[43].

The videos uploaded here are also repurposed as blog posts with introductions and transcripts, so this adds to the content strategy.

***5. Facebook***

Most people will tell you that Facebook is not particularly effective as a B2B platform. Indeed, there have been times when we have come close to shutting down TrinityP3's Facebook page. But each time, we look at the numbers of visitors who are coming from Facebook, and at the fact that for some people in the industry this is their only social channel, and we decide it is worth continuing.

Facebook has continually reduced reach over the past couple of years, so we pay a minimal sum to boost each post. The small budget allocated at least allows us to reach those people who have liked the page.

***6. Google+***

We have a reasonable presence on Google+, but in 2014 we used it primarily as a content-sharing channel. Our strategy in 2015 will be much more about engagement.

One of the big advantages of Google+ was removed by Google in 2014, and that is authorship[44]. It was a big win to have an author image appearing next to your content in search, and to have the number of people who have you in their circles below the title. But that is now gone. Conventional wisdom pointed to these results being too effective in

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42 youtube.com/channel/UCndq8tcHeUgxFKVpUeM92gw

43 youtube.com/watch?v=eOD3qL_2J_Q

44 marketingland.com/google-officially-dropped-authorship-98066

attracting clicks, and this was detracting from the number of clicks on paid search ads (Google's bread and butter).

There is still some debate about a Google patent for Author Rank, and many think that this is already part of the algorithm.

***7. Influence measurement***

This one always gets people's backs up: 'How dare you put a number on my influence based on a machine analysis?' But the reality is that in this fast-paced, time-poor, crowded environment, you sometimes have to be selective about who you spend your time with.

There, I said it.

In business, you have to spend your time on those who could become clients, or could effectively share your ideas, or could be brand advocates. And a quick way to gauge influence and reach is through influence-measurement tools.

US content marketing thought leader Mark Schaefer[45] published an essential book in 2012 called *Return on Influence*[46], which dispels some of the emotive reactions to this type of social proof. Check it out.

Klout[47] is probably the most widely used tool. It can save a lot of time in social media management. As an example, a Twitter user mentions you and they seem a bit spammy. If you are in Hootsuite, you click the user name and you get the Klout score, if any, and the number of followers and tweets. No Klout score, thousands of tweets, almost no followers = spambot.

And yes, Klout can be gamed. Some of the people who have the highest numbers of followers have achieved this through dubious means, and they inflate their scores by tweeting every second of the day. But for the most part it is a reasonable and useful guide.

Another tool we are beginning to use, NUVI[48], sorts all brand mentions, hashtags and focus keywords by sentiment and influence. So at a glance, you can see whether someone influential has said something positive or negative about you. This allows a quick response and is very useful for reputation management.

**Valuing an inbound strategy**

I have tried to be as complete as possible with this strategy account, but there are a lot of aspects that I have had to leave out. We work closely

45 businessesgrow.com/blog

46 convinceandconvert.com/social-media-tools/klout-and-the-reality-of-return-on-influence

47 klout.com

48 nuvi.com

with Darren and the TrinityP3 team on a daily basis. We discuss strategy, we test and learn, we try and fail, and we implement and succeed. It is a great pleasure to work with people who understand the value of an inbound strategy and who understand the intricacies and complexities of digital marketing.

# POST 3

## Measuring the 4Cs in selecting agencies and managing agency relationships

**Posted 14 October 2013 by Darren Woolley**

When selecting or evaluating a creative supplier[1], be it a media agency, digital agency, advertising agency or any one of a number of creative suppliers on your roster, you'll find it valuable to classify the selection or evaluation criteria using the 4Cs:

- capabilities
- chemistry
- creativity
- commercials.

Starting with the 4Cs ensures you undertake a full and robust evaluation of an agency and its ability to fulfil your requirements.

**Capabilities assessment**

Assessing capabilities comes down to ensuring an agency has the right people, with the right experience, and a proven and tested methodology. While many feel it is necessary to make an agency undertake a mock or dummy run to prove its abilities, it is much more efficient and effective to assess the agency based on its recent track record with its existing client base.

1 trinityp3.com/agency-performance/agency-search-and-selection

This can be achieved through the following:

- **Detailed case studies and examples** – Not just reading the case studies, but quizzing the agency in regards to lessons learned, issues encountered, and results. You can quickly get a sense of what is true and what is fluff. Also ask to meet the team who worked on the account for these discussions, to make sure they are still with the agency.
- **Contacting and discussing the agency's work with its existing clients** – It is amazing how marketers are happy to talk about their agency, both the good and the bad. Simply respect their time and ask sensible but probing questions and they can give you a very good insider's view of the agency's capabilities. (Even if the agency is your incumbent, it is worth calling its other clients to discuss their experiences.)
- **Profiling key staff in the agency for skills and expertise** – Of course, you can ask the agency for the résumés of its staff, but it is just as valuable to check out its online profile, such as by doing a Google search of the agency's name, checking out its presence on LinkedIn and the like. It's amazing what a bit of research can reveal about the skills and expertise of key agency staff.
- **Reviewing the agency's methodology against a real-life example** – Unless you are a Six Sigma[2] black belt, there is nothing more boring than reviewing a process map or chart. But it can be quite illuminating to have the agency present a case study of a recent project against its 'proprietary' methodology. This is especially fun when dealing with media agencies.

### Chemistry alignment

Many feel that chemistry is intangible, but it is incredibly powerful and important in defining the agency relationship. However, too many leave measuring the alignment to chemistry to chance. It is not enough to get together and see if you 'click' or 'gel'[3], as some would have you believe. This is your first opportunity to take the agency out for a test drive, even if it is only around the dealer's car park and not on the open road, where you could really put the agency through its paces.

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2 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six_Sigma

3 trinityp3.com/2011/12/the-importance-of-chemistry-meetings-in-the-advertising-agency-selection-process

We have held many types of chemistry sessions, using many formats, including:

- **speed dating** – where the marketing team meets with each agency for 15 minutes and puts to them five questions from a list of 20 prepared questions to see how they think on their feet
- **90-minute intensive Q&A sessions** – where each agency presents case studies and is quizzed on the insights, results and lessons of each to test the agency's understanding and commitment to its work
- **one-hour sessions** – where the agency starts with a presentation on 'Why choose us?', which leads into a 30-minute discussion of the agency's strengths and weaknesses.

Each session is designed to stress-test the chemistry between the agency and the marketing team to really see how aligned they are on values, culture, communication styles, outlook and personality. It doesn't matter if the sessions last 15 minutes or 90 minutes – at the end of them, the marketing team will have a very good understanding and appreciation of which agencies are most aligned to them.

**Creative access**

When I say 'creative', I mean strategy and creative thinking, along with innovation and problem-solving. Beyond expertise, experience and capability to produce work, this is really at the core of the reason for choosing an agency. It is the difference between a co-creation relationship and simply taking on a supplier of advertising services.

I have always found it ironic that the traditional approach is to give each agency a brief and send it off on its own to 'solve' that brief, then choose the one that is lucky enough to come up with the idea you love. Don't get me wrong. Output is important. But don't you really want to have an agency relationship based on co-creation? Who knows your brand better than you? And don't you want to work with an agency that enhances your understanding of how to attract and engage your audience?

This is why we *do not* recommend speculative creative work. Or speculative media strategy. Or speculative anything. Unless, of course, all you are buying is that particular outcome. But in most cases, our clients are buying an ongoing productive relationship where they plan to work with their agencies to solve a multitude of problems and take advantage of many more opportunities.

This is why we recommend the all-day workshop approach[4]. It is the ultimate test drive for both agency and marketer. You can take the agency

4 trinityp3.com/2012/10/selecting-an-agency-supplier

onto the open road and open it up as fast and as hard as you are willing to.

Marketers who have worked with us report that they have a much clearer and more-transparent view of the agency and how they will ultimately work together[5]. And by including other key stakeholder[6] and agency roster partners[7] in the workshop process, you can determine how they will fit into your business and your existing roster of agencies.

**Commercial arrangements**

Last, but not least, are the commercial arrangements, including agency remuneration and contracts. In fact, in a pitch situation, this process usually commences between the chemistry and creative stages. It means that once the marketing team has shortlisted the number of agencies to no more than three following the chemistry process, they are committed to working with those agencies through the workshops.

When you are evaluating an agency, it is important to review not just the level of remuneration but also the resource utilisation. How efficiently is the agency resource being used as against the quantity and complexity of the outputs it is producing?

In reviewing and benchmarking agency remuneration, we look at:

- agency resource levels against scope of work delivered
- agency resource mix by function
- agency resource mix within each function
- agency resources costs (salaries)
- agency remuneration fundamentals, including billable hours, overhead and profit multiples
- non-retained rates
- production costs on projects
- overall agency profitability on the account.

This provides a very clear view of the impact the remuneration model has on the scope-of-work delivery, the marketing budget and the agency resources provided[8]. From this we are able to determine the areas of opportunity for greater efficiencies through process improvements, incentives and bonuses, and resource allocations.

5 trinityp3.com/2012/10/alignment-agency-search-and-selection

6 trinityp3.com/2012/11/internal-alignment-agency-search

7 trinityp3.com/2011/12/improved-creative-agency-selection-using-strategic-workshops

8 trinityp3.com/2012/03/how-to-calculate-the-agency-head-hours-required-to-deliver-your-scope-of-work

**Think the 4Cs**

So there you have it. If you are reviewing your agency by going to market, or undertaking a review of your current agency arrangements, think the 4Cs – capabilities, chemistry, creativity and commercial arrangements.

# POST 4

## How to tell if your digital agency is buying fake followers (or using other sneaky tricks)

**Posted 15 September 2014 by Mike Morgan**

Technology has made marketing very targeted and very measurable. Now you know exactly how well your various digital campaigns are tracking, with up-to-the-minute reports on social media growth, website traffic and views of your ads/videos on YouTube.

Or do you?

In this post I am going to 'out' a few of the sneakier tricks your agency might be using, and offer ways to test whether it is being straight with you or whether it prefers smoke and mirrors.

**Faking Twitter followers**

If you have been on Twitter for any length of time, you will have had multiple offers of '1000s of Twitter followers' in exchange for a small sum – usually via direct messages. And if you know what you are doing, you will have ignored these spam offers. You might have even blocked the user or reported them for spam.

It has been proven over and over again that fake followers, robotic accounts, spam Twitter accounts and the like bring no real benefit to a social media strategy. These followers do not interact. They do not become customers or clients. They do not help with reach or amplification of your message. They do not become advocates or collaborators.

So why is there a market for this deceptive practice? And how can you tell if your agency is faking your follower count?

**Why would someone buy fake followers?**

There is a common misconception that social media influence and authority are directly related to the number of followers, likes or connections you have.

Let's say you are influential in business in the 'offline' world and you are just getting started with your social media presence. It doesn't look that great to only have a few followers, does it? This is where the following temptation can sometimes come into play:

*'If I buy my first 1000 followers, at least I won't be seen to be a novice.'*

Self-appointed social media experts often push this to the limit. It is not unusual to see people who have no real online or offline profile with hundreds of thousands of followers.

In a very popular post, Darren Woolley wrote about measuring whether self-proclaimed social media experts are really experts[1]. It was interesting to see many comments taking exception to one aspect of this – social influence measurement tools such as Klout. It seems that people are a little uneasy about having their influence measured based on their social media authority. But that is a topic for another post.

**Advertising agencies faking the numbers**

Shock, horror! Who would have thought? I am certainly not saying that every agency is guilty of faking the numbers, but from what I have seen it is way more common than it should be.

Is one of your reported metrics an increase in Twitter followers? Is it an increase in Facebook likes? Is it the number of views of your ad or video on YouTube? Is it impressions or hits? Is it website visitors?

Unfortunately, all of these can be manipulated. However, there are online tools to measure almost anything. And if they don't yet exist, you can guarantee that someone is working away to make them a reality.

I'll now address each one of the above metrics, starting with Twitter followers.

**How to check for fake Twitter followers**

As I said at the start of this post, there is a good market for sellers of fake Twitter followers. There is a very simple way to tell if your agency is guilty of this, and you can check any competitors for shonky practices

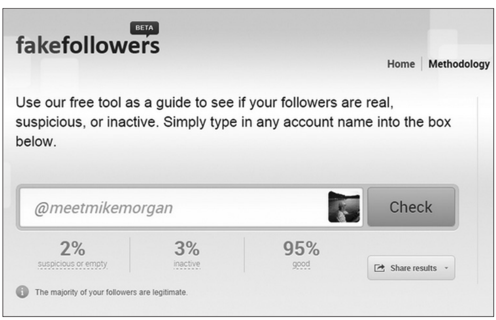
1 trinityp3.com/2012/12/social-media-expert

as well. Socialbakers has a great tool[2] that will tell you what percentage of your following is fake or inactive.

I ran the TrinityP3 Twitter account through this tool – TrinityP3 has 14,645 followers. This was the result:


A figure of 3% inactive is fine, as people do stop using Twitter; 1% suspicious is a very good number.

I couldn't resist running my own Twitter account through the tool as well. I have 34,561 followers. Lots of these have got to be fake, right?




Only 2% suspicious. And what is also very useful about this tool is that it identifies what the suspicious accounts are. Unsurprisingly, a new account that retweets something of mine at least once every day showed up. I checked out the website link on their Twitter profile and guess what? This site sells:

- Twitter followers
- retweets

2 socialbakers.com/twitter/fakefollowercheck

- Instagram followers
- Instagram likes
- Facebook likes
- Facebook shares
- YouTube views
- YouTube subscribers.

The testimonials are hilarious. Have a look at this one:

*'While most agencies cave in to pressure to use short-term tactics for quick-but-short-lasting results, this is one company that understands the importance of long-term, principle-based strategies.'*

*Jack Harper*

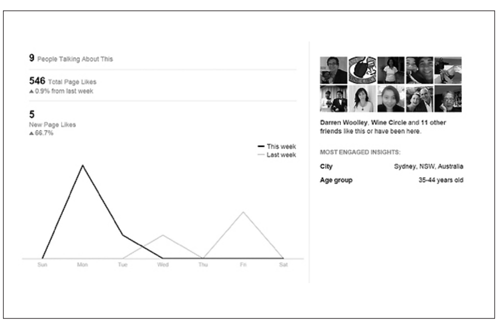
Say what?

Sometimes the Socialbakers tool misses a specific type of fake follower. So if you are still not sure whether you are getting the right information, double-check it with a tool provided by StatusPeople[3]. Surprisingly, the results can be quite different. (TrinityP3 got 1% fake with this tool, but the percentage of inactive accounts was higher.)

You can also use these tools to check out that person you know who suddenly seems to have a large following despite them following very few people.

**How to check for fake Facebook likes**

This one is a bit more difficult to measure (the tool that someone will be working on right now, I'm sure). Probably the biggest indication of this kind of cheating can be found in the insights Facebook provides. Go to the 'People' section and click the arrow that takes you to the insights.




3 fakers.statuspeople.com

What you are looking for here is the most engaged city. Is it relevant to where the business is positioned geographically, or are most people from a country that speaks a different language?

It is fairly difficult to use 'People talking about' as a measure, as boosted posts will always get a big lift in visibility and interaction. Yes, Facebook is a paid advertising platform.

**Website visitors, hits, impressions and other lies**

If I had a dollar for every time I saw inflated reporting of website data …

There are a number of ways to influence website traffic reporting. For instance, content management systems that report hits (and which sometimes call these visitors, or unique visitors) often include visits by robots. Robots are continually scouring the web – Googlebot alone may visit your site hundreds of times a day if it is a large site with lots of fresh content. Google Analytics is pretty good at filtering out bot traffic, but some software-generated traffic still gets through.

What is more insidious is the deliberate use of software to generate visits. Again, there is a plethora of 'Buy website visits' scams and 'Free website traffic' schemes available that can be found with a simple search.

Like this one:

*'[X] is the #1 tool for generating more traffic on your website from all around the world.'*

Does this extra traffic help? If the popularity signals are actually generated by real human visitors from multiple IP addresses, and this coincides with other popular brand signals such as social media, brand presence, high-quality links and media mentions, then high traffic is useful. If it is generated by robot visits which typically stay for 0:00 seconds and bounce, then you are really wasting your time.

In your analytics reports, don't just focus on sessions and users (visitors and unique visitors). Traffic sources, time on site, number of pages viewed, most popular content, locations and technology will all give you an indication of whether someone is trying to pull the wool over your eyes.

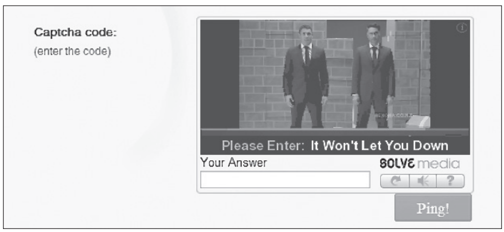
**A common practice for faking YouTube views**

Has your agency ever stated that it regularly creates videos that go viral on YouTube? Does its track record tend to indicate that almost all of its work generates hundreds of thousands of views? Well, I am going to call out a common manipulative practice using captcha forms.

There is a large number of online tools that require users to fill out a captcha form to eliminate software-driven spam. These tools are used thousands of times every day by many thousands of people. The example I will use is a tool called Pingler[4].

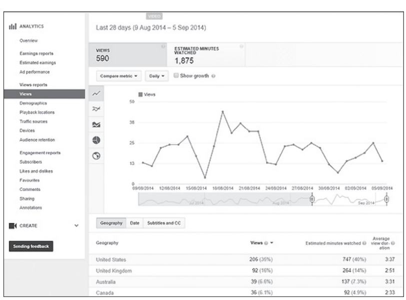
This tool has a legitimate use – notifying multiple search engines when new content is published. It's kind of like a tap on the shoulder: 'Hey, we have just published something. When you get a minute, can you pop over and check it out?' The original captcha would have had distorted letters and numbers to fool the machines. However, Pingler – like many other tools with captchas – is now being paid to run YouTube videos.

The way it works is that after the video has played for six seconds, the captcha phrase appears. This means that the tool user will have watched enough of the video to register as a legitimate view. This is how it looks:




Let's say this ad has been placed on 10 of these tools and each one generates a couple of thousand views per day. It doesn't take long to get the numbers up when you use this hack. Something else is wrong with this video – 120,000 views and only seven likes? And I wonder how many of these came from agency personnel?

So how can you tell if your agency is using this sneaky trick? Simple! Open your YouTube page and go to 'Analytics', then to 'Views'. Click on the title of the video you are analysing. This is what you will see:



What you are looking for here is the average view duration on the right. In this case (a popular TrinityP3 video[5]), people from the US spent slightly longer watching than viewers from the UK, but all view times relate closely to the full length of the video (4:19). In the example from Pingler, where 120,000 views were generated mainly from manipulation, you would probably find the average duration to be closer to six seconds.

**Spot the tricks**

So there you have it. Not all agencies are honest with their tactics. There are a number of ways in which they could be manipulating the numbers, and this post has discussed a few of them.

If you have any doubts about the validity of the work your agency is doing, run these simple tests. You might be surprised by the outcome.

5 youtube.com/watch?v=eOD3qL_2J_Q&list=UUndq8tcHeUgxFKVpUeM92gw

# POST 5

## How do you manage a successful transition to a new agency?

**Posted 5 November 2014 by Darren Woolley**

The right choice has been made, the decision has been approved, and the contract signed. You have a new agency or marketing supplier on board. But as with any new relationship[1], there are some short-term hurdles to jump, including the issue of exiting from the liaison with the incumbent in an organised manner to ensure continuation of service during the transition.

While the euphoria of the new relationship hangs heavy in the air, marketers face some very real concerns:

- Do you have the internal resources to ensure the smooth transfer of knowledge from a disgruntled incumbent to an enthusiastic but currently understaffed supplier?
- Can you ensure that all of your valuable IP and data is transferred to the new agency?
- How do you minimise disruption to the day-to-day workflow during the transition period?

### The cost of transition

Our benchmarking[2] shows that the appointment of a new agency requires a 20% increase in resources in the first 3–6 months, depending on the size and complexity of the business, to deal with transition issues.

1 trinityp3.com/2014/10/relationship-management-new-agency

2 trinityp3.com/2013/11/agency-remuneration-benchmarking

On an account of $1 million in resource costs, this equates to a cost of between $50,000 and $100,000 to your business. The other major costs to business during transition are loss of valuable IP and the legal risks when migrating third-party agreements for ongoing communication.

There is often confusion regarding payments to the incumbent, identification of and dispute over the transfer of IP ownership, and the decoding and embedding of existing processes, both internally and within the new supplier. Then there are the time and resources required to induct and coordinate the change-management process, and the difficulty in obtaining detailed information on both the previous and new supplier's processes.

Collectively, these contribute huge hidden costs and potential risks – the larger the change, the greater the costs and the risk. But with careful planning, these can be managed and reduced.

**The transition process**

Our experience here is based on helping marketers transition a full range of agency types, including media, digital and creative. We have even assisted in transitioning a call centre. Our team of subject-matter experts have not only managed the process, in most cases they have experience with the transition on the agency side.

The transition process is based on a series of filters that allow an organised exit and entry plan. Depending on the requirements of the advertiser, there are eight broad stages.

***1. Detailed transition planning***

It is essential to establish the scope of the transition. In a recent media agency transition, the new agency was replacing a relationship spanning almost two decades and a huge number of campaigns, especially in the digital space. It required detailed planning up-front to ensure all stakeholders, timelines and milestones were agreed.

***2. Identify and arrange transfer of IP***

Intellectual property is created by the agency on behalf of the advertiser. In most cases, the agency has agreed to assign this IP to the advertiser. Therefore, at the time of transition, it is important to identify the IP and determine if it is worth transitioning to the new agency, before you even look at the practicalities of the process, including the legal and physical requirements.

***3. Technology compatibility***

Most of the data and intellectual property will be stored in databases and other systems. While increasingly these platforms have the ability to share this information through APIs (application programming interfaces) and XML formats, it is still important to detail the various requirements of moving from the incumbent's to the new agency's systems, to identify the issues and engage the appropriate expertise where necessary.

***4. Process transition***

The marketing team will have been working in a specific way with the incumbent. The new agency can either adapt to the existing process or provide its own process. The other incumbents on the roster will also have specific ways of working with the marketing team and each other. Therefore, to achieve alignment of process, it is important to make a decision about either transitioning the existing process to the new relationship or creating a new process with the new agency. Either way, a procedure is required to capture and transition the process, or alternatively to create it.

***5. Contract cost resolution***

There are financial implications when ending one contract and starting a new one. It is important to completely understand the implications of the contract agreements and to manage the process in a way that's compliant with the contract. Issues will arise in regards to the new agency, but often more difficult is resolving the issues that arise with the incumbent, which will sometimes be looking to maximise its exit payment.

***6. Induction process***

The induction process brings the new agency into alignment with the marketer and the roster of agencies. This process should be comprehensive and documented to ensure all stakeholders are engaged and involved in delivering the alignment. The problem is that induction is often overlooked in the rush to commence work with the new agency.

***7. Handover period***

While the overall transition period can take many weeks, the actual handover should be focused and ideally last no more than a week. This means that the two agencies will minimise any duplication on existing projects. It takes planning up-front to ensure this is as seamless as possible.

***8. Identify training requirements***

The addition of the new agency is a good time to identify the gaps in the knowledge base of marketing and the agencies. Engaging the agencies in this process creates the opportunity to ensure all stakeholders are equally informed and aligned. It is during this time of disruption that the appropriate upskilling within the organisation and the roster can create alignment.

**The benefits of managing transition**

The fact is that making the decision to appoint a new agency is only half of the process. Management of the transition of the new agency is essential to:

- deliver greater efficiency in time, resources and cost
- identify issues up-front and develop solutions before they become problems
- provide security and trust during a disruptive period with an accountable and structured process
- maximise the value of the new agency by minimising miscommunication and alignment to expectations
- minimise costs related to the exit strategy with the incumbent
- create positive relations with the professional management of the departing incumbent.

# POST 6

## 12 essential tips for developing a content marketing strategy

**Posted 20 October 2014 by Mike Morgan**

It seems that there is still a major problem around the development and ROI measurement of an effective content marketing strategy. Questions asked in a series of recent seminars which Darren Woolley presented at demonstrated how much marketers are still struggling with the new digital content arena.

Is it too much of a leap?

Does it require too much new learning?

And how can you possibly discriminate between those who know what they are talking about and can deliver results, and those who have read all the right blogs and can regurgitate content strategy platitudes that appease those who are feeling just a little bit … lost?

Yes, it is a big call. And there are many content marketing mistakes[1] that can be made along the way, any of which could seriously hinder your results. So here are 12 essential tips that you must take into account if you want all of the business benefits that a content marketing strategy can bring to your business – big or small.

### 1. Develop a strategy

Makes sense to start here, doesn't it?

It is hugely important that the content creation team (or person) has an understanding of who your customers are, what your business does,

1 trinityp3.com/2012/11/content-marketing-strategy-failing

what needs your products or services satisfy, what language or jargon and tone of voice is appropriate for your customers, and most importantly, what success looks like. It is necessary to analyse personas and to develop content that will engage these potential customers.

Before conducting any research into potential search queries, it is important to have an in-depth conversation to get familiar with USPs (unique selling points) and competition, market reach and business goals. These should all influence the type of content you are creating. How frequently should you be publishing? What form will the content take? Who will be the business lead for this content?

The strategy should always be focused on solutions. It should answer your potential customers' questions and it should give value. It should also be structured for ease of indexing by search engines so your customers can find your solutions easily.

**2. Publish content regularly**

If there is not a commitment to regularly publish content, then a content strategy will not be effective. This is the big hurdle for some businesses. As soon as things get busy, many people have difficulty finding time to supply crucial information for their audience.

If you are struggling to resource this content creation from inside your company, then you must outsource the job to writers who have an understanding of web structure and optimisation (though do not go down the 'SEO copywriting' keyword repetition path) and who can write for humans, not robots.

What is regular enough? That depends on the size of your organisation, your business goals, your content marketing strategy, your budget and resources, and more. TrinityP3 has stuck to a regime of three posts per week for the majority of the past three years. We have lifted to five posts per week when we have had case studies we wanted to share.

**3. Get both management and employees involved**

The ideal scenario sees involvement from management and also people across the business. People from different levels of a business will have expertise in specific areas. Having contributions from such a range of people brings value to the strategy. If everyone is aware of the content marketing strategy and what is being achieved, then the amplification of your efforts is intensified.

People are justifiably proud of contributing published content to a project. And it does a great deal for the visibility and value of their personal brands. By having a diverse range of expertise, opinions and insights, as well as different voices, you will be able to connect with a larger number of people.

Your staff are likely to have the closest direct relationship with your customers, so they will know the questions that your customers are asking on a regular basis.

**4. Be generous with your information**

Some companies find it difficult to share details of how things work and why their products or services are high-quality. 'Isn't this giving away our intellectual property?' they ask. 'Won't our competitors use this information?'

A successful content strategy relies on sharing information generously. Your customers want to understand exactly why they should consider purchasing from you and not your competitor. So what are the unique features of what you do and how will they satisfy your customer's needs?

This is where comprehensive solutions work. People will do the majority of their research online. If your business stands out as the one that is answering all of their questions in a friendly, professional manner, who do you think they will be likely to purchase from? Certainly not the business that treats its product features as trade secrets.

This is all about building trust and demonstrating high levels of expertise. And this is applicable to every industry.

**5. Inbound marketing is not about the sales pitch**

The sales pitch has no place in inbound marketing. Save that for your advertising campaigns. What you should be working towards is high visibility through search engine presence with content that offers solutions and insights for a large number of pain-points or questions. This content allows you to build relationships with your current and potential customers. It builds trust.

There is nothing worse than digesting content that offers a solution and then getting hit with the big sales pitch. People who use the web are savvy, and like the dreaded pop-ups on websites, such attempts to close a sale will simply lead to a website visitor being reluctant to return.

Trust destroyed. End of relationship.

**6. Optimise your content correctly**

Once you have created the content you would like to publish, it is not just a matter of adding it to a CMS and hitting the 'Publish' button. If you wish to have your content found in search, then SEO must be factored into each published post[2].

These are the most important factors:

- **Number one is your title** – If you don't get this right, your content will never be found. This includes both the post title and your SEO title.
- **Your meta description** – This is where you get to convince a possible reader that you have exactly what they are looking for. Ask questions and let them know that you have the solution.
- **The URL** – This is also a powerful confirmation of page intent and should be edited to best practice. No special characters, no underscores, the correct length and keyword-focused.
- **Content length** – Our recommendation is that anything less than 500 words will not be effective. Definitive solutions do have the greatest value in engagement, attraction of links, social sharing and visibility in search. The optimum length varies from industry to industry, but 1000 words or more is looked upon as giving real value.
- **Heading structure** – This is important in allowing your visitors to scan through the content and find the section they are looking for. It also allows you to create a narrative that lets people gain an understanding of the overall piece before reading in more depth.
- **Social sharing and Open Graph tags** – The former generates healthy popularity signals and encourages the sharing of quality content, and the latter allows you to decide how to display titles, descriptions and images on social media channels. This is very important for engagement and for the professional depiction of your brand.
- **Image optimisation** – Images, screenshots and other graphics help break up content and allow for further demonstration of content intent. Alt tags are what search engines crawl to tell them what an image is about. And size is very important – compression and correct image resolution help Pageload performance. Don't push the keyword side of alt tags too much, as Google is a fair way down the track in recognising key elements of an image.

**7. Structure your content**

No-one wants to fight their way through large blocks of text. No-one wants to wrestle with long, complicated sentences. So use short

2 moz.com/learn/seo/on-page-factors

paragraphs; bullet points or numbered lists where appropriate; and images, videos, graphics and quotes to break up your text.

As I have already mentioned, subheadings are very useful, and you should factor these into every post. Also use a powerful opening statement and introduction. The body should deliver the value you are sharing. Your conclusion should finish the piece strongly and encourage further thought on the topic via questions or statements.

Reading your content should not be a chore. It should be a joy. It should make the reader want to digest every point.

### 8. Think about your tone of voice

You have to be careful that it doesn't appear that you have swallowed a dictionary. Some jargon or technical language will be acceptable if your audience has a high level of technical understanding, but if your audience comes from a range of backgrounds, you must not alienate them with dense, confusing, buzzword-laden content.

How would you converse with a potential customer if you meet them for a coffee? Would it be appropriate to use complex technical language? If not, then leave it out.

Your tone of voice[3] should be relaxed and friendly, and you should use language that will not jar with the reader. Your content should always address the reader as 'you'. Remember, it doesn't matter if there are thousands of people reading your post – each one will feel like you are talking to them one-on-one.

### 9. Create a social media amplification strategy

This has multiple benefits. For one thing, the popularity signals assist in search engine results placement – popular content is associated with larger brands, and these are seen to be better query solutions for SERPs (search engine results pages).

Good reach through social media also allows you to gain maximum visibility for your content. A large, engaged audience that features influencers and advocates gets your content the maximum possible number of views.

And brand visibility is very useful. By being front-of-mind when a customer is ready to make a buying decision, your chances of landing that sale are greatly increased.

### 10. Be smart in using hyperlinks

If you are describing a particular feature, idea or concept, then it is

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3 distilled.net/tone-of-voice

worthwhile giving the reader the option of reading about this specific aspect in more detail on an authoritative site.

Linking out to high-quality sites[4] has many benefits. In terms of user experience, it allows you to provide more value to the visitor. Regarding your brand, it can confirm the features or concepts you are sharing. It can also be seen as leadership by association: 'You can see that these influential sites back up what we are saying'.

And if the additional information is contained within your own website, this internal linking has value for SEO. It helps search engine robots to discover other, sometimes older content on your website. It helps tie together associated pages and content to help with the overall themes of your content.

**11. Measure, measure, measure and react**

Without a robust measurement and reporting regime, ROI will be very difficult to quantify. This is where Google Analytics, Webmaster Tools and SEO analysis tools come into play.

Google Analytics supplies data on visitors, time on site, pages viewed, bounce rate, geolocations and mobile usage. Equally important is the measurement of top pages visited and top-performing posts.

Webmaster Tools allow the continual auditing of a website for technical issues. Crawl errors, metadata issues, duplication, server issues, robots.txt and PageSpeed are just some of the elements that can be tracked here. They also give the best indication of keyword performance, with useful information about which non-branded and branded search queries are performing well, which queries are getting the most impressions, which ones are getting the most clicks, what your click-through rates are like, and what your average SERP positions look like.

Other SEO tools give you the ability to closely monitor any sites that are linking to your website, so you can detect and react to any malicious or unwelcome behaviour.

All of this data is vital for measuring growth and avoiding any faults that may slow down your progress.

**12. How it all ties together**

As you can see, content marketing[5] is a fairly complex beast. It requires a high level of strategic thinking and technical expertise to be successful. The ideal situation is where each of the elements discussed above contributes to the overall strategy.

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4 searchenginejournal.com/get-mind-google-human-rater-handbook-leaked/117573

5 contentmarketinginstitute.com/developing-a-strategy

Understanding the business and its market is the crucial first step, then you can work through the other elements:

- Develop a range of topic ideas that are solutions-based.
- Research traffic on these topics.
- Create a publishing schedule.
- Work with content contributors to maximise performance.
- Develop author profiles.
- Edit or write content.
- Structure content.
- Optimise posts and ready them for publishing.
- Share posts through social channels.

This is a long-term strategy. It builds as you create a larger pool of valuable shared knowledge. Each piece of content has the potential to rank well and to bring visitors to a specific page on your website. The content knowledge base grows an ever-increasing portfolio of long-tail search queries. Your increased brand visibility leads to a growth in trust and allows you to position your brand as an industry leader.

And all of this serves to grow leads and sales. We have demonstrated this very clearly with the TrinityP3 strategy, and revenue continues to grow significantly thanks to this range of tactics.

What's not to like about that?

# POST 7

## Why advertising agencies can no longer ignore conflicts of interest

**Posted 1 September 2014 by Darren Woolley**

A conflict of interest is defined as when a person is in a position of influence and uses that influence for their own personal gain, usually financial. It is seen as particularly significant when the money involved is from the public purse and the probity surrounding the awarding of government contracts is at issue.

But the same should and can be argued for all contracts, especially in the advertising industry when an agency has had a huge influence on where and with whom the marketer's budget is spent. This can be as major as the awarding of a media contract, or as minor as the appointment of a storyboard artist to draw up the latest television concept for a client.

Increasingly, these decisions are being reviewed by the client's procurement teams, and they are often found to be lacking in either rigour or probity. In an industry where deals and appointments are often lauded for being made over a handshake or after a game on the links, is it any wonder that the industry has a reputation for being less than robust in the handling of clients' dollars?

### Examples of conflicts of interest

Let's look at some hypothetical examples and see if you think any of these represent a conflict of interest:

- A senior agency manager starts a production company with their domestic partner and uses their influence to have all agency staff actively recommend and propose the company to their clients without declaring the personal interest.

- A senior agency producer recommends and appoints a particular supplier to their client's business in exchange for gifts, gratuities and entertainment from the supplier, none of which is declared or passed on to the advertiser.
- A senior creative person sings the praises of a post-production company while disparaging the competition, encouraging more client business to engage the company owned by his brother-in-law.

You will notice that all of these examples are related to advertising production. This is deliberate, as it appears to me that this is where many of the examples we hear about arise. I am not sure if it is because of the relatively smaller nature of the spend (compared with, say, the million-dollar deals made in media) or a tradition of appointing and working with those whom you know and therefore have a relationship with (production people certainly belong to a very tight community within the larger advertising industry), but the fact is that conflicts of interest can occur in any part of the advertising process.

If you need to be told, all the above examples represent a conflict of interest. The telltale sign is that the facts are often withheld from the client paying for the service.

**How can the industry ignore this?**

Of course, not everyone in the advertising industry participates in this behaviour, but the problem is that, as per the idiom, one rotten apple can spoil the barrel.

I remember having a conversation about conflict of interest with a senior agency player, and when I gave them the aforementioned examples, their reaction was that this is simply the way an agency gets things done. They expounded on a wide range of justifications, such as these:

- Working with people you know means that you are guaranteed to get the job you want and the quality the client needs.
- Clients rarely allow enough time to do the job properly, so there is no time to waste going through some tedious selection process when you know the right company for the job.
- Besides, the whole industry has its hand out. If you land a little of the cash going through then good luck to you, because if not you then someone else will.

The problem is that the agency is acting as an adviser to its client and therefore should be working in the best interests of that client. If the agency is conflicted, it should declare the conflict and offer to excuse itself from the process.

On this point, I have had agencies suggest that the declaration of potential conflict would be a breach of confidentiality or commercial confidence. But the agency and its personnel should never be in a situation where these arrangements are bound by legal gags. We are not talking about a public declaration, but simply informing the client of the situation and allowing them to make an informed decision on the best way forward.

Justifications like those above are simply convenient excuses that allow this type of behaviour to flourish. In the process, it diminishes the credibility and integrity of the whole industry.

**The increasing role of procurement**

The issue for agencies is that while their clients, advertisers and marketers may be too focused on the outcomes of the process to worry about or identify these conflicts, this is a core responsibility of the procurement team.

Procurement is charged with not just cost management, but also the need to manage and minimise risk and ensure a robust and diligent supply process. Agencies are very rarely acting as agents for their clients these days. Instead, the agency is more likely to be a contractor, without the ability to bind an advertiser to a commercial arrangement without its written permission.

This means that when the agency 'procures' services from third parties on behalf of clients, the procurement team has the right to oversee this process and ensure due diligence. If an agency is found to be conflicted in this process, then it is likely that the procurement team may take over the process to minimise the risk to the advertiser. In the process, the agency could potentially lose any influence over the outcome.

In some cases, the justification for decoupling production[1] from an agency is legitimately given as not to reduce cost, but rather to minimise the risk to the advertiser of poorly managed and executed procurement by the agency.

**How do you identify a conflict of interest?**

While it should be fairly straightforward, there are a few ways in which you can identify if a conflict of interest exists:

- If a person who is either the direct decision-maker or who can

1 trinityp3.com/2013/12/decoupling-television-advertising-production

influence the decision has any relationship with anyone who will benefit from the outcome, it is potentially a conflict.

- If you do not want the relationship or the situation known directly by your client, then it is probably a conflict. (Never assume they know, as often they do not.)
- If you are obtaining a benefit directly or indirectly from the outcome of the decision, either financial or otherwise, and this is not known by all the parties involved, then it is probably a conflict.

Applying these guidelines to the examples I gave earlier, I am sure you can see that they are all conflicts of interest and therefore should be either declared or eliminated in the best interests of the individuals, agencies and companies involved, and those of the industry at large.

**Applying this standard at TrinityP3**

In our role as adviser to marketers, we hold ourselves to a standard to avoid all conflicts of interest, either perceived or real. All TrinityP3 consultants sign a contract that has specific provisions on conflicts of interest, and processes and requirements on how to manage these should they arise.

If a potential conflict does occur, such as a relative working for an agency participating in a review, or a consultant having worked previously for a competitor of a client, we are open and transparent with our client, informing them of the potential for conflict and allowing them to make the decision as to whether the consultant should continue.

We expect this of ourselves, our clients, and the agencies and companies involved in our projects. It is always disappointing to find out conflict exists when it can usually be addressed and dealt with effectively up-front.

# POST 8

## Four thoughts on advertiser–agency relationships – Audi and Holler

**Posted 15 April 2015 by Darren Woolley**

The relationships between advertisers and their agencies are becoming more complicated and difficult to define. When they work well, this junction of creativity and commerce can have a significant impact on both parties. But what are the key criteria or ingredients for high-performing advertiser–agency relationships[1]? What are the challenges in managing these relationships? What is good advice in regards to managing the relationships? And what changes will these relationships face in the foreseeable future?

Our series 'Four thoughts on advertiser–agency relationships' continues here with Audi Australia[2] and its agency Holler[3].

1 trinityp3.com/2013/08/improve-agency-relationships

2 audi.com.au/au/brand/en.html

3 holler.com.au

Holler won the business with Audi in a competitive pitch run by TrinityP3 in 2012. Since then, the relationship has gone from strength to strength. Together, Kevin Goult[4] (right, in photo opposite), General Manager Marketing of Audi Australia, and Mike Hill[5] (left), Holler CEO, have overseen the development of the award-winning work in the last 'Land of quattro' campaign. This kicked off an increase in Holler's service offering to Audi to include CRM (customer relationship management) and data.

**What are the key ingredients of a great client–agency relationship?**

**Holler:** First and foremost, you need a shared vision. This may be adapted over time, but it always needs to be clearly defined and agreed upon from the start. In terms of accelerating a positive relationship, find something outside of work that you have in common. Unfortunately, not all clients have an unbridled passion for the intricacies of fishing …

**Audi Australia:** I'd second the point about a shared vision and add that it needs to be communicated at all levels of the business. Even people who aren't retained on the account should have a basic understanding of what the brand is trying to achieve. I also want the agency to tell me when an idea or strategy is terrible. Easier said than done, of course, but vital.

**What frustrates you the most in managing agency relationships?**

**Holler:** Competing with other agencies for budget can be incredibly time-consuming and not helpful for any party. It's why we have retainers, though. Again, it works best when each agency has a set area of operation that the client enforces.

**Audi Australia:** Agencies who over-promise and under-deliver can be extremely frustrating to manage. Ideally we've done our due diligence and selected the right agency with similar business principles. Nevertheless, sometimes individuals on accounts can be inconsistent, can make false promises, and can generally cause more relationship harm than good. High staff turnover is also unwelcome and can point to problems in the business, and of course arrogant or self-centred behaviour [on both sides] can also have a negative impact. It would also be great if the agency CEO drove one of our cars – that's a real negative! I'll say no more Mike!

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4 linkedin.com/pub/kevin-goult/34/756/518

5 linkedin.com/in/mymatemike

**What's the one piece of advice you'd give to other marketers about managing their agency relationships better?**

**Holler:** Most marketers [and agencies] know that setting aside time to focus on the relationship is crucial. But many either don't stick to it or end up talking only about work. Lock in 360-degree reviews and stick to them.

**Audi Australia:** The client and the agency need to take a genuine interest in how the other works. Holler have a unique way of working. A lack of understanding can lead to serious issues and a loss of trust, which is critical. It's also important to push your agency, but not to breaking point. Otherwise the trust [and the passion] is eroded.

**How do you think agency relationships will change in the future?**

**Holler:** Remuneration models will change, with bonuses paid to staff and not the agencies. This will be a way to keep staff on the same account and working at the same agency for longer than the average tenure. Furthermore, the budget breakdown between different client departments [marketing, communications, tech/IT etc.] will be more fluid. The kind of work that agencies do is no longer as clearly defined, and this impacts where the budget comes from.

**Audi Australia:** More co-location. Agencies sharing office space can only be a positive thing for their relationships with one another. It also means less client commuting between different locations, which I wouldn't complain about.

# POST 9

## Top 10 ways to avoid trouble when using music in advertising

**Posted 7 November 2011 by Darren Woolley**

Music is a powerful component of television commercials. The right music track can increase the cut-through, become the mnemonic of the communication, and help target a specific audience. Yet music copyright, performance rights and mechanical rights are often misunderstood. Here are 10 ways to avoid trouble when either licensing or commissioning music:

1. Avoid using copyrighted music in concept testing unless you can afford to license it. Where possible, get some initial feedback on 'availability'. No use getting excited about the unobtainable.
2. When briefing a composer, use a number of tracks rather than just one to communicate a musical style. It lessens the chance of your composer directly copying someone else's musical work.
3. Beware when agencies or composers talk about creating a sound-alike track, as this is a high-risk strategy. If it sounds like the original track, then chances are it probably infringes that track's copyright.
4. Insist that the composer warrants that the work does not infringe the copyright of other works when they create an original piece for you. That way, if they haven't been as creative as they promised to be, you can deflect the damages bill elsewhere.
5. When rerecording a track you have licensed, make sure the vocal

treatment and arrangement are different to the original recording. Licensing of the publishing rights does not extend to the master rights – your new recording mustn't infringe the copyright of an existing (perhaps famous) recording.

6. Consider the merits of licensing the original master recording. There is more value in your target market concentrating on the product and mood created by the music, rather than worrying about why a famous female artist suddenly sounds like a guy.
7. There are no musical formulas, such as notes per bar, for distinguishing copyright. The ultimate legal test is how the final track compares with the original in the way it sounds.
8. There are always other music options. If that 'must have' obscure track is expensive, it might be worth searching for another obscure track that will be just as appealing to your target market but has a lower price tag.
9. When negotiating music copyright, list all of your potential 'wants' up-front. You can't negotiate mag wheels and leather trim for free after you've bought your car. The same applies to licensing music.
10. Contact TrinityP3. We can provide advice and information on ways to use music cost-effectively without the risk of infringing the rights of others. We have assisted many marketers and their agencies in negotiating the murky waters of music composing and licensing.

# POST 10

## Who won the FIFA World Cup sponsorship value game?

**Posted 18 July 2014 by Anton Buchner**

A client recently asked us: 'Is our sports sponsorship delivering good value?' With that in mind, and having also recently watched the 2014 FIFA World Cup[1], where brands attempted to win over customers through sponsored and non-sponsored guerilla activity, I thought I'd explore sponsorship value a little deeper.

**Let's play the 'delivering good value' game**

Many people have been asking who won the 2014 World Cup in terms of sponsorship. At TrinityP3, we assess sponsorship based on four lenses:

1. **Business alignment** – How strongly does the sponsorship align to business objectives?
2. **Cost–value equation** – What definable value is the company receiving from the sponsorship investment?
3. **Quantifiable results** – Does the sponsorship deliver on what it promises and how quantifiable is the spend?
4. **Leverage** – Does the sponsorship offer opportunities to leverage connections with potential customers, both internal stakeholders and external consumers?

Let's now apply these to two of the World Cup sponsors. It's Adidas vs Nike. The whistle blows to signal the kick-off. Game on.

1 fifa.com/worldcup/archive/brazil2014

### Business alignment

Soccer has about two billion fans worldwide, making it the globe's most popular sport, followed by basketball with 1.2 billion fans, according to sports research consultancy Repucom[2]. Roughly 70% of the soccer-related product market is controlled by Nike[3] and Adidas[4], with Puma third in line. However, Nike only entered the soccer product market in 1994, whereas Adidas has been associated and aligned with it since 1949.

Adidas is the market leader, but Nike is hot on its heels and has a strategy to become number one. In 2013, Nike's soccer-related revenue was $2 billion, up 21% from a year earlier, and about double the pace of revenue growth for the broader company, while that of Adidas was $2.4 billion.

Adidas recently launched the 'One Brand Anthem' strategy, bringing together its three lines of business – sports, style and street – into one global campaign for the first time, and engaging with consumers across multiple platforms and touchpoints. The campaign was called 'All in or Nothing'.

Nike decided on a 'Risk everything' strategy, as it wants to win in soccer globally. 'Risk everything' is all about success despite pressure. Nike has focused on blending product placement with entertaining content and real-time marketing. The question is whether all the social connection converts into sales.

Let's call it a goal each at this stage: 1-1.

### Cost-value equation

FIFA predicted it would generate $1.4 billion in sponsorship revenue from twenty-two different companies at the 2014 World Cup. FIFA had six top sponsor 'partners' – Adidas, Coca-Cola, Emirates, Hyundai Motor Company / Kia Motors, Sony and Visa – which collectively contributed roughly 56% of the revenue, or $783 million. So assuming equal contributions from each of the partners, the World Cup cost Adidas about $130.5 million in FIFA sponsorship alone.

Adidas also reportedly spent $68 million on its advertising campaign. Industry analysts have calculated that, based on the $21.2 billion revenue target for Adidas in 2014, then the company may have assigned a $2.14 billion marketing budget (the same spending ratio as last year's 10.1%).

So with a sponsorship cost saving, Nike slips a sneaky goal ahead: 2-1.

Nike and Adidas fought out their 2014 World Cup strategy with

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2 repucom.net

3 nike.com/au/en_gb

4 adidas.com.au

sponsorship of national teams and individual superstars. Of the 32 teams in the tournament, Nike sponsored 10, including hosts Brazil and rising star the United States, while Adidas sponsored nine, including the 2010 World Cup champion Spain and both of this year's finalists: Germany and Argentina.

It's the first time Nike has kitted out more teams than Adidas, so 3-1 to Nike. However, with Germany and Argentina both appearing in the final, Adidas is rightly claiming victory. That's two goals to Adidas. It's all tied up again at 3-3.

Now, Adidas sponsored Colombia's James Rodríguez, who won the Golden Boot award for being the leading goalscorer in the tournament, as well as Germany's Thomas Müller and Argentina's Lionel Messi. So that's 4-3 to Adidas! It's a goal fest.

Yet Nike has boasted about the fact that 53% of the players across all of the World Cup squads wore Nike boots. And Gonzalo Higuaín of Argentina and Miroslav Klose of Germany (who broke the all-time tournament scoring record) both wore Nike Hypervenom boots[5] in the final.

That makes it 4-4 at half-time in the 'delivering good value' game. Hold onto your seats as we head into the second half.

**Quantifiable results**

FIFA has stated that more than a billion fans worldwide accessed information about the tournament through its digital platforms. 'This has been the first truly mobile and social World Cup', said FIFA President Sepp Blatter.

There were more than three billion interactions on Facebook – that's more interactions than the Super Bowl, Oscars and Olympics combined – with the grand final generating 280 million interactions from 88 million users, including comments, likes and posts.

There were 672 million posts on Twitter, with 32.1 million during the grand final, which didn't quite pip the 35.6 million posts during the Brazil–Germany semi-final. Yet 618,725 tweets a minute were registered after Germany scored the winning goal in extra time to defeat Argentina 1-0. That beat the 580,000 tweets a minute generated during Brazil's humiliating 7-1 thrashing at the hands of Germany in the semi-final. Compare this with 381,605 tweets a minute during the 2014 Super Bowl, according to Twitter.

There were also over 2.1 billion World Cup–related searches on Google.

Getting back to the game, let's look at some of Nike and Adidas' digital

5 nike.com/au/en_gb/c/football/hypervenom

media metrics. Nike's *Risk Everything* YouTube video has been viewed over 16.6 million times, with a 35:1 like:dislike ratio. Adidas' *All in or Nothing* YouTube video has amassed over 38 million views, but it has a 6.3:1 like:dislike ratio. In addition, Nike's *The Last Game* video[6] has received a whopping 64 million views, with a fantastic 36:1 like:dislike ratio.

Nike reports its campaign has proved to be its most social and mobile campaign ever, with 22 million engagements (likes, comments, shares) to date, and 650,000 uses of the hashtag #riskeverything in social media. However, Adidas' #Allin hashtag trumps Nike's with 917,000 uses. And Adidas had the fastest-growing Twitter handle during the tournament, with the official (crowdsourced) name of the match ball, Brazuca – @Brazuca had over 3.9 million followers.

Maybe a goal each: 5-5.

Nike had a 21% increase in soccer revenue for the financial year preceding the 2014 tournament and is closing in on Adidas' market leadership – it will be interesting to see how sales pan out for both companies in the next six months. So a close chance for Nike ricocheting off the post.

**Leverage**

As we enter extra time, with the 'delivering good value' game still tied, it's critical to understand how Adidas has leveraged its sponsorship. This could be the clincher, outweighing Nike's guerrilla attack.

As mentioned before, Adidas named the match ball and it created extensive leverage through social media and digital platforms – YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. It ran promotions with the chance to win soccer balls signed by sponsored players by following Adidas' soccer-related Twitter accounts.

Additionally, it created the Adidas' SoundCloud page[7] (107,000 followers) as a home for World Cup–inspired music playlists, and it conducted the FIFA World Cup Chant Challenge, giving fans the opportunity to create an original chant for their respective national teams in return for the chance to win a trip for two to the World Cup. Adidas also had extensive on-site activations, including opening a Creation Centre in São Paulo[8], and 3D light-projection shows in Rio de Janeiro[9].

6 youtu.be/Iy1rumvo9xc

7 soundcloud.com/adidasfootball

8 blog.adidas-group.com/2012/10/a-taste-of-brazil-for-the-rest-of-the-world

9 news.adidas.com/US/Latest-News/UNIQUE--STAR-STUDDED-rio-REVEAL-SEES-adidas--brazuca-FIFA-world-cup--ball-LAUCHED-IN-DRAMATIC-STYLE/s/89245b09-474b-49de-b385-78be7898b9d7

However, I'm not privy to how well these performed and how they were measured. So no goals!

It's still 5–5 nearing the end of extra time. Maybe a penalty shootout will have to decide it! It does feel to me, though, that Adidas has overinvested in the hope of staving off Nike's threat. My feeling is that Nike will knock them off …

Gooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooaaaaaaaaaaaaallllllllllllllll!!!

It's 6–5 to Nike, with a calculated goal in the dying seconds of play.

# POST 11

## The difference between paying consultants on percentage of savings and success fees

**Posted 25 February 2009 by Darren Woolley**

It is a common practice in procurement to reward consultants by paying them a percentage of the savings they have identified. But in the marketing space, this is a practice that, while highly lucrative for the consultant, is fraught with danger for the client.

In the realm of marketing communications, unlike many other areas of traditional procurement, it can be incredibly difficult to provide a measure of quality. Quality of people, quality of outputs, quality of relationships – all are often highly subjective or difficult to measure. Therefore, developing a value proposition is also difficult, or at best highly subjective.

By rewarding the consultant on purely financial criteria, such as savings, without taking into consideration the other important component of value, being quality, the client will often end up paying for marketing services that are ineffective and unsustainable, because the consultant has screwed the supplier to the nth degree to maximise their payment.

A classic example was an FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) client which engaged a well-known procurement consulting company to review all of its print requirements, both marketing and non-marketing. The final solution saw the appointment of a print management company with no experience of packaging printing, which is one of the more technical and demanding print disciplines, and one that, when poorly executed, can risk many millions of dollars in costs. By the time this eventuated, the consultants had been paid and had moved on to the next client, championing the work they had done and leaving the FMCG client to fix its problem while too embarrassed to tell anyone about the experience.

Instead of this scenario, we recommend a more accountable and sustainable approach to the process.

Traditionally, TrinityP3 has provided a fixed price for delivering our services on the basis that we provide third-party, independent, expert industry advice without the financial motivation of driving down cost, being focused instead on increasing efficiency and value. However, we are increasingly being asked by our clients to assist them in reducing their costs in relation to reductions in their budgets across a full range of marketing communications expenses, including media buying, agency remuneration, printing, production and more. In these cases, we are proposing success fees as opposed to a percentage of savings.

**Percentage of savings**

Under this approach, the more savings or cost reduction the consultant identifies, the greater their payment. Many procurement consultants negotiate fees of 10% or more on savings, no matter if these savings are realised or not, and no matter if they are sustainable or not. This is a huge financial incentive to drive down costs at the expense of quality, which often results in unsustainable and questionable agreements and practices.

**Success fee**

This approach is about setting a realistic objective for cost reduction based on either the financial objective, such as budget reduction, or an initial assessment. Both the client and consultant agree on the objective, the way it will be determined or measured, and the bonus for achieving this objective. This links the results to the remuneration without driving the questionable practices stemming from the percentage of savings approach.

In TrinityP3's case, we reduce our usual fee by up to 50% with the opportunity to achieve a bonus payment that is double this reduction, on the basis of identifying and measuring the objective using the pre-agreed methodology. By having an agreed objective, the consultant can determine if they believe it can be achieved in a sustainable way to deliver value to the client. After all, no consultant would enter into this type of agreement, risking their remuneration, no matter what the upside, if they believed the result was unachievable.

We have implemented this method of remuneration primarily in the production area, where cost and outputs are measurable. But it can also apply to other marketing communications expenditure such as media buying, supplier remuneration and the like.

**There's more than one measure of success**

Ultimately, the measure of success in any procurement process is not simply financial. Return on investment is just one measure of success. Another measure is improvement in transparency, leading to greater management efficiency and medium-to-long-term sustainability. This provides real value in any marketing relationship.

# POST 12

## How fees are calculated for agency compensation

**Posted 16 August 2011 by Darren Woolley**

Perhaps it is because I spend almost every day calculating, benchmarking and negotiating agency compensation[1], but it always surprises me how often people get these calculations wrong. Sometimes it is marketers, sometimes their procurement team, and sometimes even the agencies make mistakes on how to calculate their own fees.

To navigate this maze, let's use a mythical agency as an example to make the numbers easier and therefore the process easier to follow.

**Billable (direct salary cost) versus non-billable (indirect salary cost)**

So the agency has 10 staff. Three belong to accounts and admin and are therefore non-billable. Seven are billable, but they include the CEO, who is billable only 50% of their time. Therefore, the agency has 6.5 FTEs (full-time equivalents) as billable and 3.5 FTEs as non-billable.

Let's assume everyone gets $1000 per year. Therefore, their direct salary costs are 6.5 × $1000 = $6500. Their non-billable salaries are part of the business overhead costs, so this is 3.5 × $1000 = $3500 per year.

**Overhead costs**

The agency also has another $3000 per year in overhead costs[2] such as rent, utilities and other costs of business, making the total overhead cost $6500 per year.

1 trinityp3.com/strategic_alignment.php#3

2 trinityp3.com/2010/03/what-is-included-in-the-overhead-when-calculating-the-agency-retainer

**Overhead factor or multiple**

Comparing the overhead cost with the billable or direct salary costs, we have \$6500 / \$6500 = 100%. That means that for every hour worked, the agency needs to bill double the direct salary cost to recoup its total cost. This is known as a two times multiple. But it also means that the agency would make no profit.

**Agency profit multiple**

If the agency wanted to make a 20% profit mark-up on costs, it needs to bill 2.4 times the direct salary cost. So for each \$1 in salary there is \$1 in overhead, totalling \$2 in agency costs, plus 40 cents profit which is 20% of the cost. Therefore, the agency needs to bill \$6500 × 2.4 = \$15,600 per year, of which \$13,000 is cost (\$6500 direct salaries and 100% overhead).

This assumes that all of the agency's billable staff are working on the client's business. If only two of the staff are working on a particular client's business, then the calculation still applies: 2 × \$1000 per year = \$2000, × 2.4 = \$4800.

**Things to watch out for**

Although this is all fairly straightforward, the following mistakes are commonly made:

1. Applying the profit to the direct salary cost only, so the multiple above is 2.2, which effectively reduces the agency's profit by half.
2. There is a difference between gross profit margin and profit mark-up. The example above is mark-up where the profit margin is marked up from the cost. Margin is the percentage the profit is of the total fee paid, so in this example the gross profit margin is only 16.6%, being \$800 profit / \$4800 fees.
3. Indirect or non-billable salaries need to be accounted for in the overhead. People often think that agency overheads are high, but this is because the more senior and therefore the most expensive resources (such as senior management) often are not included as billable staff.

If you are having problems with the calculations, check out our online calculators[3] or download our free Resource Rate Calculator[4].

3 trinityp3.com/calculators

4 trinityp3.com/mobile_apps_for_business

# POST 13

## MediaCom – it's a sorry day for the industry when trust is compromised

**Posted 17 December 2014 by Darren Woolley**

The news last week concerning MediaCom[1] and two of its clients was a sorry day for the whole industry. It was the inevitable consequence of the market trend of advertisers putting pressure on agencies to do more with less and less, and the pressure on agencies and their holding company groups to report improved profitability to their shareholders.

### The industry is under pressure

Trapped in the middle of these industry trends are people like you and me who are just trying to do their jobs. While there is no excuse for acting unlawfully or unethically, the fact is that when people are under pressure to meet unrealistic expectations, it is often ethics that end up being compromised, and the consequence is a loss of trust and integrity in the relationship and the process.

Only the week before at the AANA AGM, Dr Simon Longstaff AO[2], Executive Director of the St James Ethics Centre[3], addressed this issue when he recounted working with people in war zones who face many ethical dilemmas, and how they were able to work through these issues to

1 mumbrella.com.au/mediacom-foxtel-kfc-yum-pejic-media-agency-265379

2 aana.com.au/speakers/dr-simon-longstaff-ao-2

3 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_James_Ethics_Centre

achieve a resolution. How much more challenging is war than marketing?

While we may never know the actual mechanisms of what has occurred here, it is worthwhile reflecting on the impact opposing pressures have on the individuals at the centre of the client–agency relationship. We cannot forget that this relationship is often a very personal one, that it is not between brands or companies or organisations but is ultimately delivered and managed and maintained by people.

**The 'race to zero' creating a commodity buyers market**

The first pressure is what is known as the 'race to zero'[4], which we have commented on and discussed publicly as recently as the SAGE gathering[5] in Sydney last month. There has been sustained downward pressure on agency fees, and ultimately on margins and profits, since the global financial crisis of 2007–08. This pressure has met with little resistance from the agencies, as it is a highly competitive market with far too many agencies competing for far too little revenue. This, combined with the divergence of specialist disciplines and the convergence with all agencies now offering digital, 'full service' integrated capabilities, means that there is little distinction between agencies, making it a commodity buyers market.

To make matters worse, this is occurring at a time when advertisers have access to greater amounts of performance data than ever before and are demanding a greater level of performance accountability from their agencies, just as they are under the same pressure to be accountable for results within their organisations.

**A constant drive for profit increases**

The counterpressure, especially among the publicly listed agencies and their holding companies, is the constant drive for profit increases to appease the shareholders and investors. At reporting time, we see the holding companies announcing modest increases in profits at best. But considering that the pressure on cost in many markets, including the high-growth markets, means that while revenue may increase, profit margins are often compromised, it is difficult to see how they can sustain this profit reporting.

This pressure is applied down the line from the holding company level to the individual agency networks at the global, regional and local market level. There is a huge inducement to deliver, with big financial incentives, and the promise of fame, glory and promotion to London, New York

4 trinityp3.com/2013/09/agency-remuneration-e-auctions

5 mumbrella.com.au/sage-masterclass-building-great-agencies-returns-sydney-melbourne-featuring-program-australias-respected-agency-bosses-256150

and beyond, for those who deliver at any cost, and a significant career impediment for those who do not.

At the agency office level, we are regularly told that CEOs are required to cut costs, freeze head count (even after a new business win), and have staff working long, unpaid overtime to meet management's expectations. In Asia we saw a member of staff die from overwork[6], causing one agency to close its office each night to stop this practice. But perhaps staff now just drive the work home and only the office's electricity costs benefit.

In the middle of all this, and at the pointy end of the client–agency relationship, are people – professionals wanting to do a great job, and to be recognised and rewarded for their efforts. They are working long hours, and forgoing pay increases as agency budgets are frozen. They are under pressure to deliver results that exceed the client's expectations and meet the expectations of their boss, their boss' boss and their boss' boss' boss. And while we cannot condone unethical or illegal behaviour, we can understand why it may happen in these circumstances.

**How do we make sure it does not happen again?**

What we have to decide now is how we deal with it. How do we make sure it does not happen again? It is a sorry day for the industry because this is evidence that the system has reached breaking point. People have ignored their responsibilities to each other. Trust is broken, and the integrity of us all has been called into question.

Rather than a witch hunt, which only punishes those in the middle, it is best that we try to understand what caused this and start to address the issues that have compromised the ethics of all involved.

If any good comes of this, it will be that we – agencies, marketing, advertisers, media, procurement and, yes, consultants – all work to find ways to make the whole process more sustainable, based on the value each party contributes, rather than simply reducing it to its most basic form. Because if nothing changes, then nothing will improve.

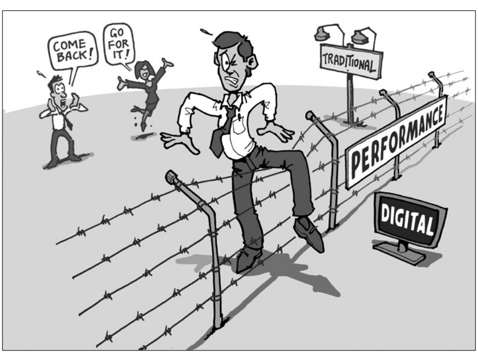
6 mumbrella.asia/2013/12/overwork-blamed-death-yr-indonesia-copywriter-mita-diran

# POST 14

## How to avoid the traditional-to-digital-marketing transition trap

**Posted 26 November 2014 by Darren Woolley**

I wonder how many marketers feel like this. My old friend and terrific illustrator Roger Harvey[1] drew this cartoon for me and I think it captures where many marketers find themselves today: with one foot in the traditional marketing camp, where they have lived for most of their careers, and one foot in the digital camp, which is not living up to the expectations or the promise. Surrounding them are the vendors, agencies, suppliers and media, encouraging them to either 'Go forward' or 'Pull back' depending on their vested interest.




The transition from traditional to digital marketing – Roger Harvey 2014

1 rogerharvey.net

The marketers feel like they are trapped in a precarious position, worried that if they stand still too long they will be left behind, but if they go forward or back they could be seen to fail. What they do know is they need to make a decision one way or the other, as in the meantime they will continue to haemorrhage budget on both their traditional and their digital strategies.

So how did marketers get here, and more importantly, how can they avoid being trapped?

**How did we get here?**

There are many reasons why marketers end up in this situation. Understanding these reasons is the first step in finding the best way out of the situation, or even better, making sure you avoid it completely.

***1. Assuming traditional and digital work the same way***

There is a very senior marketer who got stuck here because he simply transitioned the business' spend from its traditional media to its digital media[2]. Working for a services company, he believed that digital advertising worked in exactly the same way as traditional advertising. That is, instead of thinking about engaging the audience, he focused on audience delivery, measuring and paying for impressions with excellent CPM (cost per thousand) in digital over the increasing price of media in his traditional channels.

His approach was driven by a belief that the role of advertising was to drive awareness and perception of the brand. Over time, the digital budget increased at the expense of the traditional budget, but the results were not being delivered in the form of new customers, increased sales or increased revenue. In fact, financially he felt it was a huge failure. But he could not go back to his traditional media options as he had seen the performance here fall rapidly too.

***2. Treating this as a marketing-only opportunity***

Technology is not just changing marketing and advertising. Technology is impacting all areas of business. E-commerce is the most obvious area where all parts of the organisation are engaged, from operations to finance, marketing and distribution. But other areas are increasingly in dispute. One is social media[3], with corporate affairs, sales and marketing all participating and claiming responsibility.

With so many stakeholders embracing or at best utilising technology to

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2 trinityp3.com/2012/06/some-of-the-differences-between-traditional-and-digital-media-planning-and-buying

3 trinityp3.com/2013/03/business-shifts-social-media

engage with the customer, there is often conflict or roadblocks. Therefore, many marketers will try and develop their digital strategy in isolation, rather than collaborating with the other internal stakeholders. While this means the marketer can develop quite an effective digital advertising campaign, it limits the opportunities to engage the customer in the brand experience.

***3. Not having the organisation aligned to the process***

With so many suppliers and agencies engaging with them, and all pushing the latest technology or digital opportunity, marketers are increasingly leading the technology investment within organisations (some have predicted the CMO will outspend the CIO on technology investment[4]). Marketing tools is one of the fastest-growing areas of technology, driven by the consumer embracing technology and in the process handing over so much data and information on their behaviour and preferences.

The problem is that often the marketing investment is out of step with the rest of the organisation. While marketing may be leading the process, it is continually limited by either being misaligned or operating ahead of the organisation's strategy. This includes having effective infrastructure and processes to collect, manage and utilise customer data.

**Moving from confusion to clarity**

The solution to finding yourself in this position is not easy, but it is achievable – in fact, we recently published our 27,000 word *The Ultimate Guide to Digital Marketing in a Data-driven World*, which provides a 100-day plan on how to go from confusion to clarity within your organisation. It is a matter of making sure your digital and technology integration is aligned to the overall business strategy, not just to the marketing strategy. Of course, it can be argued that the marketing strategy is aligned to the business strategy, but just to make sure, we recommend aligning to both the business and marketing objectives.

We are increasingly working with a wide range of marketers across services (financial and telco), consumer goods, automotive, media and the like to not only align their external suppliers and agencies, but to also assist in designing and managing the transformation internally to achieve this alignment. It is this experience we have captured in *The Ultimate Guide to Digital Marketing in a Data-driven World*. If you are interested, you can download a free copy[5]. Alternatively, we are happy to meet with you and discuss the particular situation you are facing. Confidentially, of course.

4 forbes.com/sites/lisaarthur/2012/02/08/five-years-from-now-cmos-will-spend-more-on-it-than-cios-do

5 trinityp3.com/download-the-ultimate-guide-to-digital-in-a-data-driven-world

# POST 15

## The rise and rise of digital marketing in a data-driven world

**Posted 10 November 2014 by Anton Buchner**

The first post in this series introduced the new TrinityP3 book *The Ultimate Guide to Digital Marketing in a Data-driven World*. This post reproduces Chapter 1 of the book, in which we look at the history of digital marketing and the importance of data. We also discuss some incredible statistics, some of the big players – Google, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter – the rise of content marketing, and much more.

We will continue releasing this book as a series of posts over the coming weeks, but if you don't want to wait that long you can download the full book right now[1].

### It all begins with data

Big data, little data – it all begins with data. While the old direct mailers from way back have been immersing themselves in data warehouses and databases for decades, it's now the top brand marketers who are embracing these practices and espousing the power of data to drive their businesses.

Major TV advertisers are now talking at conferences about the power of digital marketing and data, and the challenges of harnessing it for their businesses. But this isn't just talk. There has been a dramatic shift from TV, print and radio budgets to budgets for an array of digital media. In fact, on average, 35% of a marketing budget is now spent on digital marketing.

Let's not get ahead of ourselves, however. Let's first talk about where it all started.

1 trinityp3.com/download-the-ultimate-guide-to-digital-in-a-data-driven-world

### A bit of history

The information and digital marketing revolution fired up in 1989 and sped forwards at warp speed. That was when the so-called 'information superhighway' was created by a British computer scientist called Tim Berners-Lee. He invented the World Wide Web (www) with the aim of connecting people, places and information using servers, computers, and something that has since become as common as cars, houses and televisions – the internet.

It wasn't long before e-commerce was born, which soon began to transform our economic and social landscape. It was a completely new way of life. Having said that, many lessons can be learned by taking a quick look back at a past life – that which followed the industrial revolution.

### The industrial revolution

In the late 1700s, low-yield production by hand started to give way to mass production by machines with the use of chemicals and coal. New types of jobs were created, productivity grew, cities expanded and living standards dramatically improved. Factories, canals and railroads forged a new era of urbanisation and connectivity. But these changes were not instant ones.

The industrial revolution is widely recognised to have taken place from the mid-1700s through to about 1830 (over roughly 70 years). And a second industrial revolution is said to have begun in the 1850s, when steel made it easier to produce railway tracks, and electrification started to make its mark.

These were times of major innovation and knowledge transfer. And inevitably, along with major improvements in productivity, wealth and knowledge, came greed and an imbalance in society. The new middle-class business owners lived in splendour; the workers lived in squalor.

### The advent of the information age

Fast-forward to 1989 and we see the start of the next major shift in development – from analogue to digital technology. It was the advent of the information age, the point at which the product economy evolved into the service-based economy. Computers, digital cellular phones and fax machines were created and adopted at a much faster rate than the bulkier machinery of the earlier transitions. The internet was shared with the public from 1991, giving people faster access to global information and previously untapped international markets.

Just like the industrial revolution, we experienced two major waves of change. To begin with, the 1990s saw innovation and experimentation, with internet companies springing up out of nowhere: Yahoo and Amazon were born in 1994, eBay in 1995 and Google in 1998. The mantra was to raise venture capital, operate at a loss and 'get big fast'. It was also a time when companies were focused on getting their brand names into the vernacular.

However, dotcoms such as Flooz, Boo, Webvan, Pets and Zap, among many others, didn't last long. The tech bubble finally burst in March 2000 after numerous internet companies had skyrocketed to life and then spectacularly crashed due to the lack of a solid business plan. The Nasdaq Composite lost 78% of its value as it fell from 5046.62 – more than double what it had been a year earlier – to a low of 1114.11 in 2002. In 1999, there were 457 IPOs (initial public offerings), most of which were internet- or technology-related. Of these, 117 doubled in price on their first day of trading. But by 2001, the number of IPOs had dwindled to 76, and none of them doubled in price on the first trading day.

Some internet companies survived by revising their business models, but most simply disappeared. It is widely believed that it was a case of too much, too soon. Greed was back, and people had forgotten the simple lesson of hard work.

**Waves of digitisation**

This first wave of digitisation can be summed up as 'convergence' – work and life started to converge, media started to converge, even countries started to converge as the 'global village' mentality was adopted. But by the mid-2000s, a new wave of 'divergence' was being created.

The second digital revolution was characterised by hardware differentiation. This time, new products were created to allow people to access digital content like never before. These included portable audio and video media players, PDAs (personal digital assistants), ultramobile PCs, mobile phones with internet multimedia access (smartphones), and entirely new forms of internet access such as in-store consoles, kiosks and radical surface technology. Society was again transformed in terms of technology and users, customers and organisations, and employers and employees.

In 2004, up popped a new social networking service called Facebook, only a year before a global video-sharing platform called YouTube was launched. Ten years after going live, Facebook has over 1.26 billion users. If this was put in terms of country population, it would rank second globally, with only China boasting more people. And Facebook is currently banned in China, which means that country's 1.3 billion residents are as yet untapped.

**The key digital stats**

Facebook and YouTube, along with iPads, iPods, iPhones and a myriad other 'smart' devices and applications, have indeed revolutionised the world as we know it. There are millions of digital and data statistics we could quote here, but we've narrowed it down to a top 10 that we feel puts it all in perspective and highlights what impacts marketers the most.

***1. Mobile***

In 1982 there were 4.6 billion people in the world, with not a single mobile/cellular-phone subscriber among them. In 2013 there were seven billion people on the planet and six billion mobile-phone subscriptions, of which 73% were in the developing world[2]. Yes, the world truly has gone mobile, and it's time for marketers to incorporate this into the mix.

***2. Search***

Of all the traffic to the 18,000 e-commerce sites analysed on the KISSmetrics blog[3], 30.5% came from organic searches on Google, Bing, Yahoo and other search engines. As Google continues to update its search algorithm, it is critical for websites to not only be relevant, but also to be connected and contain conversational engagement.

So have you reassessed your search strategy in the last six months? If not, then refer to the section we've included below specifically to help you understand Google.

***3. Social***

Around 93% of marketers use social media for business[4]. You may have dabbled in it or you may be highly proficient with it. Regardless, it's now table stakes to be in social media from a customer service, engagement and advocacy perspective. Are you?

***4. Trust***

About 82% of buyers say they trust a company more when its CEO and senior leadership team are active in social media[5]. It's not just the hipsters and early adopters who use social media. Consumers are demanding that all levels of business utilise it.

What percentage of your business, in particular your senior leadership team, is using social media regularly?

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2 technologyreview.com/news/427787/are-smart-phones-spreading-faster-than-any-technology-in-human-history

3 blog.kissmetrics.com/8-important-ecommerce-stats/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=8-important-ecommerce-stats

4 hosting.ber-art.nl/social-media-revolution

5 slideshare.net/toprank/war-of-words-mythbusting-social-media-seo-content-marketing

### *5. Facebook*

Around 80% of Facebook users prefer to connect with brands on Facebook[6]. While we have already mentioned social media, it's worth reinforcing that Facebook is the killer network. Have you got a structured content calendar for your Facebook activity that maps to your business plan?

### *6. Online ad revenue*

Online advertising revenue recently overtook TV revenue for the first time in Australian history. For the first six months of 2013, online revenue was $1.88 billion, while FTA (free-to-air) TV was $1.80 billion[7].

This doesn't mean that you have to spend 50% of your budget online. However, you should be assessing the effectiveness of your online spend. How are you optimising online activity every month?

### *7. E-commerce*

E-commerce now accounts for just under US$1.3 trillion globally and involves an estimated 1.03 billion digital buyers around the world (10.3 million in Australia). E-commerce may not be relevant to every business, but it's still important to consider how it might be integrated into the customer experience.

### *8. YouTube*

YouTube users upload 100 hours of new video every minute of every day[8]. This has helped give rise to the notion of 'unstructured data', or data that is not organised according to a predefined model/process. As the song went, 'Video killed the radio star'.

Online video has transformed the concept of a corporate video by allowing bite-sized imagery to be created cost-effectively (and your customers make the most of this too, in user-generated content). Have you seen what Zappos has done?

### *9. Big data*

The volume of business data across all companies is doubling approximately every 1.2 years[9]. This information tidal wave makes it easy to drown in data. How are you gleaning insights from all your data?

### *10. Content*

Over the past three years, on Facebook alone, the total number of pieces of content shared per week has increased from 3.50 billion to

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6 hosting.ber-art.nl/social-media-statistics-2012/?utm_source=Webbiquity

7 campaignbrief.com/2013/08/online-advertising-maintains-s.html

8 youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html

9 ibm.com/annualreport/2012/bin/assets/2012_ibm_annual.pdf

33.25 billion[10].

We've left this number until last. However, it's possibly the number-one stat. All the digital channels and platforms are irrelevant without the relevant content. Do you have an effective content strategy and editorial calendar for your marketing activity (not just an old-fashioned promotional calendar)?

Feeling a little overwhelmed? Are you thinking, 'Should I even bother to read on'? Well, take a deep breath and relax as we start to demystify this digital whirlwind and all the mind-numbing statistics it throws up.

**The world of search**

In Chapter 2 of *The Ultimate Guide to Digital Marketing in a Data-driven World*, we will explore how digital fits into the marketing mix and challenge the conventional thinking that regards it as being a single piece of a jigsaw puzzle. However, before you click on, let's explore the world of search a little deeper.

**Understanding Google**

The title of this section is a bit of a misnomer. Very few people have a complete understanding of how Google actually does what it does, even those who work there. Various silos at Google can reveal pieces of the puzzle, but only a small number can offer detailed insights into the full, complex picture.

Google's business model is based on revenue from advertising, and this is inextricably linked to the quality of the results that Google's famous and incredibly complex algorithm gives. If the organic search results deliver less-than-optimum answers, then eventually Google will lose market share, and the demand and price charged for the ads around these results will both drop.

Here are a few stats to give you an idea of what is at stake here[11]:

- current daily searches on Google – 30 billion per day
- monthly unique visitors to Google sites = 191.50 million (October 2013)
- Google share of US search market = 66.9% (October 2013)
- number of URLs Google was requested to remove in September 2013 = 21.50 million
- drop in global web traffic when Google had a five-minute outage

10 econsultancy.com/au/blog/63918-20-mind-blowing-social-media-statistics-three-years-later

11 expandedramblings.com/index.php/by-the-numbers-a-gigantic-list-of-google-stats-and-facts/#.UrEgIvQW18E

in August 2013 = 40%

- total online advertising revenue earned by Google = 33% (August 2013).

We'll let you ponder that last figure for a few seconds …

How many of our daily tasks are not tied to the use of Google products? Even the most zealous Macophiles would have trouble avoiding the vast array of Google products and platforms. Who can conduct their business lives without Google Drive, Google Calendar, Gmail, Google Analytics, Google Webmaster Tools, Google Maps, Google News, Android, Chrome, the social channels (YouTube, Blogger and Google+) … and what about the big one, Google Search?

This is true market dominance. And Google's goal, of course, is to grow this further. How will it do this? With innovation and creativity that is beyond what anyone else out there is able to match.

So how does all this affect your business, and how does it inform your marketing strategy?

**Your website and Google**

Any business that is serious about its web presence and its online brand has to understand what Google's requirements are. Google gets to make the rules in this space and you either step up or face less-than-positive results.

Your online business hub is your branded website – the domain that you covet and the aesthetics and attitude that you project with your investment in design and technology. In order for this hub to be universally found and accessed, it is critical to know what Google wants and what Google does not want. And make no mistake. It is very easy to stray into the 'does not want' sector by accident. We have all heard the stories – major brands that have suffered financial hardship due to breaching guidelines and which have spent a fair amount of time and resources trying to recover their positions.

Why is Google so uncompromising with the dishing out of non-compliance penalties? It all comes down to search quality. In other words, Google's core business relies on delivering the best possible experience to its customers – people using search – so that it can continue to dominate internet advertising.

Because of the huge amount of potential income at stake, an entire industry has bloomed around being smart or skilful enough to circumvent the filters and to hack into the top positions for money keywords. This is a frantic game of cat and mouse – find an Achilles heel, exploit it, sell the tactic and rake in the cash. It seems that a significant number of businesses play this game, one in which they see the rewards as great and the risks as minor. But unfortunately, this is not the case. Recovery from a penalty can take six months and tens of thousands of dollars, and even then it is likely that you will not regain your previous level of search engine trust.

## Google game changers

### *Panda update*

Up until February 2011, it was relatively easy to gain top page positions for targeted keywords. You could create a video, publish an article or a press release, or write a blog post, then use software to quickly mass-submit this content to multiple sites. Then Google rolled out the Panda update – originally referred to as the Farmer update because it targeted so-called 'content farms', or sites that offered little value. This caused huge ructions in the online marketing industry, as sites that had been huge drivers of business suddenly disappeared from search. Major article directories lost 90% of their traffic overnight. Many cried foul, but when you looked at the quality of the content on these sites, it was crystal clear that they were being used to manipulate the SERPs. Even Seth Godin's Squidoo got hammered by this 'clip-on' algorithm, as it too fell into the content farm category.

But Google's Search Quality Team (also known as the Webspam Team) had much more in its sights. There is still some debate about exactly what the various incarnations of Panda honed in on, but here are a few of the more accepted targets:

- content farms – too much low-quality, duplicated content
- not enough content 'above the fold' (refers to what can be seen when a web page first loads, without having to scroll down)
- thin content, or pages with no content
- multiple pages saying much the same thing
- too many ads above the fold
- machine-generated content
- multiple affiliate links.

Over time, it became clear that many technical aspects of search optimisation had fallen out of favour. Accidental duplication, crawl errors, server issues and international SEO concerns started to become more problematic as each of the Panda updates was rolled out. These were the first of many signs that it was no longer OK to develop a website and go live without consulting a SEO specialist.

The big directories have never recovered their previous positions of authority because Google does not see these sites as having any value. Of course, in the wake of the Panda updates, people were still able to find loopholes and perform hacks to build authority and a presence for particular websites. But the respite would not last long. Google was working on something much bigger than Panda.

### *Penguin update*

Although the head of Google's Search Quality Team, Matt Cutts, had telegraphed at various search marketing events in early 2012 that something big was coming, the Penguin update still sent a shock wave through the world of search marketing when it launched in April that year. Websites large and small were flung to the outer reaches of search results, and in many cases disappeared from search altogether. There was plenty of speculation about what was called 'an over-optimisation penalty', but very few people realised the scope of what was happening. It took another couple of versions of Penguin to be released before it became apparent what had been hit:

- paid links, including advertorials
- too many exact-match keyword anchor text links
- too many links from low-quality sites (as a percentage of overall links)
- paid blog networks
- comment spam
- anything deemed to be a 'link scheme'.

Penguin went to the heart of manipulative techniques and successfully shifted the focus from 'link building' to 'link earning'. Unfortunately, it also created an opportunity for negative SEO, where a large number of low-quality links are directed at a competing site in order to get it penalised. Various SEO forums, including black-hat SEO discussions ('black hat' refers to aggressive SEO strategies that focus on a quick financial return), have suggested that this is not an uncommon practice.

### *Other Google spam targets*

Over the past couple of years, Google has made a number of other moves against webspam and manipulation.

The Page Layout update targeted thin content above the fold coupled with too many ads (ironically, Google's own search results layout violates this update!). The Exact Match Domain update was supposed to shoot down low-quality sites that were ranking purely due to a keyword in the domain name, though the jury is still out on whether this update had much of an impact on the practice. The DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act) penalty was created for sites with repeat copyright violations (funnily enough, YouTube continued unscathed). Google also sent out thousands of 'Unnatural link' warnings via Webmaster Tools, and then proceeded to announce that these may not have been a problem after all. Throughout, Google has been on a seek-and-destroy mission, identifying link schemes and banning the primary sites, then penalising everyone linked to them.

To demonstrate the power of Matt Cutts and his Search Quality Team, the Google browser Chrome was removed from Google Search for the phrase 'browser' for 60 days for violating guidelines. The team at Chrome had compensated bloggers for talking about Chrome, which fell into the category of 'paid links'. Even Google Maps was removed from search at one stage for being 'too spammy'. Can you imagine the glares directed across tables in the Google cafe at these times?

Recently we have also had the Pigeon update, which has caused serious difficulties for companies in 'local SEO', and we have had the Pirate update, which targets piracy and has led to a 98% reduction in the visibility of torrent sites like Pirate Bay. There was also the HTTPS/SSL update, which offered increased performance for 'safe' websites. In the rush by many to take advantage of this change, several high-profile sites had less-than-positive results. Buffer lost 90% of its traffic for several days until Google found a 'bug' which returned it to its previous rankings.

Google is not, however, *all* about combating webspam. If the company did not also continually innovate, it would perish in this fast-moving space.

### Search innovations

Google is continually refining and maximising the effectiveness of its search engine. Indeed, it has implemented many innovations over the past few years.

In August 2009, Caffeine was launched. This was a new architecture created to cope with the speed with which information was arriving from social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Twitter. It enabled Google to surface fresher results and allowed the index update time to be shortened substantially.

The Knowledge Graph was another huge innovation, one that has become a familiar feature of search results pages. This was the beginning of semantic search and signalled increased intelligence in judging searcher intent based on a range of criteria, including context. The Knowledge Graph takes information from a number of sources, including Wikipedia and, interestingly, the CIA's World Factbook. It allows the search engine to display responses to a range of queries without the searcher needing to navigate to another page for the answer.

This all lined up with the assertion by Google's Amit Singhal that search needed to:

- answer
- converse
- anticipate.

It was further confirmed with the incremental launch of Answer Boxes. These offer instant answers at the top of search results that take away the need for a searcher to click through to websites. There are well over 100 search types that will trigger an Answer Box, including any search around the weather, how tall is …?, how far is …?, how old is …?, sports results, calculators for converting a number of measurements, and many, many more. An interesting Answer Box appears if you type in 'the answer to life the universe and everything', which will appeal to fans of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

These Answer Boxes have led to some consternation, however. A good example of why is government weather sites, which now have to pay for a position with AdWords to appear at the top, above the large Answer Box. The drop in traffic when the weather Answer Box was launched must have been frightening.

Following this evolution, sometime around August 2013, came the comprehensive refurbishment of Google's algorithm and the soft launch of a new animal named Hummingbird, so named because it was very fast and very accurate. But this wasn't merely a new version of Caffeine. Hummingbird had other objectives in mind – most significantly, future-proofing.

Hummingbird anticipates the dominance of mobile devices and the move towards 'voice search' as the primary search function. It is a major shift away from keyword-based search behaviour. It is about a real conversational search in that a user can ask, in a full question, exactly what they want and then continue the conversation without referencing the original request. This is made possible due to the update's advanced abilities around context, history and behaviour. It means that a question like 'How old is it?' has meaning to the software, which interprets intent.

Pretty cool stuff! And how about prompts like 'OK Google' to get the ball rolling? Here we have a search engine that is a big part of the daily experience of much of the world's population and which is predicting the future (Google Glass and Google Cars), delivering innovation to grow its multimarket domination.

But what does all this technobabble mean for your online business presence? Well, it means you have to grasp the opportunity afforded to you.

**Post-Hummingbird content strategy**

Content may already have been King, but we will have to find an even higher position for it in the aftermath of Hummingbird[12]. Panda and Penguin spelled the end of cheap tactics and ushered in the era of strategy in SEO. Everything Google is working towards is completely reliant on quality.

Low quality = low satisfaction.

Frequent low satisfaction = time to look at options.

And in our increasingly impatient world, market share can be lost in days, not weeks.

For business, this is both an opportunity and a conundrum. It requires a complete reassessment of resourcing. It requires a commitment to investment in content creation and also expertise in content optimisation and promotion. It requires a big investment in time, as training, education, workshops, schedules and deadlines have become important parts of the strategy. And it requires investment in top-level staff or partners with expertise in the many digital disciplines. The rewards for such investment, however, are significant.

Understanding the key elements of content, those that drive engagement, sharing, advocacy and attraction, is the first step towards increased revenue and brand presence. This is at the core of inbound marketing – delivering expertise and value to such a high degree that your prospective clients or customers are falling over each other to buy from you or work with you.

The traditional branding and marketing principles are still important:

- Who are our customers?
- How do we help them?
- How are we different to our competitors?

12 trinityp3.com/2013/11/google-hummingbird-for-marketers

- Who are the people who can help promote our message?
- What is our story?

Then it comes down to how generous you are with your expertise and how well-thought-out is your engagement strategy. Consultants/agencies will always need to demonstrate a high level of leadership, creativity and expertise. The difficulty can lie in letting go of the concept of intellectual property: What if our competitors use this information? What if our clients do? What if we make it all sound so intuitive that we are diminishing the value of our services?

There are boundaries, of course, but overall, the demonstration of expertise will do nothing but put your business front-of-mind when potential clients are looking for the service you offer. Consistently build on this expertise presence and you will drive demand across a range of offerings.

Companies that sell physical products also need to understand what their markets are most interested in, and often it will not be the companies themselves or even their products. Coca-Cola recently launched a content strategy based on a huge amount of research and testing. A website was developed to embrace a new model, the 'Coca Cola Journey'. It was all about storytelling and engagement, with the emphasis on actioning consumer feedback. There were some surprising inclusions, such as background on Coca-Cola marketing campaigns and information about jobs in the company. But the main focus was on elements that were prominent in the research results, such as music, lifestyle and food.

These are the key characteristics of effective content:

- It must be what your target market is looking for – in this sense, it is solutions-based.
- It must be of high quality.
- It must be interesting/entertaining/informative.
- It must speak in a voice that your market understands.
- It must be unique/innovative.

And this is critically important:

- It must reach the target market.

**Amplification of content**

Too often, we see blogs where there is almost no engagement, no sharing and very few actual views. In other words, there is no strategy. Without a content-promotion strategy that identifies the potential channels for amplifying your content, you are wasting valuable time and resources.

Here are a few of the crucial elements of such a strategy:

- **SEO** – metadata, URL optimisation and heading tags
- **content structure** – what appears where and how you improve the UX (user experience)
- **social media promotion schedule** – the correct frequency for multiple platforms
- **newsletter and list promotion** – email marketing
- **influencer and network outreach** – crucial people through whom to extend your reach
- **technical promotion** – pinging and URL submission for speed of indexing
- **offline promotion** – trade press, press releases and PR
- **interested organisations** – more outreach.

This is also where a highly developed social media presence pays dividends. Developing a tuned-in audience through various social media channels affords your content great reach. But this is not just about numbers. Accounts we have analysed that have had some of the biggest numbers of likes, followers and connections have also had some of the lowest engagement figures.

Having big numbers is only part of the picture. There are other, equally important issues to address. How are you giving value to these networks? What are you doing to build relationships with potential customers/ clients, collaborators and advocates? What are you doing to increase brand visibility and seek out influencers to engage with? What is your strategy for engagement on trade sites?

It is just not useful to set up multiple social media accounts if your strategy does not address all of the above engagement factors. The result of this lack of focus will be the impression that your brand is not popular or that it is inept. Either of these can be damaging, so it is critical to get things right.

When we look at four of the most popular social media platforms, it quickly becomes apparent that separate strategies are required for each of them.

**The Facebook paradox**

Facebook is the largest of the social networks, but it can be difficult for B2B companies to gain traction here. Aspirational, FMCGs, fashion and music all work very well here, and their effectiveness can be increased with the various paid options Facebook offers. Boosted posts and PPC (pay-per-click) ads, for instance, will allow you to reach large numbers of people, grow your likes and drive up engagement. However, there is quite a big divide between what Facebook Insights reports and what Google Analytics says is the reality about clicks on links.

Anecdotally, it seems that Facebook currently inflates the figures around website visitors to increase the desire for further promotional spend. In one case, Insights reported 200+ clicks on a blog post link, yet Analytics recorded just 25 visitors from Facebook on the same day. And we don't think that Google Analytics is underreporting, so …

The targeting features in boosted posts also seem to be fairly random. Choosing specific countries and interests seems to get content in front of people who are completely unrelated to the targeting – boosting to your fans and their friends would seem to be a bit more reliable.

But, in the end, the spend does bring an overall increase in visitors from Facebook. And the popularity of the content does have a positive effect on organic visitor numbers.

**Welcome to LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is going from strength to strength, and it would be unwise for key people in any organisation to not have a solid presence here. It has morphed from an employment-related site, where everyone hung their CVs, to a powerful content and engagement channel.

Content placed here has the potential to reach a large number of relevant people, and the level of conversation is increasing all the time. But as with all social strategies, it is not a good idea to be overly self-promotional. This is about giving value in the range of content shared and contributing in a generous way to discussions that relate to your areas of expertise. LinkedIn Groups are the most effective areas for these contributions, as they remove a layer of brand advocacy that many on LinkedIn are a little wary of. Regular, helpful contributions demonstrate expertise and leadership and serve to improve personal brand presence.

LinkedIn Company Pages are still a little tentative unless your brand has high visibility generally. I am guessing that this will be on LinkedIn's radar in the near future, though, as many Company Pages get to a certain stage of growth related to encouraging employees to follow the page, and then the enthusiasm for sharing content there gradually diminishes. And as you can't connect with individuals with a Company Page, this somewhat limits the potential for higher reach.

The addition of LinkedIn publishing has created a very useful new channel. Content published here has the ability to get in front of a lot of people. Click-through is also very good and has led to very good website visitor results. Unfortunately, with a feature like this there is no barrier to entry, and the steady rise of low-quality content has meant fewer views for the high-quality posts.

**High-speed Twitter**

Twitter is the fastest and probably the most complex of all the social channels[13]. It benefits from having a large number of followers, and high engagement is shown quite clearly in Analytics visitor numbers. It does require a consistent effort, but fortunately a range of social scheduling tools can assist in managing the regular posting of valuable content.

Because of Twitter's structure, it is quite OK to post multiple times every day, and some level of repetition is acceptable. On publication, you can schedule a new tweet to be shared more than once on the first day and can repeat it over the next few days – assuming, that is, you are following the unwritten rule of sharing more content from other people than from yourself.

Because the feed on Twitter moves so rapidly, this is a great platform on which to hone your short-copy skills. It also encourages constant testing and learning: How do you get noticed? What types of titles get the best click-through rates? What topics are the most popular?

Twitter is also a brilliant customer service channel. People will expect an answer or a response fairly quickly, though, so you will have to resource this accordingly, with constant monitoring.

**Is Google+ an echo chamber?**

This is the social channel that is the least understood. Google has announced usage figures that put Google+ second behind Facebook for active users, but this is a little disingenuous. Every time someone logs into Gmail or uses a Google product, the Google+ page appears in the menu, and this is seen as an 'active' user. So let's ignore the hyperbole and concentrate on the benefits.

Google+ is Google's great social media hope, and so the company has given users some pretty useful advantages. Firstly, the links from Google+ are 'dofollow', which means that they count towards site authority. Dofollow is a tag that tells search engines they can use the link to go to the destination page, and they can allow PageRank to flow to the destination site ('nofollow', on the other hand, tells search engines they should *not* follow the link or pass PageRank).

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13 highprofileenterprises.com/2014/06/25/ultimate-beginners-guide-to-twitter

Google recently removed Authorship, which added the author's image and numbers in circles to the search results. These were so successful in attracting clicks, however, that it is suspected that these were removed due to a drop in paid AdWords clicks.

The usefulness of Author Rank is still being debated. While there does not currently appear to be any weighting on this, the influence of an author and the value of their network will have a bearing on search result presence at some stage (Google holds the patent for Author Rank). We are already starting to see data that backs up the notion that interaction with influential users is having an effect on how well posts are ranking. Google+ influencers do primarily operate in tech-related industries, but this dominance should dissipate as more and more people from other vertical markets grasp the benefits.

**The evolution of content strategy**

Over the past couple of years, content strategy has come of age[14]. This largely has been driven by Google's need for as much high-quality content as possible, as well as the series of safeguards discussed earlier that inhibit the ability of low-quality pages to gain high SERPs.

The best way to attract a completely natural link profile is to create exceptional content and to give comprehensive value. The days of posting frequent short blogs are over (unless you are Seth Godin). What is needed now is complete and exhaustive research and documentation. With Google's recent addition of 'in-depth articles', the bar has been raised for content length and quality.

Recent data has confirmed the relationship between increased social shares / pageviews and content length. Analysis of the TrinityP3 blog has shown that the sweet spot on this site lies around the 1500–2000-word mark. Posts in this range achieve significantly higher figures in both the aforementioned metrics.

This raises various questions concerning resourcing:

- If you want to publish regularly, how do you resource the five-plus hours needed to create each post?
- How many authors will be contributing?
- Will you use expert pieces from individuals who are outside your organisation (rather than random guest posts for the benefit of SEO)?
- As the business achieves the targeted growth figures, how will this resourcing be managed?

14 See the post titled '12 essential tips for developing a content marketing strategy' on page 49 of this book.

- Who will perform the role of managing editor or content director?
- Who will drive the selection of topics and the creative and design aspects of the posts?
- What are the key metrics that will demonstrate success?

And content has evolved in a number of other ways:

- Correct content optimisation is now paramount.
- Metadata must be handled carefully so that every opportunity to engage is taken. Titles are the hook – they must be appealing or compelling enough to gain instant attention. Meta descriptions must summarise the theme and have a call-to-action. This call-to-action does not have to be a generic 'Read more here' but can be much more strategic. Asking questions, being provocative and tapping into emotions are all ways to optimise click-throughs.
- The correct heading structure will allow readers to scan for key points. It will also persuade the visitor to investigate in more detail or help them navigate to the specific solution they are seeking.
- Grouping content by relevant categories helps guide readers to more information on their particular field of interest.
- The use of images, GIFs, graphs, diagrams, videos and drawings all add to the UX and help break up the text.
- The art of copywriting has been elevated. Those with the skills to bridge the divide between informal and professional, warm and informative, engaging and instructional, are in high demand. Shorter sentences and paragraphs that speak directly to the reader increase time on page and build the connection.
- Technical compliance has become very important. The correct use of Open Graph and heading tags, the elimination of duplication, a good URL structure, the optimisation of images – these issues and more should be checked off before you hit the 'Publish' button.
- UX has also grown in importance. Larger font sizes, white space, ease of navigation and overall great design have really jumped to the fore.
- CRO (conversion rate optimisation) is likewise becoming an important element of content. This refers to gaining increases in the desired actions through a focus on testing buttons, colours, navigation, calls-to-action, copy, layout and more.

The most crucial element, though, is value:

- Who is the content going to help?
- What is the solution that the content is offering?
- Will the reader be satisfied that the solution is trustworthy and easy to understand?

**The three pillars of a successful web presence**

To summarise this section on search, there are three pillars that support online success:

1. **SEO and technical compliance** – This covers everything from keyword research to website development, from site audits[15] to reporting, from content optimisation to the elimination of duplication, and much more.
2. **Content strategy** – This is where the value is delivered. This is where you connect with your target market and provide solutions that will assist your prospective customers. This is where you tell your stories.
3. **Social media** – Social proof, content reach amplification, relationship building, engagement, brand humanisation – all these and more can be integrated with the two points above.

The world of the web has become extremely complex, but the underlying concepts are still relatively simple. Give value. Think humans first and robots second. Be committed to your strategy. Be agile and innovative. Be creative. Think relationships – with customers, colleagues, partners and advocates. And be prepared to put in the hard yards to understand all of the necessary elements, to continue educating yourself about new innovations, best practice, and technical advances and requirements.

15 See the post titled 'SEO audits – What are they and why should you use them?' on page 111 of this book.

# POST 16

## A procurement professional responds to the poorly managed RFP

**Posted 3 June 2015 by Darren Woolley**

I recently received an email from a procurement professional in North America in response to a post of mine titled 'The damage caused by poorly managed RFPs'[1]. That post was published almost a year ago, so they are lucky that this was not an RFP (request for proposal) as clearly they would be non-compliant.

I wonder why it was sent as an email when it could just as easily have been posted as a comment on the post – which I encourage, as I think it is important that as an industry we discuss these issues openly. Therefore, to continue this conversation I have reproduced the email here (without attribution, as I do not have the person's permission to attribute this as yet). I think it is an insight into the mindset of this particular procurement professional regarding their attitude to suppliers.

*(My thoughts on the feedback are in italics.)*

**1. Why are you inviting me to tender?**

Here is the list of invitees for now and forever:

1. The incumbent (unless we have had to exercise those ugly contract-termination clauses).
2. The friends and hangers-on – those who have approached us in the past for business but who we haven't been able to help because

1 trinityp3.com/2014/07/poorly-managed-rfps

we have a contract with someone else, or those who have bid in past projects but have lost.

3. What we find through our regular sourcing procedures. Sometimes this works and sometimes it doesn't. That's why it's very important to be #1 or #2 above.

It is the role of the procurement agent to make sure that the invitee is the right fit, but accurate and honest information from the supplier is oftentimes difficult to come by. That is, it is not uncommon for suppliers to exaggerate what they can do.

*This is a real concern – that as a procurement professional, this person is simply relying on such an ad-hoc approach to supplier long-list creation. The other issue is that it relies too heavily on reputation and not fact-based analysis of supplier capabilities and expertise, such as we have in both our Agency Register*[2] *and through our access to systems like Calibr8or*[3]*.*

**2. How many companies are you asking to tender?**

I get asked this a lot and my answer is always the same. How will your bid change if there are five or 10 invitees? Will you offer more services? Will your price differ? The answer is it will not change in the slightest, so why should it matter? When asked, companies always say they are the best and brightest, so the procurement process is your opportunity to finally get to show it.

This question is a real irritant because it adds no value, diminishes the value of the business that I'm offering you, and makes you seem arrogant. Also, if you decline to bid because I have a bid list of six and not five, then don't expect to get another invite.

*Sheer arrogance and an overt sense of entitlement in thinking that every invitation to a supplier to participate in a tender will automatically be met in the affirmative. Knowing the number of people asked to participate will not change my response, but it will allow me to assess if this is a process I want to participate in.*

**3. Are you willing to share the process?**

The procurement process should be clearly outlined. Interviews or meetings are often listed as 'maybes' simply because we do not know what the process will expose, and they may not be necessary at all.

As for the length of time a process should take … well, that's a question for the ages. Obviously it is in everyone's best interest to have a quick resolution, but most of the time this element is completely outside the control of the

2 trinityp3.com/agency-register

3 calibr8or.com

procurement people. Here is a list of why it takes sooooo long:

- The client department has a change of direction, modifies the scope, or otherwise muddies the waters – typically because they never really knew what they wanted.
- The supplier side asks lots of questions – for good and valid reasons such as clarification, or just to make me crazy.
- The endless requests for deadline postponement. I'd venture to say probably 80–90% of all RFPs – not RFQs, RFTs or RFIs (requests for quotes, tenders or information) – have requests for extensions.

*Isn't this simply an excuse for poor stakeholder and project management? And isn't that something that procurement or purchasing is responsible for in the process? In managing a tender, we insist on planning the process to the day and ensure every stakeholder is committed to the timeline, with all relevant meetings in their diary, before we engage potential suppliers.*

Also, on a more basic level, if I tell you it will be done in two weeks, then in two weeks you're going to call me. And you're going to call me every hour until you get an answer. And then you're going to call the vice-president and complain that the process is taking too long. And then it spins in circles because, invariably, if it had been finished, you'd be the first to know. It becomes an endless cycle of nightmarish supplier management.

*This would only happen if there was no open communication or if the process became unreasonably protracted. I have found that if you treat people professionally and maturely, then they are likely to respond in the same way. Perhaps this procurer's experience is different to this because they clearly treat their potential suppliers as a nuisance, and perhaps this encourages those suppliers to become the same.*

That doesn't excuse the procurement agent that ignores the suppliers though. They should maintain open communication, especially when the timeline is unexpectedly protracted.

**4. Who are the decision-making stakeholders?**

Simple answer: none of your business – at this stage. Because the moment I hang up the phone after telling you, you're going to call them. You're going to call them and tell them how great you are, and 'Why are you going to RFP' and 'Can we come in and meet you' and 'Oh do you know so-and-so, I just had lunch with them' and a million other questions that my client has neither the time nor the interest to answer at this point. Your only goal here is to get around the process. That's why I won't tell you.

*I am not sure who they have been dealing with, but the reason for this question is to understand the level of importance of the process and the perspective of the assessment. Both reasonable for suppliers to understand. Have you noticed there is a really patronising tone in the responses here?*

Once we get the short list and we have a scheduled presentation, then you'll get a list of everyone and their roles.

**5. Can you provide an indication of the scope of the project?**

This is a little tricky. Typically, the budget is not something that we like to produce – basically because the suppliers will then set their price based on the budget (don't say this is not true … it is). So I will venture a range if pushed – 'bigger than a mouse' or 'smaller than a breadbasket' are my typical yet remarkably unhelpful answers.

The real answer is this: 'We' are not experts, 'You' are. That's why the RFP process exists. The marketplace is in the best position to answer the question 'How much?'. Not the client, who may have been overpaying, underpaying, getting the wrong product or otherwise inappropriately serviced for years. And definitely not procurement, who are responsible not for the product but for the 'process'.

So 'No'.

*Yes, how long is a piece of string? Many RFPs ask for very specific services and then cop out by suggesting that the supplier can provide alternatives. Talk about working in the dark. Clearly, like many procurement professionals, they only understand price and have no concept of value because they are unable to provide any indication of what is the value of the service. All the RFP process is designed to do is define a price.*

**6. Are your RFP requirements commensurate with the size of the project?**

This is a valid comment. Unfortunately, and especially with regards to government tendering processes, the procurement process is very tightly controlled and regimented and the consequences for an agent that disregards this process can be severe. We have kids and mortgages too you know. Do I want to risk all that because a supplier finds that there is too much paperwork? Probably not. And probably, government contracts are not for you.

*Sadly, government and large corporations have a lot in common. Except that perhaps government offers better payment terms than many multinational corporations!*

**7. Can you provide constructive feedback?**

Yes! Of course. Post-award supplier management is a procurement responsibility. Not only because it is the polite thing to do, but because I genuinely want you to do better next time – and – selfishly, I want you to bid again.

Don't ask me for specific details though – and this is where it gets a little tough – because any specific detail that I give will be thrown back in my face at a later stage or used against me in a future discussion. Here's how it happens:

- Supplier loses bid.
- Supplier asks for details on reasons for loss.
- Procurement agent, thinking he's being helpful, shares.
- Supplier then cries foul and calls everyone in the company directory to complain about the unfair process, saying 'We shouldn't have lost' and 'On page 74 it's clearly stated that' yadda yadda.

Downward spiral.

*Clearly someone does not like to be held accountable or to provide transparency on the process. Interesting that the same level of accountability and transparency they believe they can demand from their suppliers, they refuse to provide themselves.*

It is clear that the bidder didn't lose for one single thing or another. They lost for what I call a 'picnic basket' of reasons, but the bidder, at the other end, is so desperate that they will take any information they can to try to submarine the legitimacy of the exercise.

That's why your constructive feedback is so sparse.

*How can a supplier improve if all they get is vague, non-specific feedback with no clear direction? We give our agencies and suppliers very detailed written feedback with suggestions on specific areas for improvement. If they question the feedback against the criteria of the RFP, we will then discuss this to alleviate any concerns or misunderstandings. In every case it is valued and appreciated.*

**8. Will you provide metrics on our RFP scorecards?**

No. I will give you 'top third', 'bottom third' type responses. I have no need to provide 'complete transparency' to you because that means I will provide it to everyone else.

Would you be comfortable with all of your competition knowing that you scored 12% on one criteria or another? Or that we are uncomfortable with the fact that your company currently has four lawsuits pending, or that your credit rating is below average, or that when we did your reference checks we found your customer base complained about 'lengthy turnaround times'?

As for financials – same answer. If I tell you that you are 15% off the winning bid, then I just gave you your competition's price. I'm pretty sure they would see that as a competitive breach.

*This is such simple thinking. We provide each supplier with an indication of their scored performance against each criteria, against the average and the highest and lowest score. I am not sure why they suggest they would need to share details like lawsuits and credit ratings, but I think they are just being petulant and childish. The fact is, for criteria like this you are usually compliant or non-compliant and this is again worthy of providing as feedback to the specific supplier impacted.*

**9. Will you let us know if we are unsuccessful?**

Yes! Of course. See answer #7. You should receive an official letter from the RFP publisher. The nasty LinkedIn threats seem a little much though.

*I feel the real issue has been exposed here – that there is a level of paranoid thinking that being able to track on LinkedIn the career path of unprofessional procurement practitioners is not a threat, it is a reality. We live in a transparent and accountable age, and until procurement people like this one understand that this is the reality, they will become less and less effective.*

**10. Are you going to consider us for your next RFP?**

We will definitely consider you next time – if you behave and if you follow the rules.

*How condescending is this attitude? If we behave? You are not running a kindergarten here. Hopefully you are dealing with professionals who do not like being treated like children.*

**Sad but true?**

I really do appreciate this procurement professional providing this feedback, for several reasons:

- It clearly indicates their attitude of superiority and entitlement in dealing with suppliers.
- There is a distinct lack of understanding of the processes suppliers go through in evaluating if an RFP is worth participating in.
- The level of rigour and robustness of their process is questionable as it appears to be more about ease of management than quality of outcome.
- The process demands transparency and accountability from the

suppliers, but they appear not to be willing to be held to the same.

Happy to discuss or debate this. If we want to improve the process, we need to get a clearer understanding of the underlying causes of the actions supporting some of the current behaviours. Are you willing to join this conversation?

# POST 17

## When agency pitches fail – seriously fail

**Posted 6 February 2015 by Darren Woolley**

Pitching for new business[1] or defending business in a pitch[2] can be a highly stressful time for those involved – both agency and advertiser. It is under this pressure that Murphy's Law of 'If something can go wrong, it will' thrives. But contrary to popular belief, it is not just the agencies that screw up a pitch. Many advertisers have managed to screw up their own pitches, just as often as agencies have spoiled their own chances of success. The difference is that when an agency screws up, they usually just bomb out. When an advertiser screws up, everyone knows about it and the advertiser is left embarrassed.

For more than a decade, we have managed many hundreds of pitches: large and small, local and regional. To use the language of Twitter, here are some of the more memorable #pitchfails. (I have not provided names to protect the guilty, but am happy for speculation on the parties involved.)

**Poor proofreading**

There was a flurry of pitching activity a year or so ago in a particular market, when agencies were frantically trying to pitch for anything and everything on offer. RFPs were like a river of paperwork flowing into agencies and back out again. Well, this one agency had clearly not employed

1 trinityp3.com/agency-performance/agency-search-and-selection

2 trinityp3.com/2013/08/incumbent-agency-review

a proofreader before sending out its response. While the agency had the right client on the front cover of its document, there were numerous references throughout to one of the client's competitors, which had gone to tender only a few weeks earlier.

It was certainly entertaining, but clearly it would have been a bit disturbing for the advertiser to read its competitor's name all the way through the document. I think the agency should be given bonus points for reusing and recycling, but clearly it was not in a sustainable manner. #pitchfails

**Poor time management**

The only thing possibly worse than a lack of proofreading is poor time management. One advertiser wanted to go to pitch as its incumbent was not proactive, and worse, continually missed deadlines. The agency argued that it was under-resourced and that it deserved one last chance to prove that it was better to be great than on time, though this time it would deliver both.

For the agency credential meetings, the advertiser organised for five agencies and the incumbent to meet at its office throughout the day, finishing with the incumbent so they could compare it to 'what was out there'. The day progressed well and the various agencies arrived (often early), made their presentations, answered and asked questions, built rapport, and then left.

The final presentation time arrived and there was no sign of the incumbent. After 20 minutes, the marketing manager phoned the agency to be told the staff were at an off-site meeting all day and would not be back in until the next day. Needless to say, they did not progress to the next stage of the pitch. #pitchfails

**Cultural conflicts**

One of the important factors in any pitch decision is how aligned the agency is to the advertiser's culture. It is important to make sure you know who you are pitching to and the culture of the business and the people employed there before you go to pitch.

When one marketing and brand team, composed of four senior women and the male Director of Sales and Marketing, were confronted by three men from an agency, the room looked a little unbalanced. No-one realised how much until the agency team members opened their mouths to start the presentation.

From the get-go, the agency addressed its whole presentation to the only male on the client's side of the table. Even when one of the women asked a question, the answer was directed to the guy and not to the person asking the question. Even when the client team became more and more uncomfortable with this behaviour (including the male representative), the agency persevered in addressing only the man.

One of the women finally asked the agency why there were no women representing it that day, especially as the product had an almost exclusive target audience of women. The agency director replied that the head of client services was about to return soon from a 'bout' of maternity leave. The 90-minute presentation lasted just over 30 minutes. The agency was ushered out, never to return. #pitchfails

**Time-poor**

Of course, it is not always the agencies that are the cause of the #pitchfails. Many times, advertisers will go into the pitch process either underprepared or for the wrong reasons, and come unstuck along the way.

A major media company decided to go to market to review its creative agencies. The pitch was high-profile because of the associated media brands, although the spend was relatively small. Therefore, there were many agencies keen to be on the consideration list. It was interesting watching the review from the sidelines (the marketing team managed this in-house) as many of the top agencies in the market jostled very publicly for the business.

Rather than filtering down from an extensive consideration list, the marketing team decided to put all of the agencies through a speculative creative brief and have six presentations back-to-back on the one day to save time – the advertiser's time, not the agencies'. According to the many disgruntled agencies involved in the pitch, on the day, the marketing team was rarely there for the whole presentation – they just came and went, going about their other duties. To rub salt deeper into the wound, the marketers took another month to decide to stay with the incumbent.

Now there is a way to upset some of the top agencies around town. Luckily most are ready to forgive, but they never forget. #pitchfails

**Time-wasting**

Then there is the high-profile tech company which runs a pitch like clockwork every third year as part of its corporate governance. In the lead-up to the pitch process, the industry is alive with gossip about the level of dissatisfaction the client has with the incumbent, and speculation on which agency will win the pitch. The last round was no exception as the advertiser dutifully went to market, selecting some of the largest agencies to pitch for its sizeable business.

The protracted process of more than six months' duration was heavily procurement-led and slowly ground the consideration list down from eight to four final contenders. The rumour mill was running hot as the contenders leaked information on their inflated chances. But then it appeared that the preferred agency could not match the ridiculously low fees being asked by the incumbent, which had strengthened its position by going even lower.

In the end, the advertiser announced that, following an extensive review of the market, the successful agency was the incumbent. There was a collective groan from the industry – the incumbent had been successful only because the purpose of the review was simply to extract further savings without making any major disruptive changes.

It will be interesting to see how many agencies race back to that well in 18 months' time. #pitchfails

**Time is up**

Finally, for those advertisers who believe that getting it wrong does not really affect them personally, here is a warning.

One marketing head had been in that role with a financial services company for about two years, during which time the performance of the brand had declined. In desperation, the marketing head convinced the CEO and CFO that the problem was their media agency, which was underperforming in driving leads and sales to the brand. A pitch was organised and a range of suitable, non-conflicted media agencies were asked to tender. The marketing head enjoyed being courted by the various agencies and increasingly felt it was time for a change.

However, with its back to the wall, the incumbent found a way to the CEO through the board. Little did the marketing head know that the agency was presenting a different set of facts to the CEO and CFO, contrary to the story it had told previously. The marketing head was quickly dispatched, the pitch was cancelled (after progressing for several months), and the incumbent resumed its relationship with the client. Another #pitchfails

**Learning from mistakes**

From our experience, the biggest mistakes happen either when the agency is unprepared for or uncommitted to the process, or the advertiser has underestimated the commitment needed or is undertaking the pitch for the wrong reasons. No matter the cause, it is usually embarrassing for those involved, and it's like seeing a car crash for us – you just cannot stop watching the tragedy happen.

# POST 18

## SEO audits – What are they and why should you use them?

**Posted 29 October 2014 by Mike Morgan**

Most organisations now realise that SEO is a hugely important element of any marketing strategy. SEO dictates the level of visibility of your brand and is an essential part of any content marketing plan. It is no longer the domain of tricksters and spammers, as Google has continually raised the bar to eliminate the multitude of manipulative tactics and hacks that were once in the toolbox of every affiliate marketer and 'get rich quick' pyramid scheme promoter. Today, search engine optimisation[1] is all about value and quality. Content is King … right?

Not so fast!

Your content may be exceptional and your website might be state-of-the-art in design and UX, but if you make any mistakes you will attract varying degrees of loss of trust or you will be marked down as a preferred solution to a given query.

### The rise of technical compliance

This has been an incremental process. Google has been very clear[2] that fast, efficient, error-free websites that don't suffer from thin content or spammy back-links will perform well in its search results. A series of major algorithm updates have targeted specific ranges of tactics – Panda, Penguin, Pigeon, Pirate, EMD, HTTPS/SSL, Payday Loan, Page

1 moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo

2 support.google.com/webmasters/answer/35769?hl=en

Layout, Hummingbird[3], DMCA Penalty, as well as several unnamed and unannounced updates.

Overall, the requirements are fairly clear. But working through the increasing range of compliance factors has become increasingly complex.

**Google Webmaster Tools**

Webmaster Tools[4] has become an essential addition to website performance analysis – this is where a large portion of research can be done. Google has been continually adding features to these tools and gives recommendations on what can be improved on your site. This is also where Google advises if you have received a manual penalty for non-compliant behaviour or if you have security issues such as malware.

It is not surprising, then, that I recommend that every website must have Webmaster Tools added and the data should be continually monitored.

**Other recommended tools**

There are a number of other very useful tools that take care of different elements of your website. We use the Moz Suite[5], Ahrefs[6], Majestic[7], Screaming Frog[8] and others to look at and analyse back-link profiles.

A clean, high-quality link profile is extremely important. Any sign of manipulative behaviour and the penalties can be severe[9], resulting in removal from search results or a dramatic reduction in visibility.

**What is an SEO audit and how does it work?**

An SEO audit looks at the various elements of your website and web presence. The report will give you actionable recommendations that you can work through with your developers or adjust through your CMS. The outcome will be a website that ticks all the boxes for search engines and offers a better experience for your human visitors.

Let's now run through the various elements of the audit.

***Crawl errors***

The following areas should be checked:

- **DNS** – problems connecting will hurt your site
- **server connectivity** – frequent server outages can punish your search positions

3 trinityp3.com/2013/11/google-hummingbird-for-marketers

4 google.com/webmasters

5 moz.com

6 ahrefs.com

7 majestic.com

8 screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider

9 searchengineland.com/library/google/google-penalties

- **robots.txt fetch** – if Google can't find your robots.txt, it will delay crawling
- **URL errors on desktops, smartphones and feature phones** – small numbers of these are OK, but once they get up in number (and I have seen sites with more pages returning a 404 than actual pages on the site), your site is seen as not giving a valuable experience to the user
- **Not Found, soft 404 and server errors** – as above, these all contribute to a poorer user experience.

***Search queries***

There should be an evaluation of current page positions, impressions and clicks. How relevant are your top-performing, non-branded keywords, and what is the click-through rate like? Is the overall SERPs trend healthy or is it of concern?

***Structured data***

Review whether structured data is relevant. This page mark-up is very useful for particular industries but must be managed carefully to stay within guidelines.

***HTML improvements***

Here we are looking for duplicate, long- or short-title tags or meta descriptions. There are many out-of-the-box duplication issues that are potentially harmful and common to most CMSs. Blog archives, category management, author archives and other taxonomies can all produce accidental duplicate content.

Dynamic URLs are also a major contributor to duplicate content. Way too often, people see the title tag and description as somewhere to be as comprehensive as possible. Title tags should never be longer than 60 characters, including spaces. Meta descriptions should never be longer than 156 characters, including spaces.

Short titles are often caused by automatic tag creation which uses just the page name; for example, 'About'.

***Links to your site***

As well as using Webmaster Tools, it is important to look at your link profile with Ahrefs and Majestic to ensure there are no concerns with either the quality of your links or the anchor text used. Since the Penguin update was launched, it has been poor practice to build links through submissions, article marketing, commenting, or any other practice where the link has not been earned and placed by a third party.

Triggers for a penalty include the number of low-quality sites linking to yours, lack of relevance of the sites to your business, repeated keyword-rich anchor text, site-wide footer links, widgets and more. Penguin penalties are probably the most severe of all Google penalties.

***Manual actions***

Check that there are no manual actions by Google. This is something that you definitely do not want. Even global brands have been hit with these when they have crossed the compliance line.

***Security issues***

Check for malware and other security threats.

***International targeting***

Check that the website has the correct international targeting and that hreflang tags are used when needed. International SEO[10] is one of the most complex and challenging strategies, crossing both geographical and language boundaries. It is not advisable to have the same content in multiple geographic territories – I have seen some very large brands make this mistake.

***Index status***

Look at the number of indexed pages. Does this align to the number of value-giving pages on the site? Are there duplication or thin-page-content issues?

One audit I worked on found that the site had indexed over 100,000 pages, but 99,000 of them were caused by a calendar function that created events pages for the next 10 years. All of these pages were blank, and so the ratio of value-giving pages to thin-content pages was extremely poor. We removed the entire directory from Google and the website's performance improved significantly.

***Robots.txt tester***

Test robots.txt for errors – I have seen people accidentally block search engines from visiting their site by using incorrect code here. It is very important to get this element absolutely correct.

***PageSpeed insights***

Slow web pages have a negative effect on site performance. Frequent problems are images that have not been optimised, lack of compression,

10 seerinteractive.com/blog/international-seo-strategy-guide

browser caching, render-blocking JavaScript and server response time.

You also need to look at desktop speed and mobile speed. Mobile speed is becoming increasingly important. It is a strong factor in mobile search, as Google wants its customers to be able to find solutions quickly wherever they are.

***Redirects***

Have these been handled correctly? Are 301s used? Are duplicate versions of the site live?

It is very common to see both the www and non-www versions of a website live. And for some reason, many developers have a different URL when you return to the homepage from elsewhere in the site – usually with an addition like index.html. Sometimes 302 redirects have been used, which is a temporary shift where 301 (page moved permanently) is the correct response.

This is poorly managed in many site redesigns and redevelopments. URLs are changed, but no thought is given to what happens to the old URLs.

***Image optimisation***

Do images have useful file names? Are there alt tags for all images? Are they compressed and of a reasonable file size?

Alt tags are the primary indicator of what the image is about, but the other elements are also read by search engines.

***Heading tags***

Correct heading tag implementation is very important. The correct frequency, length and relevance make a big difference to your content structure.

Every page should only ever have one H1 heading tag, and this should be clearly aligned to page intent. H2s and H3s need to be the correct length and should follow a hierarchy to demonstrate a full picture of page content emphasis.

Developers often use heading tags for text sizing instead of as a content map. So you may end up with fairly useless H2 tags as navigation, such as 'Quote'.

***Metadata***

The quality of titles and descriptions should be high – no keyword stuffing but rather use of the correct length, calls-to action and compelling copy.

This is where you get to put your best foot forward. SEO titles and meta descriptions are where you get to say exactly what the page is about and give useful, compelling information with a teaser or call-to-action. It is not a place to put multiple keywords. This is your shop window – it is how you will be represented in search and in social media.

How many times have you seen a social media share that looks like this: 'Widgets | green widget | blue widget | Sydney | Melbourne | Auckland'? Rubbish, isn't it? SEO page titles are one of the most important content signals for Google, so don't blow it!

***Social signals***

What is the quality and influence of your social media properties? Are they adding value to your SEO or are they hurting it? Search engines are tracking the level of engagement on social media. A brand that is popular on social media will mostly be a good result for a given query – as long as the other factors line up as well.

So how influential is your brand?

***Content strategy***

Google has very clear recommendations for content: well structured, easy to crawl, comprehensive solutions (in-depth articles), relevant, focused, popular and more. Does your content strategy measure up?

How frequently do you publish? Is the content optimised and structured correctly? Is the content popular? How many people are viewing and sharing it? How professional is the standard of writing? Is spelling and grammar of a high standard?

**The importance of the SEO audit**

In an SEO audit, all of these elements are checked and analysed. Recommendations can then be made on the key areas that need correction or improvement. Each of the performance improvements and error corrections will incrementally improve your website's search visibility.

It is interesting to track just how quickly the sudden appearance of errors or a slowdown in page loading can affect visitor numbers. At the other end, the technical fixes do not always result in immediate changes for the better. Sometimes it can take several weeks for the changes to be trusted and rewarded.

It is important to implement a regime of regular audits. Crawl errors from a long-dead version of your website can suddenly appear for no apparent reason, so you must watch closely. And a spam site linking to yours thousands of times can do serious damage if it is not dealt with quickly.

Do you have a regular SEO audit strategy in place?

# POST 19

## Five key management challenges for the CMO in 2015

**Posted 12 January 2015 by Stephan Argent**

My advisory role in marketing provides a unique vantage point from which to talk to many different marketers and a wide variety of agencies – all with different perspectives and their own vantage points. This gives me a neutral, privileged perspective on what's currently top-of-mind in marketing and agency management.

A few years back, the majority of conversations were focused on digital and social media, as their respective roles grew in marketing ecosystems. While those conversations are still active, the focus has definitely shifted. Marketers are now faced with deeper, more complex issues around technology, media and (of course) performance. It's these themes that I believe will (continue to) take centre stage in the year ahead.

If you thought you were on a roller-coaster of a ride last year, here are some things to think about for 2015.

**1. Marketers must become tech savvy**

Gone are the days when the CMO could comfortably toss something to an IT (or related) team and expect a solution to reveal itself. Historically, digital solutions – whether under the headings of web development, social media management or UX, or even mobile development – were something that could be reasonably outsourced. But in the year(s) ahead, marketers will need to take more of a leadership role in upgrading technology infrastructure, software and other support systems to give themselves better, faster access to data that can drive their businesses.

This means that CMOs need to fundamentally understand the technology that supports their businesses, and make more-informed decisions about recommendations from their IT teams, or from external brand, digital and media agencies who rely on technology solutions to support their clients.

**2. Programmatic media management**

Yes, programmatic buying has arrived. And while there's still considerable debate about it's true efficacy and the extent to which it can have a measurable effect on a marketer's media buy, the practice of programmatic buying will surely improve and expand beyond its current limitations.

While this may not necessarily mean that all marketers will set up their own programmatic media solutions in-house, it does mean that marketers will need to evaluate and address programmatic buying solutions for their own specific needs. This means marketers will need to really understand their own data usage implications and the efficacy of the solutions being presented to them, and also cast light on the whole buying chain to understand how their dollars are really being spent.

**3. Bridge the procurement gap**

I've written before on the subject of bridging the marketing procurement gap[1], but with the rise in procurement-driven marketing initiatives, marketers will want to take greater control over procurement involvement in marketing recommendations and decisions. To do this, marketers will need to harmonise procurement relationships by starting earlier, clearly defining roles, and also defining what constitutes real value for their organisations.

One of the biggest mistakes made by organisations is leveraging the marketer's brand in order to lower prices to unsustainable levels[2]. Establishing a workable value equation between marketing and procurement – particularly around agency and technology-enabled providers – will be the key for value-based supplier choices in the year ahead.

**4. Agency performance measurement**

As organisations place greater emphasis on marketing ROI, and with the continuing trend towards performance-based remuneration for agency

1 trinityp3.com/2014/09/marketing-procurement-gap

2 trinityp3.com/2013/09/agency-remuneration-e-auctions

compensation, they will also prioritise agency performance metrics.

Historically, contractual agreements have gone awry because there have been too many generalised performance metrics that rely on subjective evaluation. Performance metrics need to be slimmed down and tied directly to behavioural change or to measurable market performance that an agency can reasonably influence.

**5. Improved data management**

Data mining and data management have become increasingly important topics as marketers move towards data-driven decision-making. This in turn has placed greater emphasis on improved data-management capabilities and stronger analytics suites to support marketing teams and their organisations.

On the flip side, for those who get it wrong, the consequences can be dire – and breaches that compromise customer data can be catastrophic for marketers. In short, marketers need to take hold of data management to maximise insight and value, while mitigating the risk that their organisations can face.

**Technology as an enabler**

To me, the year ahead is about embracing technology as an enabler to help make stronger, more-informed decisions to lead and grow business, while directing agencies and suppliers from positions of informed strength. Marketers who aren't up-to-speed, or who have blind spots around technology, need to step up and make the necessary strategic and educational investments in themselves if they are to survive.

And yes, I think it's that serious, because this is only the beginning as far as how technology and data, and the agencies and suppliers which manage and provide them, are going to fundamentally reshape our world. And it's going to be one hell of a ride.

# POST 20

## Global Marketer Week 2014 addresses the big marketing issues

**Posted 7 April 2014 by Darren Woolley**

The AANA & WFA Global Marketer Conference[1] on 26 March this year was my fourth WFA Global Marketer Week[2], and the best. Sure, Beijing, New York[3] and Brussels last year[4] were great opportunities to hear from some of the world's leading marketers on the issues facing the industry, but to have the event in Sydney made it even more exciting. Meeting up with many of the colleagues who I have formed friendships with over the past four years, and being able to show off my home town, made the event special.

Although Sydney failed to turn on the blue sky and sunshine (some suggested the English contingent brought the weather with them as revenge for their Ashes defeat over the summer), the conference, held at Doltone House in Pyrmont and kicked off by AANA CEO Sunita Gloster[5], was a terrific event, showcasing marketing talent from here (Australia), near (throughout Asia) and far (Europe and the US). Here are some of the highlights of the 2014 AANA & WFA Global Marketer Conference.

### Purpose and profits for Unilever

WFA research[6] has shown that purpose is considered a core focus of

1 aana.com.au/gmc2014/#the-conference

2 wfanet.org/en/events/sydney-2014

3 trinityp3.com/2012/05/global-marketing-insights-putting-the-customer-experience-first

4 trinityp3.com/2013/03/global-marketer-conference-insights

5 au.linkedin.com/pub/sunita-gloster/21/b38/aa7

6 slideshare.net/WFAMarketers/brand-32757197

successful brands. As Unilever is a global purpose leader, who better to discuss marketing purpose than Marc Mathieu[7], the company's Senior Vice President, Marketing. Marc presented a number of examples of brands with purpose from the Unilever portfolio, including Axe/Lynx[8] and Dove[9], telling the audience that 'a brand without a brand is just a billboard'.

This left me wondering, is it best when a brand arises or has a purpose naturally at its core, compared with overlaying a purpose on the brand? Or doesn't it matter? Often brands will adopt a purpose or cause which, looking at it cynically, can appear to be just a facade that obscures their real motivation.

**Making the most of millennials**

Michael Birkin[10], CMO, Acer Inc., then shared the insights his company has gained into the all-important millennials[11] (also known as generation Y). He reminded the audience that by 2018, millennials will have the most spending power of any generation ever, $2.5 trillion globally[12]. Therefore, brands must be careful in crafting their social messages for the very-self-aware millennial generation.

While Michael's research and insights into the millennials were fascinating, I was more impressed by the fact that 30 minutes into his 40-minute talk, he realised the wrong presentation had been loaded. Ever the consummate professional, he powered on[13].

**The Silk Road runs West to East**

Heading up a global luxury brand division meant that James Thompson[14], Global Managing Director, Diageo Reserve, was the perfect person to share the opportunities and challenges of marketing luxury brands.

Despite recent and continuing financial restraint, luxury is still alive and well, thriving even, especially in the emerging markets. There has been a rise in demand for luxury goods and luxury experiences, such as the House of Johnnie Walker[15], which recently opened in Shanghai, Beijing and Seoul. It is this focus on emerging markets and the growth opportunities they promise that led James to suggest the Silk Road is

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7 linkedin.com/in/marcmathieu

8 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axe_(brand)

9 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dove_Campaign_for_Real_Beauty

10 adage.com/article/agency-news/michael-birkin-heads-back-asia-acer-s-cmo/236978

11 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennials

12 cmo.com.au/article/541393/marketers_must_tap_into_millennials_desire_record_lives_acer_cmo

13 mumbrella.com.au/art-powering-216316

14 sg.linkedin.com/pub/james-thompson/0/780/ab3

15 johnniewalker.com/global/houseofjohnniewalker

thriving today, but that it now runs West to East[16].

**Diversity leads to brand differentiation**

It took a woman to demonstrate how cultural and gender diversity is not a challenge by talking about an opportunity involving feminine sanitary pads and tampons to a room full of both male and female marketers. Michelle Froah[17], Asia Pacific Senior Regional Marketing Director, Kimberly-Clark International, made her point clearly and visually using campaigns from across the APAC (Asia-Pacific) region for the Kotex brand[18].

At a time when there is so much discussion about delivering efficiencies through global advertising campaigns, it was refreshing to see the effectiveness of embracing the diversity of the various markets, rather than taking a simple cookie-cutter approach. Michelle also encouraged marketers to develop direct relationships with the media and not simply rely on their media agency[19]. This appears to be often misinterpreted as cutting out the media agency. In fact, where marketers have managed to build collaborative relationships with their media agencies and also the media proprietors, innovation and opportunities abound.

**Behavioural science and innovation**

John Kearon[20], founder and Chief Juicer, BrainJuicer[21], had the crowd jumping – literally. His session, without slides or video, addressed creativity, innovation, and human nature and behaviour. The key point of John's presentation was that if you do not understand human behaviour, there is no way you will be able to influence it – and that this behaviour is rarely logical, but it is usually predictable.

**Getting an insight into Google Glass**

Ed Sanders[22], Director of Marketing, Google Glass[23], says Google's biggest challenge is addressing the concerns people have about the ability of Google Glass technology to invade privacy and breach security[24].

Certainly Google Glass is incredibly desirable wearable technology, but

16 mumbrella.com.au/diageo-luxury-boss-seeing-new-silk-road-216388

17 sg.linkedin.com/pub/michelle-froah/b/a7/b38

18 youtube.com/watch?v=uhyAH2ARGyE

19 mumbrella.com.au/kimberley-clark-apac-cmo-clients-talk-direct-media-owners-216689

20 linkedin.com/pub/john-kearon/0/75/89a

21 brainjuicer.com

22 linkedin.com/pub/ed-sanders/3/a33/138

23 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Glass

24 mumbrella.com.au/google-marketing-director-says-glass-security-concerns-greatest-challenge-cmo-216458

more interestingly for marketers was Ed's recounting of the importance of collaboration in the development of this innovative technology. In a world where businesses and even the agencies are placed into a silo structure, collaboration is easy to talk about, but it continues to be essential in developing innovation within the same organisations.

**Making and breaking the rules in China**

Colin Currie[25], Managing Director, Adidas Group, Greater China, opened the eyes of those who had never visited or done business in China. He presented figures that showed the size of that country's marketplace, and for the rest of the day I overheard people talking about the number and size of the cities there.

Colin also explained the diversity across China and the myopic thinking that has China as a single homogeneous marketplace. It is this diversity that makes China feel like a market pulling in two directions at once. The sheer scale and pace of change in that country has the ability to fundamentally change the way we do business. It means on a practical level that you need to rip up the rule book[26].

For me, Colin's best, most humorous insight was in regards to the simplicity and importance of Adidas' footprint strategy. 'We invest a lot by mapping cities by economic, demographic and psychographic data', he said. 'Understanding gross trends is important. We follow KFC whenever they go into a lower-tier city[27].'

**Creativity and marketing**

The keynote of the day was given by Sir John Hegarty[28], founder and Creative Partner, BBH. Certainly there was much anticipation about hearing the creative legend speak. I think it's best to let the man speak for himself – here are some of his better quotes:

*'Marketing is letting us down. Our audience thinks what we are doing is getting worse.'*

*'Too much marketing is about deception. I didn't get into marketing to be deceptive. I got into marketing because I believe great brands can be inspiring.'*

*'The most important thing to remember is we're all creative, we're all in marketing.'*

*(Hegarty tells marketers to respect their audience.) 'I loathe the word "consumer". I think it's insulting.'*

25 linkedin.com/pub/colin-currie/14/533/517?trk=pub-pbmap

26 mumbrella.com.au/adidas-boss-china-ripping-rule-book-marketing-216668

27 mumbrella.asia/2014/03/adidas-china-boss-follow-kfc-wherever-go

28 hegartyonadvertising.com

*'Marketing and advertising have been liberated by technology; it's fundamental to creativity.'*

*'A bad idea costs as much as a good idea. Don't be limited by budgets.'*

*(Hegarty talking about the decline of Kodak and the rise of Instagram.) 'How can you tell if a company is in decline? When process overtakes innovation. Kodak didn't realise they were in the image business.'*

*'All you marketing people want it to be a science. But it's not. Selling stuff has never been a science. Marketing is persuasion, despite all the stuff you've heard about big data.'*

And here are the five things that Hegarty thinks are 'fundamentally important':

1. **Broadcast**: 'A brand is made not just by the people who buy it, it is made by the people who know about it.'
2. **Risk**: 'Don't focus on risk. No-one likes risk. Instead, focus on excitement and reward.'
3. **Consistency**: 'Focus on consistency, as this leads to long-term growth and success.' (Hegarty cites Nike's 'Just Do It' campaign[29] versus Reebok changing its positioning regularly[30].)
4. **Tell the truth**: 'If you go back and look at the history of marketing, the work that wins is the work that tells the truth.'
5. **Passion**: 'The people who succeed in business are the ones who passionately believe in their product. Sales marketers who just flick between products will never be really successful.'

Personally, of Sir John's rant, I was left feeling I had heard it all before, be it from Bill Bernbach[31] of DDB fame (who Sir John acknowledged as an influence), or Bob Isherwood[32], ex–Saatchi & Saatchi Global Creative Director, or more recently Craig Davis[33], ex-JWT Global Creative Director.

Don't get me wrong. It is always important to be reminded to get back to the fundamentals. But the world is becoming increasingly more complex, as are the issues and choices we face. Yet these exceptionally talented and creative people seem to have no more solutions to this complexity than anyone else.

29 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Just_Do_It

30 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reebok

31 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Bernbach

32 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Isherwood

33 linkedin.com/pub/craig-davis/18/7b4/751

# POST 21

## Agency websites – Who's your target audience?

**Posted 4 January 2013 by Stephan Argent**

With laptops open and a lively discussion underway last week, a client asked me where to look on agency websites for the information she was searching for. In this instance, the client was looking for a longlist of agencies to put before her Agency Selection Committee. With multiple choices in hand, said client was trawling through an array of irrelevant content in an effort to find the detail she needed to provide context and verification for her choices.

In one instance, the homepage was so confusing that the client asked how the agency could even be a realistic consideration if its own site was virtually unintelligible. There were no clear links to content, navigation was unintuitive … there was lots of focus on describing how smart the agency was, but no obvious connection to the content that a potential client might be looking for.

Agencies, take note!

If a client (or perhaps search consultant[1], or even an investor) has landed on your website, chances are they're looking for a high-level overview of who you are, not a barrage of television commercials or links that demonstrate your creativity. (Yes, that may come later!) Typically, at first blush, vital statistics will encompass the following five elements.

1 www.argedia.com

**1. A list of major clients**

Why? At this stage, a longlist selection is likely around clients that may involve a conflict, and perhaps a search for relevant industry expertise. It's not about drilling into creative (yet) in place of a list – it's just not helpful. In fact, it's distracting.

**2. Offices**

Why? Typically, clients (or search consultants) just need to know if you can service their needs in whatever market or markets (perhaps domestic and international) they're searching for.

**3. Size**

Why? It gives an instant sense of scale as to whether the agency is too small, or perhaps too big, for a client's needs. Criteria around size comes up more often than one might suspect. Some clients have minimum revenue criteria, others cannot represent more than a certain percentage of an agency's billing, while others want to make sure they'll be a big fish in a smaller pond. Size matters!

**4. Areas of expertise**

Why? A search is typically prompted by a specific need. In many cases today, that need is often around digital. So spelling out your broad areas of expertise will only help.

**5. Contact**

Why? Well, hopefully this needs no explanation. But you'd be surprised how many agencies make this difficult. A specific name, email and phone number is typically what's needed at this stage.

**Doing it right**

I'm not saying this is all that a client, agency search consultant or investor might be looking for – of course not. But in doing an initial pass, particularly if no agency search consultant is involved and the client is unfamiliar with the market, then agencies need to make their clients, offices, size, expertise and yes, who to talk to, easy to find and easy to digest.

There are (unfortunately) all too many examples of where this just doesn't happen. But rather than focus on the negative, I'll go out on a limb with an example of an agency which, in my view, does it right: Rethink – homepage[2] and 'Us/Facts'[3].

Agencies: please. And thank you.

2 rethinkcanada.com

3 rethinkcanada.com/us/facts

# POST 22

## Things to consider when selecting a new advertising agency

**Posted 13 February 2012 by Darren Woolley**

Choosing a new agency, be it creative, media, digital, experiential or any one of the many other types of service providers, is not something to be taken lightly[1]. The cost and time involved and the impact on the business are significant. Here are a few worthy considerations when selecting agencies.

### Strategic resources

If you are looking for business or marketing strategy, it is better to select a specialist in this area than to expect the communications provider to supply this.

Look for: *a clear distinction of the strategic functions they provide; demonstrable strategic performance, probably as case studies; clear demonstrations of consumer insights that led to strategic insights*.

### People resources

Many providers will have a New Business Team for the pitch, possibly never to be seen again. It is important to identify the resources that will be working on your business in the short and longer term. While small agencies can be an advantage regarding access to the most senior people, as the agency grows, or if something happens to key staff, they may not have the flexibility to manage your business. Likewise, large multinationals may have a higher turnover through career development.

1 trinityp3.com/agency-performance/#4

Look for: *a loyal, long-term staffing base (low churn); dedicated resources or guarantees of time and effort by individual or specific level of seniority/expertise; depth of resources as well as breadth.*

**Experience/expertise**

A conundrum is that many advertisers want an agency with recent experience in their category without account conflicts with competitors[2]. While it may be ideal to have a provider with experience in your category, it could be that this comes with a package of set thinking.

Look for: *expertise in your category or industry (both historical and current) in a range of individuals; a cohesive team that provides both youthful creativity and mature experience.*

**Management skills**

Agencies are business units in their own right, and managing their own revenue and profit centres requires skill. The experience these management teams bring to the table are critical to your success.

Look for: *key personnel who have experience across many industries and categories; managers who have 'skin in the game' (are hands-on with clients); demonstrably good management skills (strong and consistent agency performance).*

**Remuneration structure**

Remuneration is most often based on a 'cost plus' formula that sees the provider remuneration comprising a salary + overhead + profit calculation[3] based on the advertiser's needs and expectations. In some cases, advertisers also enjoy PBR (performance-based remuneration) with a VBC (value-based compensation) aspect that rewards or penalises the agency on performance[4].

Look for: *a flexible remuneration arrangement based on reasonable salary structures, overhead multiples and base profit margin; the willingness to participate in PBR arrangements; demonstration of putting profit on the line (case studies); a workable review facility that recognises the ebb and flow of budgets and workloads.*

**Chemistry**

One of the most important parts of the relationship between provider and advertiser is 'chemistry' or 'fit'[5]. Most relationships that do go long-term are based on mutual respect, understanding and consideration.

Look for: *a willingness to listen as well as talk; something more than the*

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2 trinityp3.com/agency-register

3 trinityp3.com/calculators

4 trinityp3.com/agency-performance/#6

5 trinityp3.com/2011/12/the-importance-of-chemistry-meetings-in-the-advertising-agency-selection-process

*camaraderie of the new business pitch; a genuine interest in or passion for your business; an open and honest approach that will engender trust and respect.*

**Size**

How big or important do you want your account to be within the agency? Dominating the agency could mean that you end up funding the infrastructure that others benefit from, while being one of the smaller clients may mean that you are overlooked at times.

Look for: *Who are the other clients at the agency? Consider both size and type and where you fit in. How demanding are these other clients? For example, retail or high-volume clients may demand resources to a greater extent than high-media-spending clients. What impact would the addition of your business have on the agency's size?*

**Location**

While some advertisers are happy to source the best provider in the market, no matter where they are located, most require a local supplier. Considering so much of the business is built on relationships, long-distance management needs to be considered.

Look for: *Does the agency have other long-distance clients? How successfully do they manage these relationships? What are the additional costs, both in time and money? What are the alternative offerings? How can technology be used to increase interaction, shorten time issues and lower costs?*

# POST 23

## Marketers should set production budgets or pay the consequences

**Posted 24 May 2013 by Clive Duncan**

So you are filling out your comms campaign brief for the agency (TV is your medium of choice). When you get to the bit that asks how much is your production budget, what do you put in the blank field? This is a point of contention for many marketers, with some feeling it is better to provide the budget and others not.

**Why set an advertising production budget?**

When you think of professional services, and especially commercial creative services, negotiating or agreeing the budget up-front is important. After all, there is no point in briefing an architect to design a building without indicating the budget for the construction. Likewise, in advertising it is very important to set a budget, as it will indicate to the agency your financial expectations, and the agency can apply its creative talents within these parameters. This is a good thing. Clever creative is just that, clever – it does not have to be expensive.

Setting a budget will make it more likely that you end up with a great piece of creative work, as well as a media budget that ensures enough people will see the work to allow it to deliver full efficacy.

**What happens if you do not set a production budget?**

Some marketers are worried that providing a budget will simply prompt the agency to spend it. The fact is that without a budget, the agency will most likely end up spending more money than it needs to. That is why the budget should be based on what the production is worth to the organisation, in turn based on the task at hand.

If you do not set a budget, you are wasting everyone's time. They will not understand the framework they are working within, and this will lead to them having to be reined in (creatively or financially or both) somewhere along the line. A big production idea without a big budget is an embarrassment to all. Where a big creative idea is delivered bang on the money, it is a winner for all.

**How to set a budget**

The easiest thing is to just add a few percentage points to last year's budget, so your spend is based upon historical trends. The problem with this is you could be simply compounding past inefficiencies and inequities. So how do you draw a line in the sand? How do you set production budgets?

It's easy (the concept has been around for years)! All you do is set a percentage of your media spend as a production budget. The media spend is usually the biggest single expenditure in the advertising budget. The media budget is based upon the task, the strategic importance of the project, the demographic targeted, the reach and frequency required, and the value to the organisation and the marketing strategy.

To calculate your production spend, you simply decide what category your campaign fits into and apply the appropriate percentage to the initial media budget. This then becomes your production budget. For example, retail TVC (television commercial) – this is a TVC with a price point included, no matter what the product – should have a production spend of 10%. So if you are spending $2 million on media, you should be spending $200,000 on production.

Over the past 13 years we have been tracking media-to-production ratios and can provide these guidelines by advertiser category:

- service industries (financial and telco) – the percentage is between 10% and 15%
- FMCG or consumer goods brands – the percentage is between 15% and 20%
- luxury goods (big-ticket items or services) – the percentage can be up to 30%.

But these are simply the starting point. The secret is to set the budget while also taking into consideration criteria like:

- the total media investment (in the first year)

- the strategic importance of the campaign
- the potential for ongoing use.

For a reality check, it is always wise to consult a senior member of your marketing team or an independent specialist.

**The production budget is a guideline**

From these benchmarks, you could say that any percentage over 35% means you are potentially in the 'I am seriously wasting money' zone. But here is the thing: these percentages are guidelines. They are the starting point against which the production cost is referenced. The agency should deliver concepts to this budget to answer the brief, but it should not prohibit the agency from presenting more-expensive concepts as well.

If Steve Jobs had religiously followed these guidelines, then the 1984 commercial that launched the Macintosh[1] would never have been made. Legend has it that the cost of production was so high that there was only enough media money for the spot to run once during that year's Super Bowl. Now it takes a fairly courageous marketer to follow this strategy (luckily he was the CEO).

The point is that concepts should be developed at the agency's expense and presented with a clear indication of the cost to deliver at the time of presentation. This gives the brand team the opportunity to assess the value of the additional cost above and beyond the budget.

**How to keep the agency within budget**

If you can't afford the media spend to reach your target demographic with significant frequency, then a big production spend is not necessarily the answer. Your agency may say there is a strong possibility that the TVC will go viral on the internet/YouTube because it is such a brilliant piece of creative and worth the investment, but ask them to guarantee it and watch their faces.

First of all, never let yourself be upsold. You know the scenario: the agency pushes a few ideas across the table, goes through the motions of trying to sell them to you, and when that's over says this with a broad smile: 'But we also have this idea. It's a beauty. Unfortunately it's a little over your budget'.

This is a line that you cross at your own risk. You could, instead, just put up your hand and say 'Well, we don't want to see it. Go back to the drawing board and come up with a "beauty" that is within our budget'. Do this twice and the agency will get the idea that you are serious, and (if

1 youtu.be/qIUcNLTsyYo

it is up to it) it will start producing clever work that is within your budget.

Or, you can review the 'beauty' and if you believe it has merit, ask the agency to prepare a ballpark quote that it can guarantee is accurate to within 10%. (Any agency producer worth their salt can do this.) Then review if you can afford this increased level of investment without decimating your media budget.

This is a decision that must be made at the time the concepts are presented. The most responsible and safest approach is the first one. The second one is a higher-risk strategy, definitely not one to be taken lightly. But either way, you are making an informed decision and not being placed in the position of being forced to overcommit budget funds simply because the on-air date is too close.

# POST 24

## The 'dog's dinner' approach to managing agency rosters

**Posted 17 November 2014 by David Little**

Is this a familiar picture? Would your CMO or Marketing Director recognise this situation?

| | Brand 1 | Brand 2 | Brand 3 | Campaign X | Campaign Y |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Media Planning & Buying | Agency 1 | Agency 1 | Agency 2 | Agency 1 | Agency 1 |
| Creative Services | Agency 3 | Agency 4 | Agency 5 | Agency 3 | Agency 3 |
| Production | Varies | Varies | Varies | Varies | None |
| PR | Agency 3 | None | None | Agency 3 | None |
| Print | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| BTL / Sales / Activation / Promo | Agency 7 | Agency 7 | Agency 8 | Agency 7 | Agency 7 |
| Promo Staff | Varies | Varies | ? | Varies | Varies |
| Digital Management | Agency 12 | Agency 12 | Agency 14 | None | None |
| Digital Content | Agency 13 | Agency 13 | ? | None | None |
| Events Management | Agency 15 | None | None | None | Agency 9 |
| Sponsorship Owner | None | None | None | Owner 1 | Owner 2 |
| Sponsorship Agency | None | None | None | Agency 16 | None |

### How do rosters get like this?

It's common for a marketing agency roster to expand[1] according to the ad-hoc requirements of the marketing team. Marketing personnel come and go, budgets expand and shrink, and the unique challenges your brands face change too. But the task of regularly tidying up is seldom a scheduled activity.

In addition to this, short-term tactical opportunities crop up, like new promotional campaigns, events or sponsorships, or even colleagues who have a 'great contact', leading to (whoops!) another agency creeping onto your payroll.

Other mitigating factors affecting your choice of agency might be as follows:

- As illustrated above, your company acquires new brands from mergers or acquisitions, inheriting new agencies.
- A mix of local and global brands – I've worked in FMCG where a local brand is the biggest seller but barely exists elsewhere in the world.
- Global brand affiliations, where head office directs you to a global agency or subsidiary.
- Unique local brand positioning – I've also experienced a global big-hitting brand which was niche on the local scene. It didn't have the same funds to execute on a grand scale and had a very different demographic to HQ's ideal.
- No-competition guidelines, where you may not be able to use the same agencies as your direct competitors.

The end result is often a roster that isn't aligned to your needs and is hard to manage. If we use the situation, target, proposal model[2], however, we can break this complex transformation into more manageable chunks.

### Situation

The first task is to research and document a detailed analysis of the current situation. As well as mapping your 'dog's dinner', you should cover headlines like agency parent companies, agency services (including those not used), contract duration, outputs/outcomes, annual spend, contract management, transactions and recent performance reviews.

Promo personnel, print production companies, media owners and sponsorship owners are your second-tier partners. Mapping your

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1 trinityp3.com/2014/02/multiple-agency-roster-management

2 teambased.com/images/pdf/STP%20Problem%20Solving.pdf

relationships with them, and documenting how your investments with them perform, will reveal potential opportunities like consolidation or decoupling production.

Now it's time to draw insights from this information. What does it mean? What is its impact? The implications of a messy agency roster are often far-reaching:

- **Resource drain:** How much time is being consumed by the most basic daily, weekly or monthly tasks regarding managing an external partner? Everything from accounts payable having another 'vendor' to pay, to brand managers having more account managers to catch by phone, to the management of several contracts (which take months to negotiate in the first place) … it all amounts to many duplicated tasks.
- **Apples and pears:** The varied contracts, remuneration structures, reviews and templates for scopes of work will mean you're probably not comparing like for like in how you measure your investments.
- **'Diluted enthusiasm':** Like it or not, it is a sad fact that a small account often means more hassle for an agency; in contrast, a bigger scope of work (and the concomitant bigger fees) is more attractive to an agency, and an attractive account attracts talent. Many advertisers try to brass-neck their way out of this, relying on the brand's attractiveness or a favour to be repaid in the future. But you are buying the services of human beings, and the humans in an agency aren't motivated by something just because the advertiser argues they should be.

If you are familiar with Darren Woolley's 'top-down' approach[3] to engaging CMOs, then describing the situation like this is one way you can evidence the need for procurement–marketing collaboration[4].

**Target**

If you ask your CMO what the roster would look like if he/she had a clean sheet, the answer would inevitably be something radically different to the situation you see today. Moreover, the end-goal should be an agency roster fully aligned to delivering his/her department's strategy for the coming 1–5 years. (A good example of this would be the changing needs of digital media.)

One detail of mapping future needs may even be deciding which agencies are engaged on scopes of work and which are engaged on

3 trinityp3.com/2014/02/top-down-or-bottom-up-budgeting

4 trinityp3.com/2014/03/marketing-and-procurement-better-results

temporary missions (like sponsorship agencies being used to research the marketplace and establish contacts).

If procurement can accept an end-goal of a high-performing roster and then get deeply involved in supporting the transformation, you will have demonstrated an example of successful cross-functional teamwork. Note that cost reduction is nothing more than a *potential* side effect, not an end in itself. I'll cover shared KPIs in a future article.

**Proposal**

Staging an agency pitch[5] can be exciting and radical, and can reap serious rewards, but it is also very resource-consuming and stressful for all concerned. It's an important option, but ultimately it's only a means to an end rather than the end itself. As a cross-functional team, you should use the insights of the 'Situation' section above to identify and assess the relative risks and rewards of *several* improvement activities as part of your arsenal, activities such as:

- aligning performance measurement, remuneration and contract frameworks
- identifying economies of scale in agency networks
- consolidating scope to 'core competency' agencies
- mapping scope gaps and agency competencies not being exploited
- stopping unnecessary retainers
- phasing out agencies that no longer fulfil your needs
- seeking help from a consultant to make your roster more effective.

Researching, assessing and prioritising which strategies to implement should not be done unilaterally, however. Involve both the people who will sponsor it and those who will live with the consequences (refer to the RASCI model[6]). If you do this early and in detail, these stakeholders will feel a joint responsibility for the roster's future success. A CMO sign-off would be a great illustration of this.

**A few final words on procurement involvement**

One tenet of procurement category management is to take a narrow (but deep) project scope to start with: effect change on a restricted scope of work (like one brand, or one campaign, or one set of measures) and you won't spread yourself too thinly.

Another is to demonstrate 'quick wins', like negotiating contract gaps,

5 See the post titled 'Why pitching is changing and what to do about it' on page 220 of this book.

6 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responsibility_assignment_matrix

requesting pricing in a standard format, small process improvements, or the removal of 'pain points' like unnecessary admin and payment issues. These will help energise the team involved and advertise success internally in your organisation, paving the way for longer-term strategies.

If procurement is involved in realigning your roster, you should also expect a raft of 'hygiene' measures to help keep agency spend where you want it and prevent scope creeping again. ERP (enterprise resource planning) / spend system tidy-ups, e-catalogues, price lists and preferred suppliers can all drive contract compliance and remove the day-to-day guesswork from marketing's workload. Your strategic procurement colleague may have an operational team to help deliver these.

As always, good luck and have fun!

# POST 25

## How to provide fact-based feedback to unsuccessful agencies in a pitch

**Posted 15 April 2013 by Darren Woolley**

One of the things that constantly amazes me is the response I get when presenting feedback to agencies following a pitch[1]. It seems from the reactions to our debriefing report and process that this is an area that is often overlooked or at least handled badly by marketers, and apparently by many other consultants too.

In my 15 years as a copywriter and creative director in agencies, especially the last five years at JWT[2], I was heavily involved in new business pitches and remember how vague the feedback often was post-pitch. Phrases like 'Your strategy/creative was not strong' were used, and when you probed the responses, they became even less clear and less helpful in understanding and improving the way we work.

My experience since founding TrinityP3 13 years ago is that agency feedback is pretty much the same today. Even when I search The Good Pitch site[3] set up by the ISBA[4] and the IPA[5] in the UK, there is little direction on providing agency feedback except that it 'should be thorough and delivered within four weeks of the pitch'.

1 trinityp3.com/agency-performance/#5
2 linkedin.com/in/darrenwoolley
3 thegoodpitch.com
4 isba.org.uk
5 ipa.co.uk

**The purpose of providing feedback**

My belief is that if an agency is willing to participate in your selection process, then the least you should do is be open, honest and thorough in providing it with feedback if it is unsuccessful. The purpose of providing this feedback is to:

- help the agency understand why it was not successful
- give it an understanding of how it performed compared with the other agencies
- provide it with advice and direction on areas in which it can improve.

This requires a more rigorous and detailed feedback session than simply 'having a chat'.

**Why providing feedback can be difficult**

When we are managing reviews and pitches, many marketers will ask us to give the agency feedback on their behalf. I prefer to have the marketer there during this process so they can provide any input and also see how we do this. I think many people find that providing feedback to the unsuccessful agencies is a confronting process, as it requires them to justify or rationalise their decision.

This fear of confrontation regarding the unsuccessful agencies means that marketers will often look for 'tangible' points such as creative quality or strategic skills, even when the reason the agency was unsuccessful was more intangible, such as chemistry or simply being liked enough.

Yet if these are the reasons the agency was unsuccessful, it is important that you are honest, rather than misdirecting it to potentially make changes in areas where no changes are required. This is simply an excuse to compensate for a lack of courage.

**When to provide feedback**

When you inform an agency that it has been unsuccessful at any time in the process (credentials, chemistry, workshop, presentation or the final negotiation), you should offer to provide feedback at a time that suits it. This can be done by telephone but it is better provided face-to-face. The reason for not providing feedback when informing the agency of your decision is that it will be busy processing the news and will not really be open to taking in the feedback. If it does ask why during that conversation, it is important to have one or two points to explain that you can then elaborate on later in the feedback session.

## How to provide feedback

The feedback session can take place either at the agency or at the marketers' offices. The important point is to have an agenda of the feedback you want to provide. This can be structured in a number of ways, but there must be a structure. The problem with the way many people provide feedback is that, being unprepared and with their responses unstructured, they often provide feedback off the 'top of their head'.

TrinityP3 has developed a feedback process that takes the agencies through each stage of the process and shares with them the scores they were given against the assessment criteria. More importantly, the score is compared with the average score given to all of the agencies in the process. This not only allows the agency to see where it scored low, but also how this compares with the average of the agencies it was competing against.

This then becomes the basis of the discussion with the agency. We present the scores for each of the stages that the agency participated in and provide insight into any of the scores where the agency was above or below the average. The agency will invariably have questions and we answer these as openly and honestly as possible, taking into consideration any sensitive issues.

I have had to provide feedback to an agency CEO that the client did not trust him because of the way he sweated and fidgeted nervously. Then there was the strategy planner with strong halitosis, and the creepy senior account guy who kept looking the client in the chest. I think it is important to be honest and sensitive in these situations, because the alternative is to deflect the agency from the real issues. And if handled correctly, you will find the agency will thank you.

## Steps for providing valuable feedback

1. Implement a scorecard process with commentary for each step of the process, to ensure you have a detailed record of the agency's performance.
2. When you inform an agency that it has been unsuccessful, offer to provide more-detailed feedback at a time that suits the agency.
3. Structure the feedback around the scores given to the agency at each stage of the process and provide a comparison with the average given for each.
4. Be open, honest and thorough in providing feedback, but also be sensitive to the feelings of the agency individuals.

**Things you should never do in providing feedback**

1. Avoid abdicating responsibility for giving feedback and passing it to someone else not involved in the process.
2. Never make comparisons between individual agencies. Always make comparisons with the average.
3. Never share information provided by other agencies, even by way of demonstration, as this breaches commercial confidentiality.
4. Don't avoid issues or questions that you find confronting. It is better to be honest and sensitive than to lie or deceive.

# POST 26

## Why lower agency retainers lead to higher production costs

**Posted 13 August 2014 by Darren Woolley**

It is common to have creative agency fees – and increasingly, digital agency fees – broken into two component parts. First is the fee or retainer paid to the agency for account management, strategy and creative ideas, right up to the approved concept. Second are the fees paid for the implementation of these approved concepts in the form of production or technology build and project management.

While a lot of effort is devoted to ensuring the agency retainer or fee is set at the right level at the time of appointment, less of a focus is placed on the production costs – except when there is a perception that they are higher than expected. In the work we do to benchmark agency remuneration, both the retainer[1] and the production fees[2], we have noticed that more often than not, where lower-than-benchmark agency fees are paid for the former, there are higher-than-benchmark fees for the latter. In other words, where fees have been squeezed, production costs flourish. Here is my hypothesis as to why.

**Fees and retainers are incredibly competitive**

Many agency retainers are set at the time the account is pitched and awarded. The tender process is a highly competitive time and significant commercial pressure is brought to bear on the successful agency to

1 trinityp3.com/agency-performance/agency-remuneration-and-negotiation

2 trinityp3.com/delivery-implementation/production-management-assessment

propose the best possible price[3]. This is where simplicity in the way the agency retainer is calculated magnifies the impact of this competitive pressure. If you remember, the agency retainer is basically calculated on the direct salary cost of the agency resources being retained, multiplied by the overhead and profit mark-up[4].

There are basically a few moving parts to be negotiated. From the procurement perspective, the purpose of the negotiation is to maximise the number of resources and minimise the cost by negotiating down the salary cost and the overhead and profit multiple. In fact, a procurement director in Canada once explained to me that we make the process far too complex with our benchmarks to calculate the resources required, as he believed his job was to maximise the resources and minimise the costs. And he did.

In the face of potentially losing a pitch, it is not unknown for an agency to accept this pressure and minimise its fee to a commercially unsustainable level, rather than losing the pitch and all the revenue. Besides, it is hoping to make it up in the production area anyway.

**Fees and retainers are regularly reviewed**

Once the retainer is set and locked into the contract, it may not be reviewed at all during the life of the contract, unless of course the marketer wants to effect a simple and effective cost reduction. It is far easier to enter into a negotiation with the agency on the fee, as this is a one-off process that will yield an immediate result over the remaining life of the contract.

Of course, it could be that the agency requests a review of the retainer, with the view of increasing the payment beyond the unsustainable level it accepted to secure the business at the time of the tender. But any one-off increases will potentially leave the marketer feeling that the agency is expensive. And besides, in these circumstances it is up to the agency to prove that the fee is unsustainable, and all it has by way of proof is the agency timesheets.

**Production costs are rarely reviewed**

On the other hand, production costs are rarely reviewed. This is because there is usually little time for a formal review of these costs, as the deadline for the production estimate approval looms against the ever-closing delivery date. Only the most cursory review of the agency rates is usually possible.

Also, most big-ticket production items like major digital builds

3 trinityp3.com/2013/09/agency-remuneration-e-auctions

4 trinityp3.com/2011/09/iphone-agency-compensation-calculator-for-almost-any-market

and television or film productions are incredibly complex and variable, making like-for-like comparisons difficult, except by highly skilled and experienced industry experts. When simple total cost comparisons are undertaken, the agency is quick to point out that the advertiser is not comparing apples with apples and the discussion quickly becomes bogged down in technical jargon and conjecture.

Even when rates are reviewed, the smart agency is quick to lower the rates, knowing that on an estimate-by-estimate basis, it is easy to recoup the loss in the rates with additional application of the hours required to get the cost back to, or even exceed, the previous production totals. And as the brand manager will be too focused on meeting the deadline to worry about incremental increases in the individual estimate costs, this strategy will often go largely unnoticed.

**Competitive pressure is less than obvious**

Production is also an area where many agencies fail at the most basic step of procurement due diligence in obtaining three competitive quotes, except under duress exerted by the marketing or procurement team. In fact, it is more likely to be the procurement team, as the marketers are more focused on delivering a quality product on time rather than on budget. The reason for this is that no-one will remember it was on budget if the quality of the actual work is substandard.

The best excuse an agency can provide for avoiding a properly constructed and robust procurement process is the most common one in advertising agency production: lack of time. If a truly competitive process delivers a modest 10% saving on the production cost, this is still infinitesimally small compared with the cost of missing the media deadline and having to drop and charge the booked media. Therefore, production is an ideal area in which agencies can and do make up for the margin lost on the retainer through increased production costs.

**Actions that marketers can take**

There are a few things that marketers can do to address this trend:

- In cooperation with their procurement team, they can review the agency retainer and ensure that it and the underlying agency resources are reasonably linked to the scope of work the agency is delivering. Rather than looking to simply maximise the resources and minimise the cost, as proposed by the Canadian procurement director, you work to strike a fair, reasonable and sustainable fee for the outputs delivered.

- They can develop an annual review process with the agency or agencies concerning their performance and fees, to make sure these are adjusted according to changes in the scope of work.
- They can include agency production costs in the retainer. In fact, retaining production resources, if the scope of the production work is known, can deliver significant reductions in cost as the agency trades margin for increased and guaranteed cash flow.
- They can implement a production management process[5], with a framework to ensure that all production costs, but especially any significant costs, are reviewed at the budget setting stage, the briefing stage, the concept approval stage and the production stage. This includes ensuring the production timeline is carefully managed to avoid running down to the deadline, allowing time for a robust and properly constructed production procurement process.

The fact is that the Golden Rule – 'The person with the gold makes the rules'[6] – means that as the advertiser, it is primarily your responsibility to ensure the rules are constructed to deliver the most effective and efficient go-to-market process. To think that the agency would do this when the rules on retainer price competitiveness and a lack of rigour around production cost management means you are providing an incentive not to do this, is naive at best.

So what are you going to do?

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5 trinityp3.com/marketing-performance/production-management-assessment

6 trinityp3.com/2013/11/golden-rule-agency-performance

# POST 27

## Top 10 questions to ask a strategic marketing consultant before you engage them

**Posted 21 November 2011 by Darren Woolley**

Let's be honest here. Many consultants claim to have expertise in the strategic marketing management space, but you have to separate the professionals from the recently redundant or the washed-up. After all, anyone can hang up a shingle saying they are an expert in media, social media, production, data analytics, agency remuneration or [insert proclaimed competency here].

So how can you sort the has-beens from the never-were from the right ones? Here are 10 questions to ask:

1. 'What is your company's experience and expertise?' Some consultants have experience in one area but try to pass themselves off as experts in all areas.
2. 'What is your consultant's background and qualifications?' You could get an accountant telling you how much you should pay for a TV commercial.
3. 'How recent and practical is that experience?' Those that can, do; and those that can't, teach. And some even become consultants. The best theoretical advice is not a replacement for the practical.
4. 'How are you remunerated and why?' If you just want savings, go for the consultant who charges a percentage of savings as their

incentive. If you want value, look for a fixed fee. If you want to pay a fortune, go for head hours.

5. 'How much do your services cost?' How can you judge value for money if the consultant is not willing to provide you with an up-front cost? Request a detailed proposal, including timelines and specific outcomes. Too often, consultants have lowballed to get the gig and then charged a fortune to deliver it.
6. 'Do you receive any commissions, fees or kickbacks from any other party?' Some consultants get paid by both clients and agencies, yet they don't declare this conflict of interest.
7. 'On what principles does your business operate?' The right advice starts with shared values and principles, so ask to see the consultant's, or even better, testimonials from their clients and agencies.
8. 'Do you have professional indemnity insurance?' This is a great way to sort the pretenders from the professionals, as there are many fly-by-night operators out there. The guy running his consultancy from his kitchen table will not bother with such basics.
9. 'What clients have you worked for?' While perfectly reasonable, the amount of information they offer is a good indication of how much they will be telling others about your business.
10. Should you contact us at TrinityP3 and ask us the same questions? Yes. You'll find we are one of the few truly independent industry consultants to help advertisers achieve maximum value in media, digital, creative, direct marketing, print and television production, public relations, and across all marketing services.

# POST 28

## Google's mobile-friendly test and why you must not ignore it

**Posted 20 April 2015 by Mike Morgan**

*(Post updated 23 April 2015 – scroll to the end to see new analysis)*

If you haven't been following the world of Google and its constant tweaking of the famous algorithm that analyses and sorts billions of web pages, you could be excused for not knowing about the biggest change to happen to search in years. Tomorrow, Google will be rolling out a new update that will have a major impact on search results. It has already picked up the attractive little nickname 'Mobilegeddon'[1], but what is it really all about?

Let's begin with the announcement Google made in February on its Webmaster blog[2]:

*'Starting 21 April, we will be expanding our use of mobile-friendliness as a ranking signal. This change will affect mobile searches in all languages worldwide and will have a significant impact on our search results.'*

There was only one way to read this – if your website is not deemed to be mobile-friendly by Google by 21 April, you will lose a substantial amount of traffic. Zineb Ait Bahajji from Google's Webmaster Trends team was quoted as saying that this change will have more of an impact on search results than Panda or Penguin[3]. Whatever percentage that actually

1 searchenginewatch.com/sew/how-to/2398591/-mobilegeddon-is-coming-on-april-21-are-you-ready

2 googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.co.nz/2015/02/finding-more-mobile-friendly-search.html

3 searchengineland.com/how-large-is-googles-mobile-friendly-algorithm-larger-than-panda-or-penguin-217026

means, this is a big deal.

Unusually for Google, it not only gave people almost two months to take action, it also supplied guides[4] and a testing tool to help with the process. This all sounds perfectly reasonable, and is unlike the way in which Google has covertly released most of its previous major updates. However, getting websites to be compliant is a significant and often expensive task. Add to this the confusion around whether separate mobile sites, making a current site responsive, or going for a whole new responsive website is the preferred option and we have a whole lot of turmoil out there. To cap things off, there is conflicting information from Google's own tools – the testing tool may give a perfect score while Webmaster Tools gives a major fail. Even Google's communications have been inconsistent.

Before I dig down into the inconsistencies, let's take a look at the tool and talk about what your best options are if you fail the test.

**Google's mobile-friendly test**

TrinityP3 went through a responsive design upgrade in 2014, as a healthy percentage of people were accessing the site on mobile devices – particularly the blog content – and the previous version of the site had poor mobile user experience. We have all experienced the frustrations of arriving at a site on mobile that uses a small font and where you have to zoom and scroll horizontally to read the content. Since moving to a responsive design, our mobile bounce rate has dropped significantly, and mobile time on page has increased dramatically. Which is what you would expect.

So when we tested our site for mobile-friendliness[5], we got the thumbs-up. Now try your own website. While you are at it, run your site through the responsive design tool offered by BrowserStack[6]. This allows you to see how your responsive website appears on a range of different devices: various iPhones and Galaxys, Google Nexus, Notes, Mini, Tabs, Macs and PCs. You can ensure that the website looks good on any-size screen and many devices.

What if your website fails the mobile-friendly test? Well, there are three key problem areas that frequently come up with non-compliant websites:

1. text too small to read
2. links too close together
3. mobile viewport not set.

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4 developers.google.com/webmasters/mobile-sites/get-started

5 google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly

6 browserstack.com/responsive

Of course, these all contribute to a poor user experience.

What if one of the biggest SEO sites on the web fails the test, as is the case with Moz[7]? This is very interesting. Several reasons have been given for Moz not having a responsive site when its raison d'être is assisting businesses to be compliant with Google's many ranking factors, and the tools it sells help with this process:

- A very small percentage of Moz visitors use mobile – it is a desktop-dominated website.
- It is running a test – a senior staff member disavowed its entire back-link profile on their personal site to test Google's Disavow tool, so this is feasible.

Or it could be that Moz redeveloped last year, rebranding and migrating to a new domain all at once, a massive undertaking, and it simply doesn't have the resources to go through it all again. [Note: Within several months of this post being written, the Moz site became mobile-friendly.]

**What are your options if your website fails the test?**

There is conflicting information from Google about the best option. Responsive design was, up until recently, Google's preferred choice, but it seems to have softened its approach[8] and has now endorsed separate mobile sites as an option.

So, let's assume that Google is happy with either as long as the SEO is handled correctly and the mobile version gives good UX. What are the differences between the two options?

1. **Mobile websites**

- These are on a separate domain, which means you have to treat them as if they are two completely separate entities – two lots of hosting and domain registration costs.
- Content needs to be updated for each.
- Duplicate content can be a problem.
- Accurate Analytics tracking can sometimes be difficult.
- Back-links will point to either but not both.
- One advantage is that the mobile experience can be customised more easily.
- They are also a cheaper option – less development cost.

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7 moz.com/blog

8 developers.google.com/webmasters/mobile-sites/mobile-seo/overview/select-config

2. **Responsive design**

- More expensive in development.
- Not as customisable.
- Better SEO results.
- No duplication issues related to having two websites with similar content.
- No Analytics problems.
- Content only needs to be updated once.
- Only one domain.
- All links attracted add to overall authority signals.

So, if you have the budget for it, I recommend going down the responsive design path. Do ensure that the mobile version is giving a really good experience for users. I have seen quite a few responsive themes that offer a horrific experience, so choose wisely and test any potential theme on all screen sizes before committing to development.

**When don't you need to make your website mobile-friendly?**

Some websites do not have high numbers of mobile visitors. This will relate to the industry and the purpose of the website. No-one is going to try to work through complex spreadsheets on a smartphone, and some industries just do not have high mobile usage.

So how do you find out whether your audience is mobile or not? If you do not have Google Analytics tracking on your website, you can get it for free[9]. All you need to do is go to your Google Analytics dashboard and then go to Audience > Mobile > Overview. This will give you a figure for desktop, mobile and tablet use.

If, for example, your website has 80% of its total visitors on desktop (say 50,000 of them), while mobile contributes 20% of the visitors, then moving to a mobile-friendly site will be critical. I am sure there are not too many businesses who would like to say goodbye to 10,000 visitors. But if your website has only a small percentage of mobile users, say less than 5%, you could build a good case for sticking with the status quo, at least in the medium term.

Predictions are that all industries will see mobile search growth as people become more mobile in the way they do business and do their research. So it will be a case of delaying the inevitable.

9 google.com/analytics/ce/nrs/standard

**Time to look at some of the inconsistencies**

First of all, the mobile algorithm update runs on a page-by-page basis. So putting your homepage into the mobile-friendly test will not give you the real picture. Websites have many different page types – home, blog, product, portfolio, page templates and many more. You need to test each page type to ensure your entire site is compliant.

Google's Webmaster Tools offers a page-by-page mobile usability test, and the results here might surprise you. Unlike the mobile-friendly test, the data held here is from the entire site, so PDFs, images, newsletters and more may show up in these reports.

This is what Google is advising on:

- touch elements too close
- content not sized to viewport
- small font size
- viewport not configured
- Flash usage.

Regarding the TrinityP3 website, we discovered a handful of old blog posts that had videos embedded in Flash, media library images that were too large (but are fine in the actual blog post), and PDFs of trade articles that showed up as having a small font size. None of these are particularly useful in mobile search, so it is not really worth the extra investment in making these responsive. The key point is that the main site pages and blog posts are in good shape.

In this Webmaster Tools report, there were also a number of other problem pages reported, but when we ran them through the mobile-friendly test they were fine. So we are seeing some major inconsistencies between the two different tools. Google has said that we should take the results of the testing tool as the best option, as this is Googlebot crawling a page in real time.

**Are most major websites ready for the update?**

What will be very interesting in the coming weeks will be how Google treats large authority sites that are not mobile-friendly. Portent tested the top 25,000 sites[10] according to Alexa and the Majestic Million and found that 10,000 of them didn't make the grade, including a large number of government websites.

10 portent.com/uncategorized/the-coming-mobile-seo-end-times.htm

In my own testing, I have found that most of the New Zealand Government and university sites do not comply with the new requirements. And here is the conundrum that Google is facing. Obviously, Google's search results will suffer if the majority of government and education sites are bumped out of mobile search. And if 10,000 of the top 25,000 websites in the world are not yet mobile-friendly, how does that help a mobile searcher? What sort of experience will Google mobile search offer a user if many of the biggest sites in the world are suddenly missing?

The interesting aspect to track after this update goes live is how Google handles this. Will there be a special dispensation for websites that have a certain domain authority? And if so, what is the cut-off point? Or will it be based on the domain itself? Will .govt, .ac or .edu sites get treated differently to business sites?

Google will be well aware of the long timelines involved in getting a government or university site redeveloped. There is no way that these organisations are agile enough to turn this around within two months. It will be interesting to track the change in mobile visitor numbers across a range of websites to see where the impact is felt.

Good luck with your own websites. If you are not getting an 'Awesome' on Google's test, then now might be a very good time to have a conversation with your developer.

★★★★

*It is now 23 April and we are starting to see some movement in results around the web. Has Mobilegeddon been the terrifying game changer that some media have been predicting, such as a NZ Herald post trumpeting that a large number of New Zealand businesses would be 'banned' from Google?*

*Come on people … please! Take a deep breath! The sky has not fallen. We are, however, beginning to see some subtle winners and losers.*

*A day after the event, Search Engine Land writer Barry Schwartz was asking whether the update had even rolled out*[11]*, as his data was not showing much movement. He did pick up a switching of number-one and number-two results between a mobile-friendly page on Wikipedia and one that was not mobile-friendly. But in the context of daily fluctuations in search, this is anecdotal.*

*SEO Clarity is reporting only 'a 1.7% difference in ranking domains between desktop and mobile versus the previous few days'*[12]*. Mozcast*[13] *is not picking up a great deal of volatility either. Mobilegeddon seems to be fairly low key so far, with only a slight movement in mobile search. This may be to do with the slow rollout,*

11 searchengineland.com/did-google-really-start-rolling-out-the-mobile-friendly-algorithm-yesterday-219549

12 seoclarity.net/googles-mobile-friendly-update-april-21st-11964/#gs.zX9BlNc

13 mozcast.com

*or it may be that everyone, including Google, may have overemphasised the impact.*

*So how are the sites I am tracking performing? A couple of sites that are far from mobile-friendly have dropped a little, but it is too early to tell whether this is part of the usual range of fluctuations or is tied to the update. To cloud things further, Google seems to have finally identified and eliminated a number of problem referral spam*[14] *sites, which is impacting numbers. The majority are seeing a slight lift over the past couple of days, but again, it is too early to say whether this is a trend or not.*

14 optimizesmart.com/geek-guide-removing-referrer-spam-google-analytics

# POST 29

## Reasons why performance-based remuneration, or payment by results, often fails

**Posted 4 September 2010 by Darren Woolley**

Performance-based remuneration, or payment by results (PBR), is a component of many agency remuneration deals, but the fact is that in most cases both agency and client will tell you that it does not work. The concept of providing a bonus payment for achieving results or rewarding the desired behaviour is very attractive and has great merit. The problem is that it is rarely executed effectively enough to deliver the necessary strategic outcome. This is because of some fundamental mistakes that people make in implementing PBR, in particular:

1. The stick is bigger than the carrot.
2. The objective is virtually unobtainable.
3. The calculation is way too complex (or too expensive).
4. The metrics are irrelevant to the business.
5. Contribution and value creation are linked to payment.

**1. The stick is bigger than the carrot**

To encourage change or incentivise performance, there needs to be a carrot, and quite a sizeable carrot at that. Too often we see performance bonuses that are relatively small change in regards to the overall remuneration proposal.

A very popular one from a procurement viewpoint is to have the agency sacrifice 5% of revenue for the opportunity to 'earn' 10% back if they achieve the KPIs. Ask yourself, if your boss offered the same deal, would you jump at it? Firstly, why give up anything that is certain for that which is uncertain? And secondly, is 5% really much of an incentive? After tax, it is more like 3%.

So if you are taking a performance bonus, make sure the carrot is big enough to be a significant incentive, otherwise everyone is wasting their time.

**2. The objective is virtually unobtainable**

We were working with an FMCG which proposed a sales growth bonus for the agency where the agency could attain a 20% lift in revenue by achieving a double-digit objective. I stupidly forgot to ask how achievable was this objective, but the agency pointed out that it was the same one it had been set for the past three years – and it had never achieved it.

So here is the next point: if you want the agency to align itself to deliver your objective, make it one that the agency has a realistic chance of achieving. Of course, you can also have a stretch objective, but if the bonus is realistically unachievable based on history and circumstances, then it is really not an incentive.

The one way around this is marking the result and payment as continuous rather than as a discreet all-or-nothing. That is, if you achieve half the result, then half of the bonus is paid, and so on.

**3. The calculation is way too complex (or too expensive)**

Reviewing the agency remuneration of another client recently, I noticed the contract had a PBR clause and asked if this had been paid. It turned out that in the three years of the contract, no-one had been able to calculate the PBR, for two reasons.

Firstly, it had more than 12 different KPI measures and the person who had designed it had left the company. Secondly, it had been realised that the cost of commissioning the research to provide the data that was required to calculate the PBR would cost more than double the value of the PBR payment.

This is not rocket science. The KISS principle (keep it simple, stupid) applies here. Look for the measures that are already in place, then choose no more than three relevant criteria that will align the agency rewards to the organisational or corporate objectives.

**4. The metrics are irrelevant to the business**

This is a classic mistake. Quite a number of PBR models are based on KPIs that are highly relevant to the marketing team and the agency, but are totally irrelevant to the business.

This one really hit home during the GFC. In a time of economic contraction, when budgets and profits were in decline, many agencies were meeting the KPIs on relationship performance and brand metrics, while the companies themselves were facing falling sales, shrinking margins and smaller profits. Imagine how happy the CFO was when signing the 'bonus' cheque for the agency, boosting the agency's profits when the company's bottom line was failing. Often, marketers would want to suspend the PBR for the previous year rather than rub salt into the financial wounds.

At least some component of the bonus should relate to the value generated. In a time when a company is facing negative performance, it is a hard business decision to justify payment of a supplier bonus, no matter how well that supplier 'performed'.

**5. Contribution and value creation are linked to payment**

Finally, both advertisers and agencies try to link the bonus payment to their contribution. Often, agencies will shy away from sales and profit measures because they quite rightly say they do not control or influence all the steps and channels of the sales process, such as retail, call centres and sales teams. Likewise, clients with a major growth brand want to limit the agency bonus to what they see as the agency's contribution.

In one case, an agency proposed doing all the communications work at cost, and for their profit to be linked to the profit of the new product launch. The idea was knocked on the head by procurement, which said the agency could potentially earn more than 50% profit on its revenue, but overlooked was the fact that the company would make many times that in real terms, with the agency's share less than 0.5%.

**Allowing PBR to work**

If you want to get alignment and partnership, then you need to embrace risk but also not limit opportunity. PBR can work very well in aligning the marketing team and the agencies to the overall corporate objectives. It is just a pity that too many people try to protect their patch to actually let it work well.

# POST 30

## The best producer model for TV advertising production

**Posted 5 July 2013 by Clive Duncan**

There are usually several producers involved in the TVC production process[1]. They can include the production house producer, the agency producer, and sometimes a visual effects producer and a music and audio producer, among others. Each producer has a very particular role and a very particular focus.

The production house producer is focused on the needs of the director and on maximising the production house's financial outcome. The agency producer is focused on the needs of the creative director and the creative team, and on maximising the agency's financial outcome. The other producers (audio, music, effects and so on) are focused on the needs of the director and on maximising their own financial outcomes.

Traditionally, the agency producer is seen to lead the production, as it is assumed that they have both the client's and the agency's interests at heart. (In fact, the whole TVC production process is riddled with assumptions.) But not all agency producers are equal. Some are actually more equal than others.

Let's look at which type of producer has the client's best interests at heart, and which is the best fit for you.

**How are producers paid?**

Usually, the producer is an employee of the agency. They receive a salary and this salary is recouped by the agency charging their time to

1 See the post titled 'Marketers should set production budgets or pay the consequences' on page 130 of this book.

clients as required. Sometimes, however, the producer is retained by the client and not charged to individual projects.

In the majority of cases, the agency producer is charged as a fee based on hours. There are several ways this can be implemented, including:

- a fixed project fee
- hourly rates
- percentage of budget.

The pressure is on the television producer internally to increase billings and margins in production. With much of the revenue for production being passed on to third parties, this puts pressure on producers to increase the fees for their services.

Of the three approaches listed here, the hourly rates and percentage of budget provide the biggest opportunity for increasing revenue for the producer. The choice of payment method for the producer should provide no incentive for manipulation. The producer's focus should be on delivering the outcome the client requires, not on how much they are either being paid or the agency is recouping. This applies equally to agency employees and contractors as well as consultants and freelancers.

**Who employs the producers?**

While most agencies will have the producer on staff as an employee, agencies are increasingly using freelancers and contractors. This allows them to:

- engage senior and more experienced resources on a needs basis, rather than maintaining them as a potential overhead
- pass on the cost of these resources directly to the client, often with overhead and margin
- match the expertise to the specific production requirements.

The issue is that the agency producer is usually responsible and reports directly to the creative director or executive creative director in most agencies. While the financial performance of the television production department is monitored by the agency's CFO, the internal customer is the creative department and not account management. This includes employees, contractors and especially freelancers. This is traditional, and is based on the fact that the agency producer is responsible for delivering the creative vision through the production process.

### Alternative production management arrangements

Beyond the traditional model of agency producer, there are some new variants on the market, including the following:

- The agency outsources to a production management company, usually owned by the agency or the agency network.
- The marketer employs a production resource internally to manage their productions.
- The marketer engages a production management company externally[2].

### Agency production management outsourced

A number of agencies have taken the step of outplacing their production department as a separate profit centre for the business. This is usually associated with the agency then being able to extend its production offering to mount its own productions using freelance directors. In most cases, this provides an advantage for the marketer, with the option of lower-cost productions, but it has been resisted by the production companies, which see a loss of market share in a situation where the agencies are now effectively competing with them. This is the point, as the producer is now focused on being a profit centre in their own right.

### Employing internal production management resources

Some of the larger consumer goods companies have introduced their own producers in-house. These producers effectively work with the agency and other producers to ensure the creative concept is delivered as cost- and time-effectively as possible. The performance measure for these in-house producers is the delivery of production on or below budget. Of course, the main issue here is that the advertiser must have enough production volume and spend to justify the cost of the resource. In some cases, resources are shared across multiple markets, and even regions, to provide this economy of scale.

### Engaging an external production management company

Other advertisers have engaged external third-party production management companies to provide these services, including TrinityP3[3]. The involvement of these companies extends from simply overseeing the costs to fully managing the production, including attending shoots and edits. The biggest mistake here is that, often, the cost of the production manager is justified against savings, and in some cases the company is

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2 trinityp3.com/2013/06/unbundling-advertising-production

3 trinityp3.com/delivery-implementation/production-transition-management

paid based on the savings delivered. This creates tension and conflict with the agency and the production companies. Rather than savings, it is better to have the production manager aim for delivering productions to pre-agreed or benchmarked production budgets.

**Which model is right for you?**

In deciding on the right model, a marketer should consider:

- the efficacy of the current model in time and cost
- the complexity of the agency and production roster
- the transparency in the current model with the agency and third parties
- the volume and complexity of production requirements
- the size of the production spends across the various supplier categories
- the impact on production processes of digital and content strategies.

Like much of marketing, the complexity involved and the increasing number of technology-driven solutions means that there is no longer one solution for all. But production continues to be a significant spend for marketers. And digital media and content strategies mean that, correctly configured, this production spend can easily become an investment.

This is an increasing area of focus for marketers, procurement and us. Getting it right has huge benefits, but getting it wrong can be disastrous.

# POST 31

## The trouble with TVC production contracts

**Posted 13 September 2013 by Clive Duncan**

Management of the process of TVC production can cause major headaches and financial problems for advertisers. Previously, I have talked about the best remuneration models for producers[1] in order to help you identify the pitfalls and benefits of the various models. This time I'd like to look at the two most common contracts used for TVC production and the risks that are involved in using either of these.

### The SPAA contract

The SPAA (Screen Producers Association of Australia)[2] contract is often thought to be the mandatory contract when engaging a production house to produce a TV commercial. This is not the case. There is no 'mandatory' contract involving the production company, the client or the agency. The SPAA contract, due to inaction by both agencies and advertisers, has by default filled this void, but it is not mandatory to use it.

The SPAA contract was drafted by TVC producers years ago, and as one would expect, it is heavily weighted to the advantage of the producer. Since the 1980s, when money sloshed around on the deck of the good ship *Advertising*, many things have changed – unfortunately, the SPAA contract is not one of them.

Usually, the agency signs the SPAA contract on behalf of the client.

1 See the post titled 'The best producer model for TV advertising production' on page 159 of this book.

2 screenproducersaustralia.org.au

### *What's in the SPAA contract?*

Most clauses in the SPAA contract are fair and reasonable and pertain to terms of payment and compensation for the cancellation or postponement of a production. But there is one clause that I find bemusing to say the least, and that is the clause pertaining to the contract being fixed-price. It states that once the contract is signed, if the scope of the contract is diminished, then the cost will remain the same, but if the scope of the contract is increased, then of course the cost will go up.

The clause goes on to state that the fixed price is an estimate, not a quote, and the costs included are assumptions by which the agreed or estimated cost is calculated. It then goes on to say that the producer has the right to reallocate funds from one cost centre to another if the funds estimated for the initial cost centre are not required in full. Now this seems fair enough at first glance, but when you realise that every cost centre (in the contract) has been calculated according to worst-case-scenario parameters, then it is obvious the extra funds will not be required in any other cost centre as all of them have been calculated to the maximum required.

So where do these unused funds go? Into the profit margin of course. I know this because in a past life I was a production house producer.

No production house producer I know has any pangs of guilt regarding this loophole they exploit, as they believe that the signatory of the contract must see how the contract actually works. But as I have stated above, usually the agency signs the SPAA contract on behalf of the client. Most advertisers don't know what is in the contract until something goes wrong.

The clause pertaining to the reallocation of funds within the various costs centres is the one that has the most obvious impact on the actual cost of the production. However, there are several other clauses in the SPAA contract that are vague and heavily weighted in favour of the production house. I suggest that you get a copy of the SPAA contract from your agency, read it, and draw your own conclusions.

To reiterate, the fixed-price contract is not a mandatory or even industry-approved contract. Yes, it is 'favoured' by the production houses, but they are only one part of the industry.

### The CPC contract

Recently (and I mean in the last few months) another production house/agency/client contract has entered the scene, this one formulated by a group called the Commercial Producers Council (CPC)[3]. This is a subgroup of The Communications Council (TCC), an association of

3 communicationscouncil.org.au/public/content/ViewCategory.aspx?id=946

advertising professionals drawn from a wide range of disciplines, from TVC producers to PR practitioners and everyone else in-between. The CPC itself is a group of mostly Sydney-based production houses whose prime motivation is the formulation of a contract to replace the SPAA contract industry-wide, or at least for CPC members to use instead of the SPAA contract.

As those formulating this contract are TVC producers, it is easy to understand why the contract is skewed in the production house's favour, just like the SPAA contract.

### *What's in the CPC contract?*

The CPC contract has several clauses which would allow the production house to make a claim for extra funds should the TVC(s) be rolled over or exhibited outside the territories stated on the original contract – similar to the rollover and foreign use clauses in actors' or musicians' contracts. The CPC contract does not state that the production houses will actually make a claim should the TVC(s) be rolled over, but the media specifications included in the contract make it easy for them to make such a claim should they wish to do so.

I have heard many production house producers bemoan the fact that they are not included along with actors and musicians in the rollover remuneration. This, of course, brings up the intellectual property rights of an entity that commissions a work that contains creative elements, and its rights to the work over and above those of the individuals who were commissioned in the first place.

The CPC contract does have some clauses pertaining to insurance that I consider worthwhile, but there is no explanation in the contract (as there is in the SPAA contract) pertaining to the allocation of funds within the cost centres should the scope of work be diminished after the contract is signed.

### Seeking a fair contract

There are good and bad clauses for a commissioning advertiser in both the SPAA and CPC contracts. I believe that a fair contract for all parties would be a mixture of the two existing contracts, and of course the advertisers' terms and conditions. The big problem is that, usually, advertisers don't have their own sets of terms and conditions pertaining to the production of TVCs, and this is what seriously needs to be addressed.

As my colleague Darren Woolley often states when discussing contracts, the Golden Rule should apply: the person with the gold makes the rules. If your annual production budget is over $5 million, it's time you looked at formulating your own production house contract and addressed the discrepancies between what you should be paying and what you are actually paying.

How effective is your TVC production contract? Are you paying too much?

# POST 32

## When account management–client relationships are too close

**Posted 13 May 2015 by David Angell**

Over my years in agency-land, I've been fortunate enough to carve out some genuinely close relationships with my clients. Relationships where I no longer work with them but we're still in touch 10 years on, where I've been to their wedding, or met their children, or … hell, written to them on Facebook. Relationships where I spent so much time in their building I was given a desk or an office, and on a couple of occasions got head-hunted by said client to jump ship. Relationships where clients have unburdened personal issues, internal conflicts and career doubts to me, either in the office or out of it.

You get the picture, I'm sure. Based on what I've just said, it's clear that I'm a client relationship guy, and (you may well think) pretty damn proud of myself to boot.

Or am I?

**From hero to zero, to hero, to …**

The thing to point out is that carving out a niche as a big-account client lead in an agency is a double-edged sword. You get looked up to as a font of knowledge regarding a particular client, but at the same time you can be regarded as a suit, a generalist, a bag carrier.

You can be given plaudits by your boss for holding or developing the business, but at the same time you often miss out on broader agency recognition because (generally speaking) you aren't always as heavily involved in the headline-grabbing new commerce development side of the business.

Finally – and this one is the hardest to overcome – you can be held up as an example of how to develop great relationships when the client is clearly ecstatic about the work you do, but at the same time you can be privately vilified by senior leadership and your team because it's perceived that you care more about the client than you do about the agency that employs you.

**When you're too close to the centre, you can't always see out**

More than one agency individual across the last 15 years has criticised me for seeming to care more about the client than the agency – sometimes, I think, unjustly, other times with good cause. In the past, I've shrugged it off. Now, with the benefit of hindsight and the broader perspective allowed by not actually working for an agency, I'm able to re-evaluate.

While close relationships between the agency account lead and the client are always to be desired and aimed for, here are three situations where, in my view, the agency lead is 'caring too much' – with the result that, ultimately, not enough is being done either for the agency or, surprisingly enough, for the client.

***1. The agency lead is bending over backwards, to the point of no return***

I find that this happens particularly with those agency account leads with less experience. It certainly happened to me early in my career. You just want to push so hard for the client, you invest yourself personally in their issues, they ask you and your team to shoulder more and more work for them, they love you for it … but you forget that, as an agency, you're in business too.

Going too far above and beyond is fundamentally unsound. It creates an unhealthy balance of power in the relationship, where the agency feels it can never say no because of the precedents set. It can stress teams to breaking point. And – here's where the senior management vilification comes in – it can increase churn, reduce productivity and performance in the areas actually covered by the scope of work, and reduce margin. None of which is good for business.

As a client, the extra mile is great. But you should mutually set the boundaries, don't try and take on everything at once but prioritise those 'special tasks', and be aware of the fact that both agency and client are in business for a reason, and reach a sensible compromise. If you pay or recognise an agency fairly, you'll get better results over time.

### *2. The agency account lead is trying so hard to keep the relationship strong that it feels like a stance of 'client is always right' has been taken*

No, the client is not always right. In fact, the client is often wrong. We all know this.

One reason an agency is employed is to help guide and course-correct, and yes-people do not work well in this space. Also, overly defending the client or agreeing with an erroneous client can really damage the morale and trust within your own team, who will feel that you aren't accounting for their position, or that of the agency. You must try to take a balanced view, without 'We must keep this business' or 'I must not damage my relationship' getting in the way of the facts. The strongest relationships are those that have the capacity to handle big disagreements.

As a client, if your agency never disagrees with you, your relationship is, in my view, sub-par. Sometimes the agency account lead needs to be reminded or encouraged to do so. But the agency is not delivering optimally for you if you won't allow them, or if they aren't able, to challenge your views, your strategy, your approach.

### *3. The agency account lead can't go on holiday because if this happens, things fall apart*

Apart from the obvious issues regarding an individual not taking the appropriate leave, this scenario represents one of the most common challenges – that of single-point sensitivity. It is very tempting, if you're an agency account lead, to want to be the knight on the white charger – the go-to person. For the client, isn't it great to have such a dedicated person running your account for you? But for both parties it is a fundamentally unsound position to take.

Where there's single-point sensitivity, agency teams feel stifled, useless or dead-ended in their roles; no proper succession plan is in place, which also restricts career development of the agency account lead; the client, in funnelling everything through the agency account lead, becomes unclear about roles and responsibilities; and if the agency account lead departs the business, the relationship immediately becomes unstable.

Other than this, from the agency's perspective, it's just bad leadership, because it ultimately means that supporting members of the team are not given recognition or reward for toiling behind the scenes to deliver.

Not to mention the fact that the client is ultimately getting a myopic perspective rather than taking full advantage of the broader skill sets and viewpoints sitting behind the agency account lead.

If you're the client, insist on understanding your agencies' roles and responsibilities, and if necessary develop a basic contact approach (who calls who, for what). And please, when you write a note of praise to the agency CEO, ensure that you know enough about the agency operation so that the right people, beyond the agency lead, are recognised for their work.

**Taking a look outside**

So there it is. I could go on. But if you genuinely want to optimise your close relationship, then I urge you both – agency account lead and client – to read this article together and use it as a starting point to take a good look at yourselves, then to move from your collective centre and take a look outside. You might be surprised by what you find.

# POST 33

## Who in ad agencies gives clients the best value for money?

**Posted 10 September 2014 by Darren Woolley**

In benchmarking the cost of agency resources, you generally find that the rate is commensurate with the experience or seniority of the resource position. But the question of value goes beyond cost to determining the return on investment. So in considering the value, we need to balance the costs of the resources against their contribution to the return on investment.

**All roles play an essential part**

It is important to acknowledge that, for the development of advertising, all parties make a contribution to the outcomes. Media, creative and digital are all responsible for completing their part of the process to deliver the desired outcome. There is no point running media if you have no content, and likewise a great idea is worthless if no-one ever sees or hears about it.

So putting these to one side – collective responsibility and the increase in cost associated with seniority – if we look at each of the individual functions, their roles and responsibilities, and the cost, we can appreciate if any one area offers greater value than any other in the advertising process.

To assist with interpretation, we will apply a Value Index purely to provide a numeric comparison and to further the discussion on agency value. In this case, 'value' is defined by the level of investment managed by the cost of the resources managing that investment. While not perfect (few definitions are perfect), hopefully this is useful in furthering the discussion on agency value.

**Account management**

Starting with account management, this is seen as the linchpin of the process, liaising between client and agency and managing the outputs of the relationship. The more strategic the account manager, the more value and insight they can add. But at the most basic level of role and responsibility, the value they add is in quality control and the efficient running of the account.

**Value Index: 5/10**

**Strategy planning**

The strategy planner is responsible for developing the communications strategy, which is important in ensuring you have the right message to achieve the marketing and business objectives. Quality strategists are in short supply and high demand, and command significantly higher rates than their account management colleagues and even some of their creative colleagues.

**Value Index: 7/10**

**Creative**

There is a lot of focus on creative rates and fees. It is true that at the top end, a handful of talent in creative director and executive creative director roles are charged out at significantly higher rates based on industry reputation. But while much of the industry is focused on creativity, and especially awards, many successful advertisers are not relying on award-winning work to drive their business success.

**Value Index: 6/10**

**Digital**

Most agencies are increasingly integrating digital, but where they offer specialist digital resources (excluding off-shoring development to lower-cost markets) there is still often a premium over their non-digital equivalents. This is often blamed on the shortage of experienced digital talent. In the face of no obvious increased effectiveness or results, this continued premium impacts the potential value of the resources.

**Value Index: 7/10**

**Media**

Media, both digital and traditional, is still the largest investment area for most advertisers. Yet media agency staff, except at the highest levels, are inclined to be charged at a discount to their creative and digital agency equivalents.

### *Media planners*

Media planners are often overlooked in the whole scheme of the advertising process, but they have the ability to ensure that the advertising message is delivered to the right audience in the best environment against the campaign requirements. Of course, they have significant research and insights to inform and justify their strategy. But they also have the most significant financial investment as their responsibility, while they are paid comparatively less than others.

**Value Index: 9/10**

### *Media buyers*

Media buyers, on the other hand, get to spend the significant media budget using the media plan provided. In the process, a good media buyer can negotiate additional discounts and added value to increase the delivered media value for the plan. In some cases, and with enough time, a media plan could see an additional 40% or more in value delivered. That is a significant return on the media investment, and a huge return on the relatively small cost of the media buyer's salary. But just delivering more value of the wrong media is no value at all.

**Value Index: 9/10**

## Hidden value

So there you have it. The hidden value in the ad agency is in media agencies. They are paid comparatively less than their creative and digital agency colleagues, but they have the ability to deliver significant real and strategic value to the advertiser through their management of the media budget.

All parties have a role to play and value to add – but some more than others.

# POST 34

## Hey agency, before you say yes to a pitch, you should Pitcherator it

**Posted 30 March 2015 by Darren Woolley**

Back in 2010 (OMG that is five years ago) I shared a list of the top 10 questions agencies should ask before they decide to participate in a pitch[1]. They were from a significant industry authority, David Ogilvy[2] himself – you can find them in his book *Confessions of an Advertising Man*[3]. Well, it is time to update these important questions.

As today everything is digital, it appears that in 2015 agency CEOs or managing directors can now ask and answer 10 pitch-related questions online using the Pitcherator[4], which then rates whether the pitch in question is worth pitching for. Developed by dn&co[5] in London, the Pitcherator raises important commercial questions that should be considered.

**1. Have you met the client?**

Has the client committed to talking it all through with you and answering any questions? Or did they send you the brief cold and only want to see you on the day? They should want you warmed up, not just showing up.

1 trinityp3.com/2010/04/ten-important-considerations-before-an-agency-should-agree-to-pitch-for-business

2 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Ogilvy_(businessman)

3 amazon.com/Confessions-Advertising-Man-David-Ogilvy/dp/0689708009

4 pitcherator.com

5 dnco.com

**2. Have you worked with the client before?**

You have an advantage if you know what makes them tick … or ticked off. Also, you may be able to understand the bigger picture.

**3. How many companies are pitching?**

Nobody likes a tussle. And a long list often shows the client hasn't done any clear thinking. (Clearly, some pitches are definitely worth passing on[6].)

**4. Is it a paid pitch?**

A paid pitch shows an appreciation of the cost of your time and the value of your talent. It also reduces your risk. (Not sure how relevant this is[7].)

**5. Is this a profile project?**

Is this a high-profile project from a leading name? One for the trophy cabinet, not the drawer of shame? Will the project create a fundamental shift in the credibility of your business?

**6. Will the project be profitable?**

Set aside the prestige or the potential and decide if the full project will pay the bills for the duration – the consumables, the expenses, and the time of everyone who will work on it. (Profit is really more important than revenue[8].)

**7. Do you have the resources to pitch?**

Money, time, energy, expertise – do you have them? Or can you get them?

**8. Do you have the resources to fulfil the project?**

Winning a pitch and then dragging your heels or outright non-delivery can ruin your reputation, and you shouldn't risk it.

**9. Is the client team nice?**

Are they respectful, realistic and rad? If the idea of your first client meeting gets you excited, then it sounds like you'll do great work together. But if you already have that sinking feeling, then it's not likely to end well. (Try and pick the bad one up-front[9].)

**10. Will the project lead to more business?**

Some projects are sublime one-offs. But if the client has lots of potential work and you can see a bright future together, then this could be the start of a beautiful working relationship.

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6 mumbrella.com.au/tourism-nt-appoints-panel-16-agencies-following-creative-media-pitch-278610

7 trinityp3.com/2015/02/advertisers-paying-for-pitches

8 trinityp3.com/2013/02/revenue-at-expense-of-profit

9 mumbrella.asia/2014/02/8-ways-spot-bad-client

**Try it out**

In the end, the Pitcherator rates the pitch and provides you with advice on whether or not you should participate. It's definitely worth testing out next time an advertiser, its procurement team or even a pitch consultant calls to offer you the chance to pitch.

# POST 35

## What type of marketing management consulting do you need?

**Posted 23 December 2013 by Darren Woolley**

Several years ago, brand strategist Peter Steidl[1] gave me some advice on my business. He said: 'Within professional services, there are three established models, or "types", of consulting: Rocket Science Grey Hair and Process. The natural progression for you is from Process to Rocket Science, as your competitors are almost exclusively Grey Hair'.

These three types of consulting have been classified by management expert David Maister[2]:

- **Rocket Science** – This is groundbreaking thought-leadership work, solving a problem that is unique or unusual or did not exist previously. Genuine Rocket Science is rare, because a new problem can only ever be solved once before the type of work moves down the chain.
- **Grey Hair** – This involves solving problems based on long-term, proven experience. Industry and practical approaches are used to solve the problems at hand. The work needs to be carried out accurately and effectively, using skill and experience.
- **Process** – What once might have been a Rocket Science breakthrough has now become a process that can be followed in

1 petersteidl.com

2 davidmaister.com

> order to achieve a solution to a problem. It must be performed correctly to achieve the desired results, but ultimately it is complete because it has all been seen before.

Obviously, each model has its strengths and weaknesses, but I thought that in the face of the increasing complexity facing marketers[3], it would be worthwhile reviewing these approaches and explaining the TrinityP3 methodology.

**The risks of Rocket Science consulting**

The problems facing marketers are increasingly 'unique or unusual or did not exist previously'. Not just because of the increasing complexity facing marketers, but also because of recognition of the growing diversity and individuality of brands and their marketing strategy requirements.

A simple broadcast/awareness strategy is no longer core for all consumer goods communications strategies, let alone the many other categories and brands in the marketplace. There is no longer a one strategy that fits all needs. Instead, there are customised strategies, developed according to the individual circumstances and needs of the brand or business. It therefore follows that the best way of managing these strategies is also customised and will often lead to issues and problems that are unique to that brand. These problems require a scientific approach in order to diagnose them and develop solutions. It is this increasing complexity and an understanding of the Cynefin framework[4] that requires marketing management to go beyond the tried-and-tested processes of 'best practice' and innovate with 'next practice'[5] approaches.

An example of this was the major financial services client which had traditionally paid its media agency a retainer for its services. The issue was that around 30% of the media requirements were for performance media (or direct response media) for its insurance business. By restructuring its remuneration model to pay the agency a base retainer, with a performance- and value-based component, the media agency now had significant skin in the game, with the commensurate upside rewards. This also led to a more collaborative approach between the agency and the marketing team that had not previously been achieved.

**The dangers of Grey Hair consulting**

If you want to remind yourself how quickly marketing is changing,

3 trinityp3.com/2012/11/increasing-complexity-of-marketing

4 trinityp3.com/2012/05/the-strategic-opportunities-of-applying-the-cynefin-framework-to-marketing-and-advertising

5 trinityp3.com/2011/11/worlds-next-practice-in-advertising-agency-selection

consider that Google was started in 1998, Facebook in 2004, Twitter in 2006, Sina Weibo in 2007 and Instagram in 2010. Technology is driving this change, which is not just impacting media choice but marketing strategy, agency and supplier types and roster structures, compensation, performance measures – in fact, all aspects of the marketing process.

The issue for the Grey Hair consulting approach is the ability to stay up-to-date across the massive technology changes. This is possible if the consulting team continues to invest time and resources in staying across the changes[6] and implications in the industry[7]. But the problem is that those who simply rely on the lessons of the past, especially in the technology space, will quickly be found wanting. The technology changes and implications regarding the marketing process are vast, and many of the old strategies are no longer relevant.

A recent example was presented to us when we were engaged by an automotive client which has rightly, with almost 80% of people using the internet to buy cars[8], moved its marketing strategy to a digital and CRM focus. The problem for the advertiser was that the consultant it had hired had used a traditional resource-based model for the various agencies and suppliers in this space, rather than a performance-based model. Even worse, the consultant had used non-digital and out-of-date CRM benchmarks, which left the agencies significantly under-resourced.

The real cost was not due to over- or underpaying the agencies, but that potentially millions of dollars in sales had been lost because the strategy ended up being poorly and incompletely implemented.

### The limitations of Process consulting

The innovations developed by Rocket Science consulting quickly become processes that can be used with other clients. But even then, the application of these processes needs to be customised to meet the specific needs of the client. The more 'process'-driven the solution, the more likely the application of these processes will be performed by less-experienced consultants. A prime example of this is the heavy use of graduates by the major consulting companies.

The issue with marketing is that, as it is such a niche and specialist category, the consultants need an intimate and practical understanding of the marketing process. Specifically, they need hands-on experience to bring an understanding of the process and how it is applied.

6 trinityp3.com/mobile_apps_for_business

7 trinityp3.com/marketing-management-book

8 automotivedigitalmarketing.com/profiles/blogs/reputation-management-8-of-10-car-buyers-influenced-by-reviews

The simplest example of this is a procurement consultancy that approached one of our clients with the proposal that it could save 30–40% of the media spend. It even presented a number of anonymous case studies of its success. The advertiser questioned the consultancy on its approach, based on our advice. It appeared that the main strategic approach to deliver this significant media saving was for the advertiser to put its significant television media spend with two television networks, or even one, instead of strategically selecting the appropriate programming across all four networks.

The consultants clearly had a process they applied to media trading that did not consider the underlying strategy, let alone the total media investment, which in this case would have made the advertiser the largest and most dominant on the single network selected to achieve the 40% saving.

**The TrinityP3 consulting approach**

When Peter Steidl advised me on migrating my consulting business from the Process model to the Rocket Science model, I reviewed the various aspects of the business to identify the areas of opportunity. Today, the TrinityP3 business provides marketers and procurement professionals with aspects of all three approaches.

***Rocket Science***

- TrinityP3 actively works to provide thought-leadership thinking, which we share with the market through the TrinityP3 blog[9], social media[10], SlideShare[11] and YouTube[12].
- TrinityP3 has developed a number of innovative applications in response to client needs, including the unique collaboration and alignment survey system Evalu8ing[13] and the business phone application the Resource Rate Calculator[14].
- We develop customised and tailor-made solutions to our clients' strategic requirements rather than simply applying a cookie-cutter solution to agency remuneration, agency selection and relationship management[15].

***Grey Hair***

- All TrinityP3 consultants have, at a minimum, 10 years' experience

9 trinityp3.com/blog

10 twitter.com/TrinityP3

11 slideshare.net/darrenwoolley

12 youtube.com/user/dazzap3

13 evalu8ing.com

14 trinityp3.com/mobile_apps_for_business

15 trinityp3.com/services

in the marketing and advertising industry[16] in a particular subject matter speciality.

- All consultants are encouraged to keep up-to-date with the marketplace, particularly in technology and digital, by actively participating in these categories, such as through social media, digital technology and the like.
- TrinityP3 consultants contribute to industry knowledge and discussion on change and implication through the TrinityP3 blog, industry events and speaking engagements[17].

***Process***

- We have developed and automated a number of processes, including the Agency Register[18], which holds detailed, specific information on a wide variety of agencies not only across APAC, but globally.
- TrinityP3 has developed a Resource Rate Calculator and agency remuneration templates[19] that let us accurately and specifically calculate the costs of agency remuneration, and allow us to benchmark not just cost but also efficiency.
- Finally, we will be soon launching Ad Cost Checker[20], an online system that allows agencies, marketers and procurement to benchmark agency rates in real time against specific category and industry variables.

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16 trinityp3.com/people

17 trinityp3.com/speakers

18 trinityp3.com/agency-register

19 trinityp3.com/delivery-implementation/#1

20 adcostchecker.com

# POST 36

## Two ways to increase digital marketing effectiveness and efficiency

**Posted 24 September 2014 by Darren Woolley**

Over the past 10 years, we have developed a number of approaches to assist our clients in measuring and managing their digital marketing needs. Just as digital technology is driving change through the market, our processes for and approaches to this ever-increasing spend have developed to meet the needs of advertisers. In the early days, most of our digital engagements were about providing simple cost assessments, but very quickly this evolved into wanting to understand the requirements and processes for implementing the digital strategy. Plus there is an ever-increasing requirement to review and advise on the best way to integrate digital into existing structures and processes.

Today, reviewing these approaches, there are two clear directions companies can take in undertaking a process to improve their digital implementation and integration into the organisation, and in the process improve their digital efficiency and effectiveness. One commences with the assessment of a project and works up into reviewing structure, strategy and process. This is the bottom-up approach, as it means you start with the end of the process (the project) and you work up the process to the strategic requirement. The other starts with the strategic requirement and works down through the structure, process and finally projects. This is the top-down approach, as you start at the other end, at the higher strategic requirements, aligning the development and delivery of the process to the ultimate output.

There are positives and negatives for both approaches. Here we explain each approach and how we apply them to our clients' circumstances. The main point is to work out what is best for your situation.

### Bottom up

#### *1. Digital project assessments*

You are managing a digital project, say the implementation of a new e-commerce site for the company, or perhaps something smaller such as a mobile app, and you feel the costs associated with the project are excessive. You question the agency on the costs and ask it to provide a breakdown, which it does, but there is something nagging at you regarding the resources and costs. This is where we can assist with a reasonably quick review of the current project, checking the methodology, the resources and the associated costs.

We recently reviewed an annual website maintenance proposal and identified a number of areas of duplication and over-specification – in fact, we identified a reduction of almost 30% in the proposed cost.

*Hint: This is an ideal starting point for marketers who are faced with projects or processes that appear to consistently take too long, or a project that is over-budget, or where the proposed price seems high.*

#### *2. Digital health check*

Often, having identified inefficiencies in one project or a number of digital projects, we are engaged to undertake a more in-depth health check of the current process. This is sometimes a review of a particular major project, or it could be a review of a certain regular digital go-to-market process. The health check is designed to take a broader look at the current structure and processes beyond just the cost implications.

We recently reviewed a process for integrating customer data into a digital acquisition and retention strategy, to ensure the process was efficient, robust and effective. We identified a number of checks and balances in the process that could have had disastrous consequences regarding customer privacy and relationships if they had failed.

*Hint: The health check is best implemented when it is apparent that the current process, either internally or with your agencies, seems to be hard work or is a protracted process driving the cost increases identified in the assessment.*

### *3. Internal digital alignment*

Marketers are increasingly discovering that digital is not just a marketing platform, but that it in fact impacts and engages a wide range of internal stakeholders across areas as diverse as finance, information technology, sales and so on. There are times when the structure and processes within the organisation have not been designed for the 'always on' digital world, when in fact the process has been cobbled together within the existing organisational structure, leading to bottlenecks, blockages and duplication.

The internal digital alignment process is a marketing-driven, broad-based review to define internal objectives and requirements, and to assess the structure and processes needed to achieve alignment to the strategy. In the past year we have undertaken a number of these projects, including assisting an online media company to redefine its structure and process to maximise the resource utilisation within the organisation and minimise the reliance on external suppliers.

*Hint: The internal digital alignment is best undertaken if the health check identifies either duplication or confusion over roles and responsibilities among the various stakeholders.*

### *4. Digital supplier alignment*

Some marketers will contact us to help them select a new digital agency. The first challenge is defining what they mean by a digital agency and then to define the way in which the agency will integrate with and align to the internal stakeholders within the organisation.

We have written previously on the differences between a digital agency and a technology agency[1], but it may surprise you to know that many advertisers still insist on selecting an agency in this space based on a traditional 'creative pitch'. Although we try to explain the folly of this approach, often we miss out on the project because we prefer to select digital suppliers based on their capabilities, culture and alignment to the requirements of the advertiser, not their ability to simply come up with a speculative creative idea. This process is about defining requirements based on the digital strategy and the internal capabilities, and then to find the best possible fit in the form of one of more external agencies or suppliers.

Again, this is a core service we provide. Very recently we have assisted a number of consumer goods and automotive companies to select the best suppliers[2] aligned to their digital strategy needs and which complement their internal and other external resources and capabilities.

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1 trinityp3.com/2013/02/digital-agency-or-technology-partner

2 trinityp3.com/category/case-studies

*Hint: Often the internal digital alignment will identify that there are gaps in the current agency roster, or that the current digital agency roster does not have the capabilities required.*

## Top down

### *1. Internal digital alignment*

The top-down approach, as the name suggests, takes the bottom-up approach and turns it on its head. The first thing to note is that the last two steps of the bottom-up approach are interchangeable, depending on the circumstances of the organisation and the marketing function.

The first requirement is to have an internal structure and process that is aligned to the digital strategy for the company and for marketing. If this exists, great. But in our experience it is worthwhile reviewing the internal capabilities, resources, structures and processes to ensure they are aligned to the digital strategy. This means ensuring there is a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, and that the process includes all checks and balances and is also robust yet efficient, scalable and flexible.

A major consumer goods advertiser came to us wanting assistance in appointing an agency to help it select and implement an enterprise-wide CMS. We discussed the issues with this approach and instead undertook a regional enterprise review of the advertiser's requirements, then provided a report on options to be considered by marketing, IT and the other stakeholders. The selection made, we were able to go to the next step.

*Hint: If there has been a significant increase in budget in the digital category, it is worth considering undertaking a complete review to ensure the increased investment is being effectively implemented.*

### *2. Digital supplier alignment*

Due to the rapidly changing nature of digital marketing, often advertisers will find themselves with a collection of agencies that can be classified as digital service providers. Plus, increasingly, all agencies are offering digital services, and therefore you may find you have far too many digital agencies (and agencies generally).

The digital supplier alignment is about reviewing your roster of digital agencies against your requirements. By defining the capabilities you have within your organisation, you can then review the external suppliers to ensure you have the breadth and depth of digital capabilities required for your strategic needs.

In the case of the CMS for the consumer goods company, it was found that while it had a significant number of digital agencies, these agencies were more communications-focused and did not have the technology capabilities required for the implementation, customisation and management of the selected CMS. In fact, it was found that much of what the existing digital agencies were providing was actually a duplication of the brand work delivered by the brand creative agencies. Therefore, it was possible to not only assist in selecting a new technology agency for the CMS, it was also possible to reduce the number of agencies on the roster by removing the duplication of digital services represented.

*Hint: The internal digital alignment can lead to questions about the structure and capability of the existing agency roster. Aligning the roster to the new internal structures, processes and requirements is essential.*

***3. Digital health check***

As requirements of the digital strategy change and personnel change on both the agency and the advertiser side, it is often necessary to review and evolve the existing structure and process. This may be a particular process or a specific project, where the changes in requirements and capabilities mean the existing arrangement is no longer operating efficiently.

The health check helps to identify the changes required. In the case of the consumer goods company, the appointment of a new agency to manage its social monitoring impacted a number of internal stakeholders, including corporate affairs and the marketing team. Very quickly, some of these stakeholders organised alternative arrangements within the existing roster (it's amazing how everyone can manage social media), creating duplications and disputes over responsibilities that required review.

*Hint: Following the internal and external digital alignment, it is rare that you need to undertake a health check. But over time it could be that some areas of the digital go-to-market process require adjustments, and this process is ideal for that.*

***4. Digital project assessments***

Ultimately, the measure of efficiency is cost or even return on the investment, and this is where the digital project assessments become a spot measure of the efficiency of the current structure and process. Engaged either on a regular or ad-hoc basis, we can assess the process, resource and associated cost for a specific project, as well as assess the impact of the current arrangements as a diagnosis and an operational assessment.

In the case of the consumer goods company, a major brand website was under development and the brand creative agency was engaged to develop an interface and content. The implementation was to be managed by the technology agency we had appointed 18 months earlier. The project assessment identified significant duplication in the project management resources in both the brand creative agency and the technology agency. It appeared that both had included contingencies for the project, as they had become unclear about the exact requirements, roles and responsibilities of each agency in the project. We were able to re-establish these and have both aligned to the agreed structure and process, with a removal of the contingencies and a significant reduction of the project cost.

*Hint: The digital project assessment is an ideal spot check to ensure the digital alignment is delivering efficiency and effectiveness, or it can be used for particularly large, new or unusual projects.*

**Top down or bottom up?**

Both approaches are legitimate. Which is applicable depends on the circumstances of the organisation and the stage of evolution to a digitally integrated model.

Bottom up starts with a project assessment to identify any issues or opportunities and then can potentially progress upwards into the strategy across the external suppliers and the organisation.

Top down starts with the digital strategy, hopefully aligned to the business and marketing strategy, and proceeds to align internal and external structures, processes and capabilities, defining roles and responsibilities and delivering a strategically aligned outcome.

The approach you take is up to you. But the first step is perhaps talking about where you are currently with the integration of digital into your marketing strategy and the wider organisation.

# POST 37

## Four thoughts on advertiser–agency relationships – Luxottica and SapientNitro

**Posted 9 January 2015 by Darren Woolley**

The relationships between advertisers and their agencies are becoming more complicated and difficult to define. When they work well, this junction of creativity and commerce can have a significant impact on both parties. But what are the key criteria or ingredients for high-performing advertiser–agency relationships[1]? What are the challenges in managing these relationships? What is good advice in regards to managing the relationship? And what changes will these relationships need to face in the foreseeable future?

Our series 'Four thoughts on managing advertiser–agency relationships' continues here with Luxottica Australia and its agency SapientNitro.

1 trinityp3.com/2013/08/improve-agency-relationships

Chris Beer[2] (right, in photo opposite), CEO Asia Pacific, Greater China & South Africa, Luxottica Australia, and Marcos Kurowski[3] (left), Managing Director, Australia, SapientNitro, have worked together through a succession of minor and major digital platform enhancements and developments, specifically for the OPSM brand, that include the full customer journey, from online commerce to in-store experience, leading to significant revenue results for the brand.

The SapientNitro–Luxottica Australia match grew out of a global relationship between the two in the United States and Milan, and has strengthened in Australia since their first project in June 2012.

### What are the key ingredients of a great client–agency relationship?

**SapientNitro:** Without trust, you cannot have a real relationship. Easy to say, hard to do. Establishing trust requires both parties to take a leap of faith early on, giving something with no expectation of return. It needs to feel a little scary and uncomfortable. But that's just the start. Real trust is built in adversity, when things don't go to plan or as expected. The toughest times are when real relationships are forged, in the fires of adversity. How both parties react during those tough times says everything about the relationship. Even more specifically, the behaviour of the leaders sets the tone for the rest of the team.

**Luxottica Australia:** I strongly believe that the key to a great agency relationship is a mindset, not any one particular magic set of points – a mindset of partnership where each partner brings a set of skills and attributes, and where they need to be challenged and stretched. A client doesn't want to have a relationship that's comfortable. It needs to be one that stretches and challenges both parties to be better every day. I've had a saying since I took over running the business, that I want less suppliers and a few more partners, and we have been true to this for a long time now. You have to bring a mindset as well that, like any good partnership or relationship, sometimes you have good days and other times not so good days. It's about being open and transparent in feedback when it's great and not so great, so that moving forward, we can build. To this day, we have been highly committed to this mindset and it ensures we have great, positive and transparent relationships that allow both parties to do great work and serve our customers better, which is why we all exist.

2 linkedin.com/in/chriskbeer

3 linkedin.com/pub/marcos-kurowski/0/2a2/81

**What frustrates you the most in managing agency relationships?**

**SapientNitro:** If you're frustrated, you have to sit down and talk. Great relationships aren't characterised by frustration because tension points can be openly discussed and addressed. It really is that simple.

**Luxottica Australia:** As I've said about our philosophy around partnership and agency, we don't really have any great frustrations because we worked hard and built the relationship and trust from the very start. So when a tension point arises, and they do, the relationship is always bigger than a personality or an issue. Therefore, the investment up-front is the key advice to anyone, and also to appreciate it's a two-way street. Those who value the two-way partnership in a genuine way will no doubt get discretionary effort; it's simply human nature. We can transact with anyone; we only want to partner with a very select few.

**What's the one piece of advice you'd give to other marketers about managing their agency relationships better?**

**SapientNitro:** Make the first move – trust first. You'll be amazed at what you get back, from the right partner.

**Luxottica Australia:** This question has been answered above.

**How do you think agency relationships will change in the future?**

**SapientNitro:** A macro change we are seeing is that, increasingly, our role is not just to make stuff for our clients, but to help them build up their own capabilities. 'Training', organisational design, change management, internal comms – all those areas are becoming important. It might be counterintuitive for the owner of the fish shop to be out teaching his customers how to fish, but it is also hugely rewarding and a powerful sign of a client–agency relationship that matters.

**Luxottica Australia:** The future of agency relationships and future trends, I think, are becoming more and more clear. The deep understanding and trust that partnerships can bring allows the agency to be and feel part of the organisation's goals and ambitions. Both can work together to bring these to life. I personally think the big change for the agency industry is one of consolidation, as the marketing channels collide and become totally integrated into the changing ways customers want to interact with brands and products, and to personalise this experience. Organisations are continuing to look for an agency that can work with them through all the channels, so they are integrated and do not need multiple partners, which adds cost, but most importantly avoids the risk of not being fully integrated and congruent across channels.

# POST 38

## Your agency brief sucks, and this is why

**Posted 22 June 2015 by David Angell**

I have a request. Please be honest with your response. Watch Monty Python's Silly Olympics video[1] and then hands up those of you who've had this experience when briefing a group of agencies, or even a single agency, on an important campaign or project. Lots of excitement, lots of steam, lots of running in different, contradictory directions.

Thought so.

Now – and this is the last time I'll ask you to do this, I promise – watch the video of comedian Les Dawson playing the piano[2], then hands up those of you who've had this experience when the agency response is presented. Ah yes, beautifully put together, sold with sizzle, lots of keys played … but completely out of tune with what you actually need.

### Why the big analogy?

First, because I always wanted to put the late, great Les Dawson into an article about agencies (not to mention Monty Python), and today I saw my chance. Second, because I thought it might make you laugh. Third, because the analogy rings true.

These are such common occurrences, particularly when multiple agencies are involved, but sometimes even when it's just one agency. They waste time; cause frustration, confusion and demoralisation on all sides; and lead to watered-down solutions.

1 youtu.be/15Z5nsyLDbE

2 youtu.be/9nNGlaiVypU

**It's this, it's that, it's everything …**

If you haven't read the title of this article, you may expect me to go wide on the perils of multi-agency relationships, the need to manage them properly[3], the inability of agencies to work properly together[4], and other related topics. All of which is relevant – but not today.

I've already written about the go-wide stuff[5], and too much repetition is never good. Today, I want to go micro on a topic which I feel hasn't properly been covered in my canon of work (or perhaps 'my last few articles'[6] is a more appropriate term).

The brief. That's the topic. To be precise – your brief, to the agencies expected to come up with the perfect campaign strategy.

**The first thing to fix**

If I was alone on the sea of indifferent marketing, about to be stranded on the desert island of bad performance, and in order to escape I had to choose one thing and one thing only to fix, I'd choose the brief. It really is so fundamental, so obvious, and yet so often neglected.

Overhauling your briefing – the way it's written, what's included and excluded, where and how it's delivered – can work wonders. Aside from the obvious benefit of increased clarity, it can revitalise the agency teams, pushing them to think harder, and it can provide internal strategic direction to your own team and related teams in your organisation.

Perhaps best of all, a great brief can weed out the agency wheat from the chaff. It gives them a real test to provide an in-tune response, and it negates the most overused agency excuse for average work – 'Well, it was a crap brief, wasn't it?'

**The most common types of brief fails**

So I thought I'd take you on a diverting journey around the most common types of brief fails. The thing is, so much of this is done unconsciously – no-one sets out to write a bad brief, right? The trick for you is to identify which of the following you might, in your heart of hearts, identify with.

***1. The $2 shop brief***

We have to completely revamp the brand, overhaul the content, win majority share of voice in all communications, and double our sales.

3 trinityp3.com/2015/03/improving-multi-agency-output

4 trinityp3.com/marketing-performance/relationship-performance-evaluation

5 trinityp3.com/2015/05/marketing-management-consultant

6 trinityp3.com/author/davidangell

And we have $4, spread over the next 18 months, with which to do it.

If your agencies don't stand up to you on this kind of brief, then something's not right with the agencies. There simply has to be a recognition of reality versus fantasy. If not, you'll likely get a 'spread too thin' response, where lots of small executions combine to generate pretty much nothing.

***2. The everything under the sun brief***

A relative of the $2 shop brief. This time, you have the budget, so that's not necessarily a problem. But the campaign objectives are numerous and unmanageable within a single strategy.

Different objectives lead to different strategies. Too many objectives and the result is like a dinner plate at a Vegas all-you-can-eat buffet – lots of different foodstuffs, mixed together into a generic gooey mess.

Pick a core objective, and stick to it. Have secondary objectives if necessary, but clearly delineate them. And ideally, don't make that core objective 'sales'. Every campaign under the sun should ultimately sell stuff; a briefing objective has to be better defined.

***3. The one liner brief***

Often delivered via an email. 'Fix the sales.' Well, OK then. With what, exactly? Quite frankly, if you can't be bothered to inject some life and scope into a brief, then don't expect a great response from the agencies. Sure, you're paying them, and they'll work on it, but do you think they'll be able to nail a great campaign off the back of something like this?

That hoary old cliche about the agency being an extension of the marketing team applies here. They need the right level of information, just like everyone else.

***4. The republican separatist brief***

Different agencies, at different times, in different ways. I think I covered this one in another article, although at that point I didn't have such a snappy name for it. If you have a number of agencies and you brief them at different times, with different documents (yes, it does happen), then it's hard to avoid an off-key response.

Brief collectively, insist that the numbers in the room stay low, and ensure that the agency leaders have a clear understanding of what their respective remits are. If it's a big project, put milestone meetings in, with a tight leadership group only, to check progress and iron out challenges as you go.

***5. The I want your strategy but I know best brief***

'I want you to be as creative as possible with this response. We have $1 million, of which 70% needs to go into television.' This is perhaps the most common offender. What makes it particularly pernicious is that senior marketers often don't realise that this kind of directive is being given by their teams. They then complain to agency leads about mediocre solutions.

Put simply, if your campaign has to, for example, consist of pretty much nothing but TV – and there are lots of very good reasons why this might be the case – then say so. But explain why, and don't then ask the agencies to 'get creative'. It's a huge waste of everyone's time. Just ask them to deliver a TV campaign and adjust your briefing session accordingly.

I've found that a basic brief tiering system (gold, silver, bronze or similar) can help agencies to direct their efforts or tailor the appropriate response, to the benefit of all concerned.

***6. The dry as a bone brief***

The room is cold, dark, filled with yesterday's coffee cups, and the brief is read off the page in a monotone.

OK, I may be exaggerating a bit for effect. And no, I don't expect you to have strobe lights strafing the sky, dancers bursting out of cakes and a chocolate fountain at brief time. But at least put a bit of life into it! Show the agencies how excited you are about the brief. Perhaps choose a new place to issue the brief, out of the office, somewhere related to the campaign. Do what you need to do to galvanise good thought.

***7. The Bible brief***

A 48-page treatise containing every piece of information and every jargon point known to your organisation.

This is another common one, one which I believe comes from good intentions. But too much of anything, by definition, is not ideal, and this includes information. If the agencies are wading through unnecessary detail, then aside from the resultant waste of time, the salient points may be missed.

Think hard about the right level of detail and overview required. Invite the agencies to ask specific questions if they feel something is missing. Alternatively, consult with the agencies beforehand with regard to the key details they feel would be required.

***8. The boy who cried wolf brief***

For the ninth time in succession, the agencies are expected to come back with something truly different, challenging, groundbreaking. Trouble is, in the last eight responses, when it came to the groundbreaking approach, your courage failed you, and what ended up going to air was the same thing you've always done.

Put action behind your rhetoric. Of course, the agencies may not get it right, they may go too hard on the 'groundbreaking' campaign approach. But work with them to modify it, to find common ground. Don't give up and revert to the same old, same old.

There is nothing that's as guaranteed to demotivate an agency than a marketer who consistently fails to follow through on the 'We need change' mantra. Eventually, it will get to the stage where they simply don't believe the brief. If what you really want or need is the same old, same old, then brief the agencies for this and explain why. Or at least tailor your brief so that the agencies can understand how you wish to bring incremental amounts of change to marketing, rather than one big shift.

Keep it simple, and start at the beginning.

**Starting with the basics**

You might feel that I'm asking the impossible in this piece, and having an unnecessary dig at already hard-pressed marketers. Not so – that's not my aim. I'm pointing out that sometimes, just sometimes, the key to better agency performance doesn't lie in pitching, complex KPI assessments or alignment exercises. It can be so much easier to start with the basics by fixing the brief.

# POST 39

## 10 tips that are the answer to a winning pitch chemistry meeting

**Posted 21 May 2014 by Anita Zanesco**

I've fielded a lot of questions about pitch chemistry sessions[1] lately, mainly from agencies who haven't made it through to the next round. Let's face it, why would you question what you were doing if it was working? The questions have a common theme: 'Are we doing enough?', 'What aren't we doing right?', 'What can we do differently?'.

My answers, unfortunately, are also boringly similar. If I was wicked, I could suggest that winning agencies were including interpretative dance or group meditation, but while that would provide a great deal of entertainment for me as a pitch consultant, it would not, of course, be entirely truthful. While doing things in a unique way or introducing a proprietary tool for the session may make you stand out, at the end of the day I have to remind everyone that a chemistry session is about exactly what it says on the tin – chemistry!

> chemistry ('kemistri)
> n, pl -tries
> 3. the nature and effects of any complex phenomenon: the chemistry of humor.
> 4. a reaction, taken to be instinctual, between two persons.
> Edited from Collins English Dictionary - Complete and Unabridged © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003

1 trinityp3.com/2011/12/the-importance-of-chemistry-meetings-in-the-advertising-agency-selection-process

On that note, perhaps interpretative dance isn't the best way forward. Instead, here are 10 handy reminders to help give your agency the best result from a chemistry meeting.

**1. Prepare, prepare, prepare**

Do a background check and look for clues and cues to press the right buttons.

Like any first date, it pays to get some background on the people you are going to meet. This doesn't have to involve waiting outside their offices in dark sunglasses eating doughnuts, binoculars at the ready (although, just like interpretive dance, that would be quite amusing). LinkedIn, your own contacts and a pitch consultant, if the client is using one, are all ways of piecing together what this client is like, where they've come from (you'd be amazed at how many common contacts you probably both have) and what makes them tick.

Quiz the pitch consultant on what the client is looking for, why things aren't working with their existing agency (if they've got one), how the team is structured and who the decision-makers are. If you don't ask, you won't find out. What kinds of relationships do they like? Are four people at the chemistry meeting better than 10, and so on. You get the picture.

A little more effort spent preparing for the meeting can make it a whole lot more successful.

**2. Breaking the ice – dating 101**

The key to a great chemistry session is a great start. How you enter the room, introduce yourself and engage the client is critical to making you seem professional and interesting.

Although I've witnessed agencies get off to a poor start and then redeem themselves, I've seen many more that are successful due to a strong, energised start, even if the content is not as strong as others'. It's a chemistry meeting after all, so clients are looking for people they can work with – the fact they've got you in the room at all generally means they like what you do and have confidence you can deliver what they need.

Demonstrate your interest in them and their category, engage them in dialogue up-front, and inject some humour, charm or wit to make you memorable and desirable for a second date.

**3. The date – Who will they meet?**

Do you bring your mum on a first date, or your best friend, or everyone you know who can vouch for how brilliant you are? The number of agency folk and who to bring to a chemistry session is always a difficult decision.

Again, a bit of homework and common sense will help make this decision easier. Find out how many clients will be there and who they are, and where possible match skills and backgrounds with your team. Never bring more people than you need. Having people in the room with no role to play in the meeting always raises uncomfortable questions from a client: 'Why were they there?', 'Who was that person?'.

Always remember that this is a 'chemistry' session. What the client is looking for is who they will be working with on a day-to-day basis and whether they think they will get on with those people. Chemistry can be electric with two to three cleverly chosen team members, but it can be electrocuted with nine people trying to share 45 minutes of glory.

**4. Be yourself**

How many times have you heard people coming out of relationships say, 'But I thought they'd change!' People don't change. Agencies don't change. You are who you are, and if that's not right for this client then you probably shouldn't be together.

Don't fake it. Being up-front and genuine, letting them see you for who you are, will get you a lot further.

**5. First date stuff-ups – break down and cry or get up and fix it**

Everyone is nervous on a first date. Keen to impress. Keen to be liked. Nerves can create problems. Things can go wrong.

IT issues, for instance, are a horrific way to start a session. The best thing you can do is deal with them like you would any other crisis. Clients notice when an agency person stays cool and calm when their whole presentation is stuck on a computer that won't project onto a screen. They appreciate people who can get on with it, as it is evidence of how you'll deal with issues with their business when they arise.

**6. Check in throughout the date**

Polished and rehearsed, you will be on autopilot for your chemistry session. But never forget to read the room and watch for client engagement and positive responses, or more importantly, client disinterest as they doodle, check emails on their phone or look decidedly unimpressed.

Interestingly, some agency folk with extraordinary IQs have relatively little EQ (emotional intelligence quotient). My tip – bring someone on the team who has buckets of EQ and make them responsible for noting any points in the presentation where you are losing a client. They will know how to read people and the signs of disinterest and can quietly inform other agency team members to up the energy, move on, change tack and so on.

### 7. Treat all clients as equal – you never know who the real decision-makers are

While you may be sure who the head client is by title, many CEOs and CMOs will have an opinion yet leave the decision up to their team, which will have to work with the agency day-to-day. They will go with the majority unless they truly oppose the decision. So involve and engage all clients equally. They are in the room for a reason.

### 8. Getting a second date

Generally, after the first date, you don't get a second chance to engage the client, so making a positive impact in that first meeting is critical to success. However, a quick follow-up via text or email to a pitch consultant or a client who has arranged a meeting shows good manners and enthusiasm and closes the loop.

If you're using a pitch consultant – a halfway decent one – they will pass your message on or relay the fact that you've expressed your enthusiasm and gratitude. It may do nothing to aid your chances, but then it can't hurt either. And it shows your mum brought you up with good manners.

### 9. Closing the deal

Finally, if any questions have been asked at the chemistry session that weren't answered in the room, do respond to the pitch consultant, or the client if you are working direct, as soon as you can. It shows you've listened and are action-oriented.

Equally, if you have answered a question but walk away kicking yourself that you could have provided a better answer, feel free to email through those sentiments and the answer you feel best addresses the question. It shows you care. It is also a great excuse to make one more contact before decisions are made.

### 10. Reflection

Whether you get through or not, it's worth recapping at the end of a chemistry session, either with the client or the pitch consultant. What went well? What could have been done better? It's all learning for next time.

### Genuine chemistry

At the end of the day, if you don't get through a chemistry session, many times it's because the chemistry genuinely wasn't right and you weren't meant to work with the client. Or, of course, it's because another agency blew them away with an awesome interpretative dance.

# POST 40

## Challenging the payment terms for TV commercial production services

**Posted 22 June 2012 by Clive Duncan**

We recently received this query from one of our clients:

*'I have a question regarding the fact that we pay the agency 50% of TVC production costs up-front prior to production. I wanted to know whether this is possibly an area of opportunity. Have you seen other clients either not paying this up-front and only allowing the agency to invoice once the production is completed, or where the 50% is billed up-front but is then subject to the standard payment terms?'*

This is an increasingly common question. As TrinityP3 pointed out to the client, this is a standard industry practice. The reason is that the first 50% pays the film company and the talent. These have terms of seven and 14 days, respectively, and therefore the agency needs the payment up-front so as not to bankroll the client on the short-term money market.

Why do film companies and actors have such short payment terms? Firstly, actors are usually individuals who rely on these payments for their livelihood, much like a salary, and so they demand payment on reasonable terms for a salary or wage. Secondly, film companies engage a large number of subcontractors who likewise demand either payment on delivery of services or on terms of seven to 14 days, as they are also small businesses that rely on this cash flow.

On that basis, we have not seen any company challenge this. What we have seen is a film company decide on the day before the shoot to pull it, as payment had not been received, and it then passed on the cost of postponement to the client as per the contract entered into on behalf of the client by the agency.

From TrinityP3's perspective, what needs to be paid prior to commencing a production is 100% of the allocated talent fees and 50% of the production house quote, not a full 50% of the agency estimate. It should be understood that the driver for this is the SPAA agreement[1], which nearly all production houses use as their default terms and conditions. The SPAA contract does not apply to the agencies' costs. The SPAA contract states that the remaining 50% of the payment should be made on delivery of the finished master.

Many production companies are prepared to negotiate the terms of the final payment with the agency. In most cases, the production house is not paid the final 50% until the advertiser actually pays the agency, which can take up to 90 days. And if the client pays promptly, this does not always mean that the agency will follow suit. Many agencies will still hold out paying the production company for the 90 days.

One opportunity does exist here, and that would be for the advertiser to ask for a reduction of the mark-up percentage for prompt payment – perhaps 75% up-front with the remaining 25% paid on delivery of the master for a 2.5–5% reduction in mark-up, depending on the mark-up.

What is important to note is that the use of the SPAA agreement that drives this 50% payment up-front is not obligatory. But through agency and client apathy, and/or ignorance, the SPAA agreement has become the default contract.

TrinityP3 suggests that TVC production costs could be reduced with a client-based contract that is fair and reasonable, one that is not as biased towards protecting the interests of the production house as the current SPAA contract.

1 trinityp3.com/2012/01/the-unseen-supplier-contract-in-tv-production-that-exposes-marketers-to-legal-disputes

# POST 41

## How neuromarketing provides richer insights into the customer journey

**Posted 25 May 2015 by Beate Duesterwald**

The Australian Marketing Institute (AMI)[1] recently offered a breakfast seminar that caught my attention – the topic was 'Customer-Centric Marketing'. A fellow German, Katharina Kuehn[2], Director & Co-Founder of RDG Insights[3], was presenting her work on customer insights and neuromarketing, and I was curious to hear about her approach.

Katharina's work is quite fascinating, a combination of neuroscience and quantitative research that informs insights to better identify the target audience. As she says: 'Being in business without intimately understanding the customer is like performing plastic surgery without seeing the patient'.

### The early stages of customer profiling and segmentation

Now you might think that customer profiling and segmentation have developed significantly from an 'old/classic' discipline to incorporating, for example, more quantitative and qualitative data to better understand all paths to purchase. That's correct when you consider the early stages of customer (market) segmentation. Did you know that Harley Earl[4], General

1 ami.org.au/iMIS15/AMI
2 au.linkedin.com/pub/katharina-kuehn/34/90a/71
3 rdginsights.com.au
4 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harley_Earl

Motors Head of Colour and Trim (What a title!), was the first designer in the United States to design cars based on the emerging market segments of the roaring twenties?

**What influences customer profiling today?**

Today, technology developments such as cloud computing have significantly influenced customer profiling by enabling companies to capture and analyse huge amounts of customer data. Companies that leverage information and insights relevant to their business objectives can learn a lot about their audience's preferences and behaviours. These insights from quantitative data, combined with qualitative research through, for example, persona development or customer journey mapping, enable companies to gather in-depth knowledge of their target audience to improve their products and services.

However, attitudes, preferences and purchase behaviours define only a portion of the audience's profile. The majority of customer profiling and segmentation is based on the audience's 'conscious' mind, according to Katharina. The conscious mind only provides about 5% of the insights into your target audience and covers mainly brand awareness, category behaviour, attitudes and preferences, and the paths to purchase.

**Understanding the 'reasons why'**

By analysing your audience's subconscious mind – that is, to understand the 'reasons why' – you can learn much more about your audience than if you only investigate the 'how' and the 'what'.

According to the latest neuroscience research, up to 95% of our decision-making happens in the non-conscious limbic mind. The 'limbic system' can provide insights into important emotive drivers and barriers, subconscious perceptions, and how to connect with your audience emotionally.

**How can you tap into your audience's subconscious mind?**

There are a number of ways to explore deeper insights into your target audience's behaviour. RDG Insights uses a range of proprietary neuroscience research tools, including Limbic® Types Profiling and The Limbic® Load, which have been developed by Dr Hans Haeusel at the German Max Planck Research Institute[5]. The institute is highly regarded within and outside Europe, and is comparable to Australia's CSIRO[6]. The Limbic® tools are used to determine personality and emotional drivers.

5 germaninnovation.org/about-us/gcri-partner-institutions/max-planck-gesellschaft

6 csiro.au

The tools described below sound quite scientific, and in fact, they are based on multi-science research combining brain research, psycho-endocrinology, psychology and evolution biology.

***Limbic® Types Profiling***

Limbic® Types Profiling is a validated, standardised consumer personality assessment process that takes approximately two minutes to complete. It is typically integrated into quantitative research studies with large samples of customers or general consumers.

It includes:

- measurement of types-correlated value-clusters
- ratings of traits and attributes which indicate a specific Limbic® Type.

***The Limbic® Load***

The Limbic® Load is a strategic brand-positioning tool which identifies the emotional positioning of brands in consumers' minds, their target group relevance and positioning opportunities.

***Biocode®***

Another tool used by RDG Insights is a Harvard research–based methodology called Biocode®, which measures consumers' impulsive, intuitive – that is, implicit – emotional reactions towards brands and true motives based on reaction times. Measuring reaction time can provide amazing clues about the true emotions towards your brand, product or services. It can deliver insights over and above standard observational techniques, such as user-testing in labs.

**Other customer-centric techniques**

The other presenter at the AMI event, Mark Cashion[7] from Palladium[8], talked about a few established techniques, including contextual inquiry, customer journey mapping, co-creation and persona development. He also discussed ecosystem mapping, which focuses on exploring the complete environment of your customer. For example, in the context of building a house, the ecosystem would consist of the plan, the architect, the builder, suppliers, the real estate agent and so on. The benefit is a better understanding of the immediate influencers on your customer's decision-making.

**How can businesses benefit from delving deeper into their target audience's minds?**

RDG Insights has worked with a range of businesses in the retail

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7 au.linkedin.com/in/mcashion

8 thepalladiumgroup.com

industry, where comprehensive customer profiling is paramount. A prominent Australian health and supplement retailer and manufacturer is an example of a retail business that benefited from using RDG Insights' neuroscience motive and personality system. The manufacturer needed to understand how to stay relevant in a highly competitive market, and how to engage with the right consumer in its preferred channels and time. RDG Insights developed a strategy to create a clear point of difference for the business using the Limbic® and Biocode® tools. The strategy was implemented through a customer connection program across many touchpoints, including online and in-store. According to the manufacturer's CEO, the strategy has delivered double-digit growth since its implementation, and further gains are expected.

I can imagine that these neuroscience research tools add value to the customer profiling and segmentation of a range of businesses, not only those in retail. For example, service-based businesses could improve their service design by creating more-comprehensive customer profiles via a combination of neuroscience and quantitative research.

I'm a big fan of combining quantitative and qualitative data to assist in gathering deep insights into target audiences. And I'm glad I attended the AMI event and got to know Katharina personally.

# POST 42

## What Marketing 3.0 means for 2014 – follow, faster, further

**Posted 14 August 2013 by Kathy Hatzis**

As the Mad Men[1] sat around their boardroom table, drinking Scotch and onto their third version of the advertising plan for a big-screen detergent ad, print advertising in Vogue and a radio spot, elsewhere in the world a futurist plotted their path … a world where every consumer had a device – an information, video and telephone device – at their fingertips, where consumers created content while TV and newspapers curated it online, and where advertisers knew what their audiences had read, shared and bought over their lifetimes[2].

### The journey from *Mad Men* to Marketing 3.0

If Marketing 1.0 was the era of broadcast media, where behavioural psychology led and the 'big ad' prevailed, then Marketing 2.0 evolved to be about above-the-line, below-the-line and online working harmoniously on the 'integrated' idea that advertisers and agencies delivered to the consumer. Marketers measured commercial outcomes – and some agencies did the same. Then the world changed, and we embarked on Marketing 3.0.

### The great upheaval – the era of digital disruption

With the onset of smartphone usage (Google tells us it's more than 55% of Australians now), and with digital, social and content marketing

1 imdb.com/title/tt0804503

2 slideshare.net/darrenwoolley/7-marketing-effectiveness-challenges-for-the-cmo-in-the-new-economy

accounting for more than 35% of advertising dollars for some of the world's biggest brands, 'engagement' has become the new mantra. Facebook tells us there are over 11 million pages in Australia, and that under-35s typically visit the site every morning before they reach for their barista-approved coffee machine in their designer kitchen. Consumers now lead brands, and consumers know it. Enterprising advertisers and agencies are working out how to deal with the consumer-led economy and what works under Marketing 3.0[3].

## What Marketing 3.0 means for 2014

### *1. Follow the customer*

The latest Deloitte ASX200 board effectiveness research tells us that boards see continued growth through digital transformation as a key risk issue, and in the AMI's *Marketing's Role in the Boardroom*[4] guide, corporate strategy realisation and value creation are seen as the domain of marketing, advertisers and their agency partners.

Why? The digitally savvy customer is at the forefront. Information and insight are enabling them; a social platform is empowering them. New purchase models are unfolding and businesses are reviewing their technology automation to remain relevant. But advertisers aren't keeping up.

### *2. Move faster*

In a recent CMO survey by Accenture, 65% of CMOs say that digital is threaded throughout their companies, but only 7% say they are leading-edge at it, and most say their external partners aren't helping to transform the marketing organisation either.

Marketers and traditional agencies are readjusting slowly, spurred by new specialists in digital business integration, content marketing, programmatic media, social media measurement and offshore production suppliers. Change is happening, but is the industry shifting fast enough?

### *3. Look further*

At TrinityP3, we get an insight into the major advertisers in most industries across Australia, Asia and the Americas. In this new economy, we occasionally ask ourselves, why does the *Mad Men* syndrome still prevail? Here are some examples:

- Many major marketers and their agencies do not share KPIs, but they expect to have aligned views of their successes in a relationship survey.

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3 kellogg.northwestern.edu/news_articles/2010/kotler.aspx

4 ami.org.au/imis15/librarymanager/Role of Marketing in the Boardroom SCREEN.pdf

- Many advertisers are still planning, buying and measuring the cost of media reach, not behavioural impact on more targeted audiences.
- Media agencies are still benchmarked on price alone, not media value – or payment by results.
- Marketers are still structuring their agency remuneration based on volume and complexity of activity, instead of on creative outcomes with a commercial purpose.
- Most advertisers are still creating and producing content the same way they did 10 years ago, when global supply chains and production decoupling by the world's largest brands has long been proven to be effective.
- Many marketers don't have a handle on multichannel attribution: first click, last click and multichannel measurements.
- Many marketers are still wedded to the traditional creative and media agency paradigm, when business strategy, customer journey and execution may be best structured through a hybrid client–agency structure. Or through the 3S framework – specialist, strategic and simple needs.
- Very few remuneration, training and relationship management systems inspire creative thinking and drive innovation for commercial value.

**Managing for exhilaration, not exhaustion or extinction**

We've read it all. Much has changed in marketing, advertising, media and communications, with much more yet to come:

- Customers are disrupting value chains.
- Digital disruption is across channels, media, creative, content and production techniques.

We know from Moore's law[5] that technological and social change will continue, and the pace could even accelerate. Managing for exhilaration, not exhaustion, will be even more critical in marketing, media and communications. And taking the lead – to avoid extinction – is key. Agencies and clients globally are reviewing their mix of external and internal competencies and their marketing, advertising and communications models more regularly than ever before.

5 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moore's_law

Marketing guru Seth Godin[6] recently called this new era the 'connection economy'[7] – connections with each other as consumers, to (authentic) brands, to global trends. As we embark on 2014 business and marketing planning, it is timely to ask what connection points you will improve between the consumer, business goals and your agencies.

6 sethgodin.typepad.com

7 vimeo.com/68470240

# POST 43

## A communications minefield – five things marketers hate hearing from their agencies

**Posted 17 April 2015 by David Angell**

We're all in the communications industry, right? Communication of some form, at least – creating it, planning it, buying it, commenting on it or monitoring it. So how come we're often so bad at communicating with each other, across the agency–client garden fence?

Too often, agency staffers do not pay enough respect to the intuition of the client, or, even worse, they phrase an innocent comment in a way that is highly likely to be misinterpreted. They haven't read their clients properly, are not enough in tune with the people they're dealing with, and have not adapted their communication style accordingly. And when this happens, and it backfires, the reaction is frequently similar to that of one of my favourite and most cherished comedy characters – Father Ted's innocent, naive and dumb sidekick, Father Dougal McGuire: 'What's the problem there, Ted?'

A lot of the time, agencies simply don't know when, or why, they've caused offence. Account leads are usually not strong enough to withstand internal pressure to communicate in a certain way (I know, I've been there), which wins the battle with their own common sense. And if the client doesn't speak up about it, the agency will forever be the Father Dougal of the relationship.

Here are five agency sayings that marketers hate hearing, and why.

**Saying 1**

**What the agency says:** 'You know, as an agency, we consider the entire communications ecosystem – we're completely agnostic'.

**What the client hears:** 'I'm going to try and distract you from the fact that our payment structure clearly favours some channels over others by saying something modern and clever like "ecosystem"'.

**What's the problem there, Ted?** Media agency remuneration, unless there is no channel-specific financial incentive whatsoever, is always going to be perceived as ultimately biased. It's either front-end bias, such as an incentive scheme based on TV CPM performance, or relatively higher commission rates for digital media (and even within the digital scope, for search versus display versus performance), or back-end bias, such as spot monitoring, ad-serving or other associated revenue streams.

Until the media agency cost model is overhauled, the vast majority of clients simply can't be fully comfortable with the 'agnostic approach' at agency level – even if the individual in question is wholly sincere.

**Saying 2**

**What the agency says:** 'Our job is to have an intimate knowledge of your business'.

**What the client hears:** 'We're arrogant enough to think we can obtain an intimate knowledge of your business, and that we're important enough to have it'.

**What's the problem there, Ted?** Really, which third-party partners have access to truly intimate details about another business? Which agency gives intimate details of its own business to clients?

There's no need for a media agency to have 'intimate knowledge' of a client's business. They need to be well versed in the challenges, the category, the competition, the consumers and the clients they're dealing with as a team, as part of a broader organisation, and as individuals. None of this constitutes 'intimate knowledge', and to suggest otherwise is preposterous.

**Saying 3**

**What the agency says:** 'Our strategic process is unique in the market'.

**What the client hears:** 'Like every agency in the country, we claim to be unique, when in fact our collective mission statements amount to the same thing, said differently'.

**What's the problem there, Ted?** Differentiating any media agency from its competition by focusing on clever planning wheels and bold mission statements (as many do) really doesn't work that well. Clients just see right through it.

Agencies are differentiated by their people, the relationship fit of those people with each client, and their ability to actually live up to the promised delivery of results. The first two of these are largely intangible and difficult to articulate, and the third, as far as the client is concerned, can come from any internalised agency process, as long as it works.

Clients don't even care about the strategic process or how clever it is – outcomes are all that's of interest. That's why the role of procurement, and the way in which agencies are assessed, need to be carefully managed during a pitch process.

**Saying 4**

**What the agency says:** 'We have a fantastic agency network, offering a holistic platform of services across paid, owned and earned media'.

**What the client hears:** 'We can't wait to get in there and sell you lots of diversified services to boost our revenue'.

**What's the problem there, Ted?** Well, let's be fair – agencies are in business and all businesses need to grow. But if a marketer and an agency have a scoped relationship, there's a very fine line between having appropriate discussions with clients about other services, and hard-selling said client, who resents the hard sell even more, given that they're already paying a retainer.

Too often, agency account leads are under serious pressure from within to improve revenue. I'll never forget the stand-up row I had early in my career with an agency MD, in which I made the youthful assertion that as an account lead, I wasn't there to sell, I was there to service, manage and lead. 'No, you're a salesman, we're all salesmen', was the blunt, hardened reply.

This person, in some ways, was right. But not when this works to the detriment of a trust-based relationship. Get a scope of work sorted out in the contract that clearly defines the agency's remit and the way in which it is allowed to engage with you on diversified services.

**Saying 5**

**What the agency says:** 'We want to do something completely out-of-the-box with this campaign, something that will make us all famous'.

**What the client hears:** 'We want to win industry awards'.

**What's the problem there, Ted?** Clients, at least in my experience, don't give a … (well, I can't think of the word right now, but you get the drift) about awards. They see it as insular, self-serving and, as one client put it to me, 'arrogant for any agency to assume that the work they've done merits an award to the agency, when so many other people influence the work'.

Agencies should not be there to make anyone famous, other than the brands they work on, with the consumers who buy into them.

**Don't be a Dougal**

Well, there you have it. Five misinterpretations to watch out for. Five thin edges that can hurt the delicate balance of agency–client relationships.

Agencies, make sure you turn up your empathy chip to volume 10 – learn about the people you're dealing with and adjust your style accordingly.

Clients, don't be too quick to judge, but speak to your agency at a senior level if the communication style is becoming a problem – the agency will definitely want to hear about it.

It can indeed be a communications minefield. Be careful out there. And don't be a Dougal.

# POST 44

## What's the role of today's advertising agency?

**Posted 24 April 2015 by Stephan Argent**

Here's a thorny question for you: What's the role of today's advertising agency?

Depending on the set-up of your internal marketing teams, the answer can take many forms – in fact, if you're like most marketers, the answer could include some or all of the following:

- strategy planning and development
- research
- brand and campaign development
- promotions
- advertising production across multiple media
- testing and measurement
- media planning and buying.

Even Wikipedia defines the role of the ad agency in very familiar terms, as 'a service business dedicated to creating, planning and handling advertising for its clients …'

**The world has changed**

The reality is, the world has changed, and marketers have had to rethink why they hire ad agencies and the roles they want them to play in their businesses. Only then are marketers really able to define the success metrics that matter and partner with the agencies that make the most sense for their individual needs.

Darren Woolley, from our partners at Trinity P3 in Australia, encapsulates the issue as follows:

*'The role of agencies has diversified along with the diversification of the marketing options. In the* Mad Men *era, the agency was the marketer's partner. It took responsibility for developing strategy, conceiving campaign ideas, executing production and media, and managing the process for the marketer. But now the marketer has many specialist agencies.'*

And it's that diversification of marketing options and possibilities that's at the heart of the challenge facing marketers and their relationships with agencies today. Many marketers still define the role of their ad agencies in traditional terms, without thinking about how they'll collaborate with the other – specialised – agencies they've hired to address new opportunities like social media.

**Defining the role of the agency more clearly**

In many cases, the role of an agency evolves organically rather than being planned and managed, which can lead to stress and frustration on both sides. So if that's got you thinking, here are 10 questions to consider to help define the role of your agencies more clearly:

1. Does the agency have a clear understanding of your objectives?
2. Do your internal teams have a clear understanding of the agency's mandate?
3. Has the role of the agency evolved since being hired as a result of new marketing channels?
4. Have your marketing requirements changed or evolved significantly since you hired the agency?
5. If you have multiple agencies[1], are boundaries and responsibilities clearly defined?
6. Are your agencies collaborating or are they working in silos?
7. Are you frustrated that your agency isn't addressing certain aspects of your business requirements?
8. Are there challenges or unwelcome surprises around time spent and costs incurred?
9. Are any of your incumbent agency contracts operating on the same contract that was negotiated more than five years ago?

1 argedia.com/marketers-guide-choosing-full-service-standalone-digital-agencies

10. Have your agency or internal marketing teams changed significantly in the last few years?

Darren also makes the point that all of this is something marketers should contemplate throughout the life of the relationship:

*'Today, it is the marketer's responsibility to define the role of the agency, not only at the time of establishing the relationship, but on a regular basis as the needs of the marketer change.'*

Clearly defining the role of your ad agency at the outset of the relationship, and at regular intervals during its term, can save you and your team time, money, and yes, angst. Many of the issues you've faced with your incumbent agency in recent years could likely be solved if you and your teams (and your agencies) had a clear, up-to-date definition of what the agency role really was.

**The benefits of a clear definition**

The benefits include:

- alignment of objectives
- clear definition of success metrics
- defined roles and expectations of both marketer and agency
- defined roles among multiple agencies
- improved collaboration between agencies.

And yes, likely improved results too.

If you've not considered the role of your agency recently, ask your teams what they think it should be[2]. Better yet, ask your agency. The answers (and the gaps) might surprise you.

2 argedia.com/how-to-get-great-insights-on-your-incumbent-agency

# POST 45

## Three predictions for the future of digital in creative agencies

**Posted 12 June 2015 by Zoé Freeman**

Having moved from digital agencies to creative agencies, I find the phenomenon of having 'digital' in every job title rather quaint. There was no Head of Outdoor or Radio Account Manager. Yet anyone from a digital background gets this word tacked onto their title.

This ties in with the first of my three predictions for the future of digital in creative agencies.

**1. The death of the 'digital' job title**

Smarter agencies are skilling-up their 'traditional' teams and dropping these job titles. At the same time, they are realising that sometimes they need additional areas of expertise to handle the multifaceted nature of digital. Here are a few examples seen recently.

***Digital Producer > Account Manager***

Why shouldn't the account management team be managing all projects regardless of the medium?

***Digital Creative > Creative***

Good copywriters now write for all mediums, but the rise and rise of search and content marketing has necessitated additional expertise here. Any Art Director worth their salt should now know the fundamentals of good digital design and ideally be across UX/UI (user interface) as well. However, a UX/UI expert may also need to be on hand for trickier jobs.

***The Digital Strategist***

The Digital Strategist or Head of Digital continues to act as change manager, jack-of-all-trades and client-facing subject-matter expert, and is likely to be the last to go. But as a generation of digital natives enters the workforce, they too will need to adapt or perish.

***Client side***

Every brand and their dog seem to be currently recruiting a Digital Marketing Manager. But where do their jobs end and the rest of the marketing team's begin? As the Digital Strategist's client-side equivalent, they may be last to go, but as soon as they start to be promoted up the marketing chain, the need for the digital distinction will go as well.

**2. The digital agency as a credible threat**

Making websites is really complicated and involves a team of specialists to do anything beyond brochureware. Social media is a whole new world that changes every five minutes and has empowered consumers in a way that frightens the pants off many brands. Digital media means thousands of line items on a media plan instead of 10. To excel at search, an agency needs at least one person with a sound understanding of the search algorithms and how websites are made and updated.

Digital agencies who have been navigating this crazy world and made a success of it look at traditional advertising and see mediums that are less complex, not at all interactive, and a lot more predictable than the world they've been navigating for the past 20 years. So assuming *some* digital agencies have the creative confidence to pull it off, they represent a very credible threat to the traditional creative agency. After all, a TVC is not a big leap for the social media agency creating viral videos. Outdoor advertising is a banner ad that doesn't animate, and a brochure is a one-page website that doesn't need cross-browser testing.

**3. The end of the 'Yes we can make that!' attitude**

Find me a traditional agency and I'll find you a website horror story. Brochureware, promotion sites and eDM (electronic direct mail) are safe and fertile ground for traditional agencies, who can integrate the customer journey throughout the multiple mediums and deliver great results for clients. But a traditional agency taking on e-commerce or APIs or CRM integration is no different from the agency taking on the interior design of its client's offices.

There's a tentative connection, but it's so far away from the core business of the agency that it often comes undone. The agency needs to bump in whole teams of specialists who need to be retained in some way to support the site once it's live. The agency doesn't know how to best cost, plan or mitigate risk on these complex builds and integrations.

Smart agencies don't try to pass off highly technical experts as their own. They do what they do best – know the brand, the client and the customer – and outsource the rest. They help the client manage this relationship and get the best outcome for the brand.

# POST 46

## Why pitching is changing and what to do about it

**Posted 27 August 2014 by Nathan Hodges**

We've written before about the different kinds of pitches[1]. We reckoned there were nine at the last count, and there are probably more by now. But recently – especially this year – we've been noticing that there are also two kinds of pitch brief.

**The two types of pitch brief**

The first is the simple one. This is where the client team tells us the incumbent agency has had a clearly defined role on the roster, and now either performance or relationship issues have precipitated a review, or maybe there is a contractual requirement to review after a certain period.

The second kind is where the client's marketing requirements have changed or diversified since the agency's appointment, and yet the client marketing structure or process has failed to keep up. And – typically – no-one has spotted it. Or, in the case of more complex marketing operations, the agency roster model[2] has not evolved fast or far enough, even though the marketing decision-making process and communication channel choice has been transformed. And again, no-one has spotted that either.

The dangerous thing is that the first kind of pitch looks and sounds exactly like the second kind. So unless everyone stays on the lookout, clients can end up calling a pitch, hiring a new agency, and then running into exactly the same problems as before.

1 trinityp3.com/2013/07/agency-pitch-processes

2 trinityp3.com/2014/02/multiple-agency-roster-management

Heading straight into a pitch often doesn't work. There are so many better, quicker, less expensive, less disruptive answers out there. The requirement for a pitch is usually a symptom, not a cause.

**Identify your specific marketing requirements**

The remedy is so simple. The specific requirements of the marketing organisation need to be identified and defined, then matched to the skill sets and capabilities of the agencies currently on the roster. It normally takes around three weeks to do this, and it's always time well spent.

The exercise might reveal the need for a specialist addition to the roster to cover a particular discipline, rather than expecting the incumbent agencies to handle everything. Shopper marketing, for instance, is an increasingly specialist skill that can't be effectively covered anymore merely by adding an FTE to the current team. Several of our FMCG clients have discovered this the hard way in the last year or so.

The exercise might also highlight how a specific roster function is no longer sitting with the most appropriately skilled roster agency. Depending on the questions being asked by the business or the project being addressed, channel planning can best sit with a creative agency, or data interrogation with a media agency, or social media leadership with a PR agency. Get on the best horse for the given course, and suddenly things can work brilliantly again – without the need to pitch anything.

**Is your roster model effective?**

But the exercise most often uncovers the absence of a practical roster model. This can in itself be the main cause of the problems that gave rise to the decision to pitch.

Sometimes the lead agency is not treated as such by the client team (and is ignored, bypassed or duplicated when things get just slightly difficult). Sometimes there is no agreed roster model at all, and the roster agencies scrap with each other for strategic influence, client attention and share of budget. Worst of all is a combination of these two – this is when a roster can swell to 20 or 30 competing agencies (or in a recent case, over 70), leaving no single agency with any security, influence or hope of turning a profit. Fix this, and you'll have an account worth working on, and probably some very committed agencies helping you build your business.

**Questioning the pitch**

It sometimes feels to us like the Australian market is full of advertisers asking the right questions of the wrong agencies, or the wrong questions of the right agencies. The result of all that fruitless Q&A seems so often to be the pitch. But the one question that usually stops all that stuff is this: 'So, tell me, why do you want to pitch this business?'

Did you ever lurch into a pitch only to find yourself back where you started?

# POST 47

## How Calibr8or calibrates the strengths and capabilities of media agencies

**Posted 27 February 2015 by Darren Woolley**

The article this week about the anonymous disquiet in some sectors of the media industry[1] about the launch of the Calibr8or system[2] is amusing to say the least, because it is exactly this sector that the system has primarily been developed to help. So I want to take you beyond the sensationalist 800-odd words that make a Mumbrella story (Perhaps they believe their readers are incapable of sustaining concentration on a story longer than five or six paragraphs?) and explain what Calibr8or is and what it is designed to do.

First, to directly address some of the fallacies put to us by Mumbrella regarding Calibr8or:

- You have to pay for inclusion – FALSE. There will be at least 30 agencies assessed initially. Any media agency not included that wishes to be included can register for future inclusion.
- When using the Calibr8or system in the early stages of the pitch process, only those agencies that subscribe to Calibr8or will be put forward by TrinityP3 – FALSE. Every agency will be assessed based on its Calibr8or profile and suitability regarding the needs of the prospective client.

1 mumbrella.com.au/trinityp3-rejects-conflict-interest-claims-new-calibr8or-service-278222
2 calibr8or.com

- Agencies that subscribe to Calibr8or will be scored more favourably – FALSE. However, agencies that subscribe to Calibr8or will be significantly better informed on how they compare with their competitors, and as a function of this will be in a stronger position to improve the quality of their offering across time.

### It's an idea right out of the industry itself

When Stephen Wright[3] returned to TrinityP3 after spending two-and-a-half years as New Business Director at Starcom MediaVest, he was full of stories about the frustrations of being on the other side of the pitch fence. He had participated in consultant-managed pitches, client-managed pitches and procurement-managed pitches. Some the agency was successful in and some not. But there were some essential themes that emerged and some trends that were already developing.

Stephen said one of the biggest challenges for a media agency was to be able to differentiate itself from competitors as part of the pitch process. With every agency professing competitive advantage (in word at least), it was very hard for clients to determine meaningful differentiation and the selection process often defaulted to trading and 'a race to zero on price'[4].

After all, if every agency has the tools, the people, the systems, the trading position, the expertise and the skills, then all you are left with is how cheap you can buy and how little you will charge. It becomes the ultimate commoditisation of the category. Even if you do have a competitive advantage in perhaps your trading desk or your optimisation systems, how easy is it for a competitor to completely negate it by saying all those tools are pretty much the same?

### The difference between media agencies and the other agencies in a pitch

We manage all types of pitches: creative, digital, mobile, event, promotional, experiential, social, PR and, of course, media. The difference between media and the rest is that there is usually an output of the work all of these other agencies do for other clients. The work a media agency does for a client is largely hidden or can only really be demonstrated through the strategic, planning and trading process, which is often dry and difficult to follow. However, other agencies have tangible pictures and videos to show and tell that are interesting, entertaining, and elicit an emotional response, positive or potentially negative, from a potential client. (Perhaps

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3 linkedin.com/profile/view?id=287394537

4 trinityp3.com/2013/09/agency-remuneration-e-auctions

this is why creative agencies appear to win so many media awards[5].)

This is why in media, many advertisers and procurement default to having the agency prepare plans for mythical briefs (or real ones) and require it to cost these, with the agency knowing it will be compared and assessed by the CPM and total cost, and not the quality of the thinking underpinning the strategy. Ultimately it is cost that will end up determining the winner, as so much of the quality the media agency offers is difficult to demonstrate in a tangible way or is easily dismissed through lack of clear differentiation.

### The increasing complexity of the media landscape

This is all made more difficult by the impact technology and digital media are having on media agencies and the media themselves. The increasing use of programmatic buying, especially for digital, and the use of trading desks and demand side platforms means that the media planning and buying process has become more technical, more complex and more opaque for the advertiser looking to select a new agency. How does an advertiser compare one trading desk with another without a master's degree in computer science from MIT? And when agencies are asked about their capabilities in this area, all of them maintain they have best-practice capabilities.

The same applies to the growing area of data and analytics. How many agencies will today talk about their capabilities to provide and manage a DMP (data management platform) and supply the analysis, insights and even the appropriate dashboard to make results available in a real-time, user-friendly manner? It has become a full-time job just keeping up with the technology, let alone how it is being applied on an agency-by-agency or holding-company-by-holding-company basis.

### The role of the pitch consultant

To keep up with what is happening in the marketplace across all agencies, TrinityP3 has provided an Agency Register[6] for all agencies to provide their basic details such as key staff, range of capabilities, clients, size, billings, even examples of their work. This is online, on our website, and completely free and secure, so that individual agencies can update this information themselves. We use this information as a starting point to select agencies.

We have also made it a habit to meet with agencies on request and through the pitch process (some of our competitors refuse to meet with

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5 adnews.com.au/adnews/leigh-terry-media-agencies-need-to-get-style-to-win-media-awards

6 trinityp3.com/agency-register

agencies, which seems short-sighted to me). I personally spend half a day most weeks meeting with agencies for no other reason than to keep a finger on the pulse of what is happening. This is what our clients engage us for – to provide industry insights into what is happening in the marketplace.

But how can we get an even deeper understanding of the true capabilities of the media agencies beyond their performance in a pitch and what they say they can do? Some agencies are just not particularly good at pitching but are brilliant at media planning, buying and management. So how can we deepen this knowledge in a category that is increasingly technical, complex and oblique?

**Media agencies also want to know where they stand**

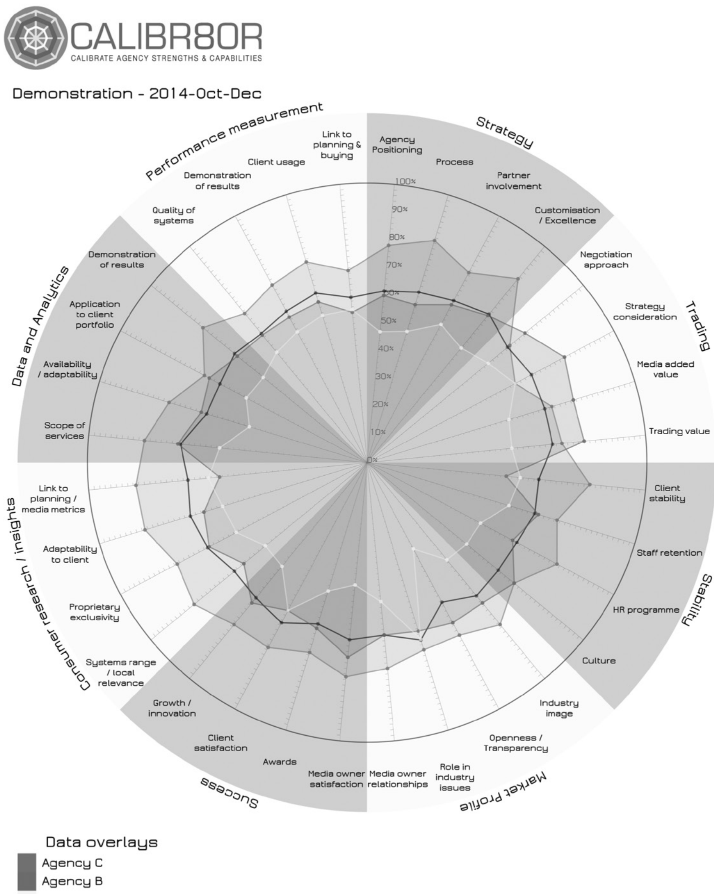
The other problem we discovered is that, while media agency people all talk with each other, they are naturally not completely disclosing their competitive differences for fear of being eclipsed. This is often compounded by the mixed or misleading messages provided as feedback by many advertisers and especially procurement professionals when giving a debrief (if one is given at all) to the unsuccessful agency.

We have fielded many questions from various media agency CEOs on how we think they stack up across a whole range of skill sets and capabilities compared with their competitors over the years. Why? Because we find that often they are told by a client that the successful agency was better at strategy, or trading, or customer analytics or the like than they were. This is difficult for us to comment on because if we are not managing the pitch, we do not know how the agency performed or presented.

But my experience tells me that, often, the advertiser and procurement will provide this 'tangible' critique to an agency to cover up the fact that the successful agency was likely a better cultural fit (that is, they liked them) or more aligned (that is, they worked with them previously) or a more cost-effective option (that is, they were willing to drop their prices further or made huge, undeliverable promises on media rates).

**Calibr8or is a way of solving these issues for advertisers, consultants and media agencies**

When Stephen Wright outlined the concept of Calibr8or and we started working on the idea, we initially thought about it as a TrinityP3 service. But it became clear that to do it justice, we needed to engage media agencies beyond the current level of interaction, so that they would be open to providing us with a critical look under the hood of each agency at the engine that drives their services. It was clear that this needed to be a separate business with a more independent structure, and accountable to itself, its clients and the industry.




Here is how it works. While IBISWorld suggests that 3429 businesses in Australia are classed as media-buying agencies, or ones that have a media-buying capability[7], Calibr8or focuses on the top 30 media-buying agencies that make up more than 80% of the media trades covered by the SMI (Standard Media Index) data pool. Even covering less than 1% of the

7 ibisworld.com.au/industry/default.aspx?indid=2338

potential media-buying pool as defined by IBISWorld, we are deeper into the market than all of our competitors.

And the Calibr8or assessment goes deeper too. Each of these agencies – and more will be added over time based on market requests and advertiser requirements – are assessed against eight categories of capability:

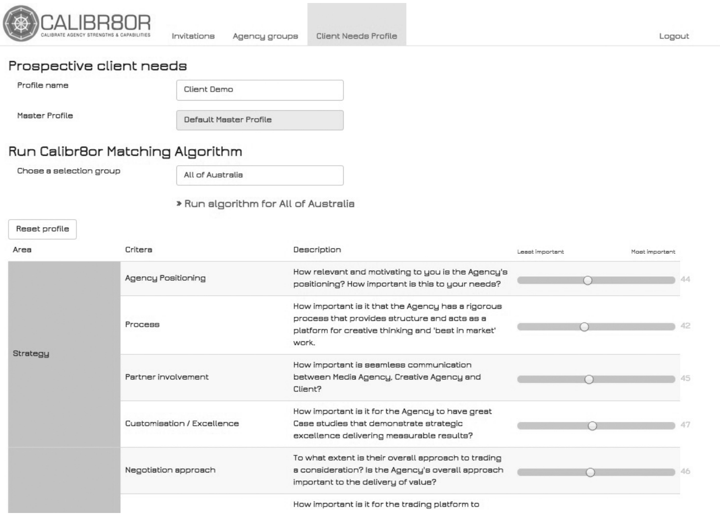
- trading
- strategy
- stability
- market profile
- success
- consumer research/insights
- data and analytics
- performance measurement.

But it does not stop there. In each category there are four scoring criteria. Agencies are scored for each one based on what they do, how well they do it and how tangibly this can be demonstrated. Detailed scoring metrics are clearly defined and methodically applied.

The system doesn't pander to superficial market image, vacuous agency promises or over-claim (one of the hallmarks of many of the media agency award processes). True capability prevails. And it doesn't just reflect the quality of the agency offering the different specialist skills and areas of expertise which will be reflected in the profiles. All of the agencies will be represented in Calibr8or – in fact, the top 30 are already. And at no cost to the agencies involved, all are therefore open and available for agency selection by TrinityP3 (we use the Calibr8or system along with our Agency Register), or in fact any consultant, advertiser or procurement specialist who wants to access the Calibr8or system to prepare a short list of best-fit media agencies.

**What's in it for advertisers and procurement?**

Any advertiser or its procurement team can, for a fee, access the Calibr8or database through the agency capability matching process. In this, the system provides the user with the range of capabilities and skills in a dashboard where the user inputs the weighting of the importance or desirability of each. It is a balanced system that means that, as some skills and capabilities increase in importance, others decrease proportionally to ensure not everything becomes important. This means that the marketers need to provide an indication of what they are looking for from an agency.




When the requirements are finalised, the system then matches the advertiser's requirements with the profiles of the various agencies and provides a ranked list of agencies – the best fit at the top, descending to the least-compatible. The advertiser can then look at individual agency profiles and even revise the weighting on the capabilities and skills to see how this impacts the recommendations.

In this way, the advertiser is able to obtain a best-fit selection of short-listed agencies to review, rather than going through the longer and more protracted long list. It also means that, rather then selecting from what are often outdated or misinformed perceptions, the advertiser makes a selection based on its specific requirements.

**What's in it for media agencies?**

The benefit for media agencies in engaging Calibr8or on a consulting basis is that they will have an agnostic, balanced analysis of what they do well relative to their competitors and where they are falling short. It provides the agency CEO with invaluable advice on how to take their business forward.

But more than this, the system allows the agency to actually collect and input staff perceptions, and more importantly, some or all of the clients' perceptions of the agency's strengths and capabilities. In this way, the media agency's management can obtain feedback from their market, be it their clients, staff, consultants or media sales staff. It allows them to track and manage the perceptions of their media agency brand in the marketplace, perceptions that often lag behind reality and ultimately differentiate them from competitors. Calibr8or provides them with a tool to see how their brand is perceived against the market average. It also allows holding companies to review how their various media agency brands compare with each other and with the market average. The system does not, however, allow agencies to compare themselves directly with a competitive brand.

Imagine you are a media agency that has invested heavily in staff and technology around customer analytics. From an internal perspective, this is a growing strength and a possible competitive differentiator. But what if the way you have been communicating this skill set is missing the target or ineffectively communicating the unique discriminators? With so much technology-driven change happening in media, and agencies and their holding companies investing millions of dollars in building the platforms and applications required, the value will only be realised when this investment leads to increased business, either from organic growth from existing clients or winning new clients through a successful pitch process.

**What's in it for consultants?**

TrinityP3 already has an extensive database of agency information that we have used for more than a decade in selecting agencies. This database is regularly updated by TrinityP3 consultants with insights gained from observing agencies participating in pitches, through agency visits, and from industry announcements. But we are aware of the increasing complexity of the media category. TrinityP3 will use its free Agency Register, but for those advertisers that want to get a deeper insight into agency capabilities, there is the option to use the Calibr8or system. Likewise, other consultants can get access under licence to the Calibr8or system.

This is one of the things we have always done, which is to make the systems we develop available to all of our competitors (for a fee). Consultants already use the Evalu8ing relationship and collaboration system[8] across the globe (including Navigare[9] in Australia), and soon we will be offering our global Agency Register system[10] to other pitch consultants. Meanwhile,

8 evalu8ing.com

9 navigare.com.au

10 trinityp3.com/agency-register

our Ad Cost Checker rate-benchmarking system[11] is online and available to all.

Calibr8or is not our only source of information to inform the selection process, but it is a deeper source of information, updated on a very regular basis with deep hands-on dives into the media agencies' capabilities and strengths, and with a business model to make the service sustainable. After all, agencies are already paying for services like this, such as their subscriptions to RECMA[12] and SMI Media Data[13], not to mention the many and varied proprietary research tools they are required to invest in, costing millions of dollars per annum just to get started.

**What are the implications?**

Contrary to some of the misinformed commentary on Mumbrella (but what can we expect from the anonymous raving of their readership[14]):

- It is not mandatory for agencies to pay to participate. All of the major agencies and many of the smaller options are already included in the Calib8or system, and more will be added over time.
- Those agencies that have already chosen to subscribe to access the data in the system, using it to manage and track the perceptions of their capabilities and strengths, do so because they see the value in this service.
- Agencies that do not subscribe to Calibr8or will of course be considered, as it is important that TrinityP3 offers a full range of options in our considerations. Our global Agency Register is free and we continue to recommend all agencies (media and others) avail themselves of this service.
- We are not replacing our search capabilities with Calibr8or. We are simply enhancing the depth and currency of the information on media agencies by accessing Calibr8or as an additional service should our clients require it.
- Advertisers, procurement and other consultants are able to access Calibr8or directly if they wish to select a short list of media agencies against their detailed specific needs and not simply based on somebody's gut instinct.

Ultimately, the success of this innovation will be decided, as with all innovations, on the perception of the value it offers those using it.

11 adcostchecker.com

12 recma.com

13 standardmediaindex.com

14 mumbrella.com.au/about/community-guidelines

I hope that those who read the Mumbrella article, which was apparently triggered by industry disquiet and misinformation, do not see it as the end of the topic but the beginning, as we invite media agencies, advertisers, procurement, consultants and media salespeople to contact Calibr8or to check out the system for yourselves.

# POST 48

## Pitch for the stars – five things to look out for in a great media agency

**Posted 25 February 2015 by David Angell**

Media agencies. They aren't half polarising. At one end of the opinion spectrum: skilled, trusted and increasingly strategic practitioners, using sophisticated tools and technology to deliver millions of dollars of their clients' money, as well as expanding into increasingly diversified areas of service. At the other end: shonky generalists, traders at heart who pass off other people's ideas as their own (refer to various aggrieved network salespeople for details) and who ultimately cream far more off the back than they take from the front (so to speak).

**Are things really changing?**

There's no doubt that the media agencies of today are almost unrecognisable from as little as five years ago. In fact, at UM[1], Mat Baxter[2] doesn't even want his media agency to be called a media agency anymore, and having read his commentary, I can understand why.

So what's real, and what's rhetoric? Well, I don't think many would disagree that change is a constant. I would also argue, based on 15 years of media agency experience, that the degree of complexity faced by media agencies as businesses is huge, not least because they need to pick a path between the now, the next and the ideal.

1 umww.com

2 au.linkedin.com/in/matbaxter

**Fitting all moulds, and then some**

Trying to drive forward-thinking media strategy is hard when the fact is that, right now, the bread and butter of any media agency is the trading of paid media – the majority of which, in dollar terms, sits in television. A great deal of elasticity in skill set, mindset, envisioning, motivation and resource is required to pull everything off at once, and I would argue that most of the bigger media agencies are creaking a bit under the pressure.

**Pitch for the stars**

So what does all this mean for the poor advertising or marketing client, trying to make the right choice of media agency partner[3]? It means they have to go beyond traditional ways of assessing the worth of a media agency.

You all, I'm sure, know the fundamentals of what you need to assess – buying performance, a good strategic process, the right FTE, enthusiastic people, market knowledge and competitive pricing are some of them. But these things should really be the must-haves – no agency should even be in the room without them. There is so much more to look for.

Call it a media agency or not, there are some big buttons to press in differentiating a great agency from a good one. Here are five of them.

***1. The right balance between future-proofed thought-leadership and traditional trading ability***

It's really delicate – when considering your actual needs, too much imbalance in either direction can ultimately cause real heartache on both sides. Try and assess the fit of the agency ethos as a whole with your organisational needs now and in the future, and brief accordingly. If the agency gets you, it'll demonstrate a great understanding of both.

***2. Flexibility around remuneration models***

If agencies are really trying to adapt in terms of service, they need to adapt their payment structures. For all but the most hidebound, commission-based remuneration is simply no longer appropriate. Look for a willingness to work with you in discussing performance-based incentive structures that will help to establish a business partner mentality.

***3. Gravitas in negotiation***

Yes, agencies should be flexible around remuneration models, but this does not mean 'Be the cheapest'. Don't perpetuate the race to the bottom. You should be buying the best fit, not the cheapest block, and the agency should recognise this. The way the agency approaches cost negotiation

3 trinityp3.com/agency-performance

with you (and also the way it structures its paid media trading approach) can tell you a lot about the state of the agency's business and its mindset.

Cheap deals do not always drive the best results; it's as simple as that. The agency should demonstrate strength in driving a mutually equitable agreement, not folding to the cheapest possible price.

***4. Agnostic transparency***

This should go hand in hand with the right remuneration structure. A healthy agency relationship should involve complete agnosticism of thought. If the correct answer to a strategic brief lies away from paid media, even away from the agency itself, then the agency should be telling you this. The agency should be geared to the best outcome for you, safe in the knowledge that it is being paid well for its efforts.

***5. Organisational acumen***

A great agency should be able to mould itself around you, rather than you around it. Sometimes this might mean adapting or deferring its own way of expressing itself to yours, or working with you to achieve the right organisational sell-in. Agency recognition that progressive marketing and the sell-in of new marketing concepts do not begin and end with the marketing director but extend to other functions (IT, legal, procurement, sales, C-Suite), is a great thing to work with.

Think about accentuating these areas when constructing agency pitch material or briefs. You never know – the perfect stars for your organisation may just shine through.

# POST 49

## The importance of trust in productive marketer–agency relationships

**Posted 17 September 2014 by Darren Woolley**

With all the reports coming out of the Cannes Lion Awards[1] earlier this year, you would not be alone in thinking it was a Hollywood film and music festival, with appearances by Kanye West, Sarah Jessica Parker, Jared Leto and Jeffery Katzenberg, instead of an advertising festival of creativity – though creativity does feed on a diversity of inputs.

Of all of the sessions I saw reported, there was one that I think was particularly insightful from a marketing management and procurement perspective, and that was 'The Naked Truth'[2] by RPA[3] and USA Today[4]. Have a look at the teaser they provided on YouTube[5] to get Cannes Festival attendees to come to the session – I think it is hugely insightful as a mirror on the industry. The survey that they commissioned, involving more than 140 marketers and agencies, provided some invaluable insights, which was summarised in a fabulous infographic[6]. But the one question not answered is why is it so?

1 canneslions.com
2 getnakedatcannes.com
3 rpa.com
4 usatoday.com
5 youtube.com/watch?v=mLC0Kyq01Hk
6 getnakedatcannes.com/Content/Press/cannes-infographic-final.pdf

### The importance of trust

The best marketer–agency relationships are based on the concept and process of co-creation. The interaction between the two represents collaboration, with each party contributing to the final outcome and the result.

The Economist Intelligence Unit has written about the importance of trust in collaborative relationships[7] and that the absence of trust is a barrier to effective collaboration. It is clear that where advertisers trust their agencies, it gives the agency permission to stretch and outperform expectations. But likewise, the agency must trust the advertiser that it will be supported in the process.

So what has caused the erosion of trust between advertisers and their agencies? In my experience, it appears to be money.

### The impact of money

Don't get me wrong. Advertising, as the world's second-oldest profession, has always been a commercial transaction, much like the oldest profession. Advertisers pay agencies to help them promote their brands and services. For the first 150 years of advertising, the agency was simply paid a percentage of the media spend (plus service fees and the like to top up the commission revenue). But since the demise of the media commission in most markets globally, the agencies are now getting paid fees, in much the same way as accountants and lawyers.

The difference with lawyers and accountants is they are providing a service, while advertising is seen by many advertisers as a deeper relationship, and not just because agencies have been invited to their Christmas parties. Advertisers and marketers often develop friendships with their agencies, unlike friendships with their accountants and lawyers. It often goes beyond a professional relationship to a more emotional connection.

When you watch *Mad Men*, there is very little discussion of agency fees beyond vague exchanges on the size of the television production budget (actually, perhaps some things have not changed). But no-one is sitting there counting the number of hours it took the creative to crack the latest ad campaign. In fact, the agency works on it again and again and again until the idea is approved.

But today, the conversation is burdened with discussions on rates, hours, rebates, kickbacks, margins and billable hours. It is no longer about the work as much as it is about how much it will cost. Now, advertisers and their procurement and finance directors are paying particular attention to advertising costs.

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7 trinityp3.com/2012/07/the-importance-of-trust-in-collaboration-between-stakeholders

**The behavioural economics of money**

Behavioural economics professor Dan Ariely[8] has shown that financial (money-based agreements) and social (relationship-based agreements) operate very differently[9]. To demonstrate this, he uses practical observations. For instance, imagine you invite a friend to come and help you move some furniture on a Saturday morning. They help you for an hour or so and you hand them $50. Suddenly, they are considering how much you think they are worth. But hand them a $50 bottle of wine and they will happily accept it. (Unless they are a non-drinker, but even then they would most likely leave happy.)

This is just one of the many ways in which Ariely, in his book *Predictably Irrational*, demonstrates how, while human beings are irrational, they are predictable in their irrationality[10]. The problem is that a social transaction has suddenly become a financial transaction, and in the process social rules are breached and the discussion becomes more about perceived value.

Imagine an agency–advertiser relationship where you can largely forget about agency fees, because the agency simply takes a cut of the media spend and a service fee and will do whatever you ask, without coming back and asking for more money. Sounds more like a social relationship than a financial one, right?

**The money of advertising holding companies**

This breach of the advertiser–agency social relationship is further impacted by the corporatisation of the agencies themselves. Holding companies are reporting quarterly profit results that get splashed across the media. Independently owned or privately owned agencies never have to report their profit results and never would for fear of raising the curiosity of their clients. After all, while advertisers say they are happy for their agencies to make a profit, no-one feels comfortable when their suppliers make a better profit than they do.

I remember a discussion with an advertiser who, after reading about the record profit growth for his agency holding company, started to look at the cars the agency personnel drove to their weekly WIP (work in progress). Suddenly, the appearance of prestige European motor vehicles in the office car park had become anathema. The relationship was already deteriorating, and this was not helpful.

8 danariely.com/the-books

9 youtube.com/watch?v=OdjlOgGVRVA

10 amazon.com/Predictably-Irrational-Revised-Expanded-Decisions/dp/0061353248

But it is more than just the holding company profits. The announcement of the Publicis Omnicom Group merger[11], and the associated media and industry frenzy, had most advertisers scratching their heads, trying to figure out what was in this for them – other than the agency holding company fat cats building their empires.

**How to bring trust back into the relationship**

Of course, trust can and does exist between individuals. But the fundamentals of the relationship have changed with the effective end of the media commission. Now the relationship is all about the money and the profits. Again, advertising is a business and the agencies have to make profits to survive. But it is also a collaborative relationship rather than just the provision of a service.

Sorting out the money and minimising discussion of it is a great way to minimise the impact money has on the relationship. Of course, I am not suggesting a return to the media commission, although I know a few agencies that would love this. Instead, this is about putting money and finance and remuneration in their place and allowing the agency and advertiser to get on with what they do best, which is the co-creation of the advertising strategy and program.

So how do you minimise the money issue? You sort it out up-front, getting it benchmarked and designed to provide a stable and sustainable relationship. You set frameworks and guidelines to assist in managing spend and expectations. And you incentivise the agency to align its success with the advertiser's.

Ultimately, this was the success of the media commission, because usually, the more successful the advertiser, the more it would spend and the more the agency would make. Today, it often feels that the agency remuneration model is designed to pay the agency less no matter how successful is the advertiser, and that does not reflect a relationship of mutual trust.

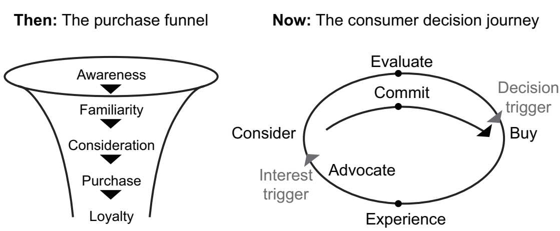
11 trinityp3.com/2013/08/publicis-omnicom-group-merger

# POST 50

## Useful tools for marketers borrowed from CX/UX disciplines

**Posted 6 March 2015 by Beate Duesterwald**

I was working on a presentation recently where I referenced McKinsey's consumer decision journey (CDJ) model[1]. If you are not familiar with it, here is a graphic that illustrates the difference between the classic marketing/sales funnel and the more iterative CDJ model.




Source: McKinsey & Co.

The CDJ model reminded me of an established method that might assist marketers in better understanding their target audience's decision-making journeys. The CX (customer experience[2]) and UX (user experience[3]) disciplines use customer journey mapping[4], among other methods, to capture user journeys and the experience a user creates

1 mckinsey.com/insights/marketing_sales/the_consumer_decision_journey
2 hbr.org/2013/09/the-truth-about-customer-experience
3 usability.gov/what-and-why/user-experience.html
4 uxmastery.com/how-to-create-a-customer-journey-map

during the journey with a business, product or service. It's an insightful and efficient method of better understanding your target audience and their engagement with your business, product or service, especially when the mapping is conducted as a group exercise (for example, with other stakeholders and/or management).

Customer engagement is more than a series of interactions, or getting people to visit a website, 'like' something on Facebook, or download a mobile app. Genuine engagement focuses on how your organisation, product, service or brand fits into your existing and prospective customers' lives.

### Customer journey maps

So, what is a customer journey map? It is a visual interpretation (think 'infographic') of the overall story from an individual's perspective of their relationship with an organisation, service, product or brand, over time and across channels. The method is ideal for mapping user journeys in preparation for a digital initiative, as it looks at multiple channels that influence the interactions and user behaviour in the digital channel.

Here are some of the benefits of creating customer journey maps to define or refine digital initiatives:

- The maps provide a holistic overview of the paths, interactions, touchpoints and experiences that a user or customer encounters with your business, product or service.
- The maps identify the emotional experiences that the user has at various touchpoints. This is a great way for all stakeholders to project themselves into the user's shoes.
- You can identify those 'moments of truth' that can be turned into a great experience for the user.

Ultimately, the customer journey maps assist you in defining what might convert a user/customer into an advocate for the business, product or service.

### Customer journeys and personas

Ideally, you will create a customer journey map for each of your key user/audience personas. Creating personas is another method commonly used by CX and UX practitioners; for example, for a digital initiative. If you don't have or use personas[5], it may be time to consider doing so. User personas are a powerful way of capturing more-qualitative insights into your target audience segments.

Wikipedia describes a persona as follows:

*'A user persona is a representation of the goals and behaviour of a hypothesised*

5 blog.bufferapp.com/marketing-personas-beginners-guide

*group of users. Personas are usually captured in 1–2 page descriptions that include behaviour patterns, goals, skills, attitudes and environment, with a few fictional personal details to make the persona a realistic character.'*

**What are the benefits of developing user personas?**

Personas assist in ensuring that your product, service and content meet your audience's needs and at the same time contribute to your business goals. Personas can be a powerful addition to the standard marketing segmentation as they focus on qualitative insights such as the audience's needs, attitudes and behaviours, which can span various age groups. Most likely, this captures user segments more accurately and meaningfully when planning a digital (or other marketing) initiative.

In a nutshell, the benefits include:

- providing a human 'face' for an audience segment that is otherwise defined by demographics
- helping team members share a specific, consistent understanding of various audience groups – data and demographics about the groups are placed in context and this makes them easier to understand and remember
- proposed solutions for a product or service that can be guided by how well they meet the needs of individual user personas – features or services can be prioritised based on how well they address such needs.

**Customer journeys and data**

So, how does a customer journey map fit into the mix with other data about your users/customers, such as insights from Google Analytics?

The customer journey map also captures 'data' about your users/customers, but the focus is on the 'qualitative' aspects. For example, you might find that users click through from your email newsletter and read your article, but feel frustrated because there is no call-to-action to take the next step. You learn about the user's disappointment via comments they made on social media. Google Analytics might tell you that X users clicked through to your article from the e-newsletter, a good result as it exceeds your KPI for that interaction. But the experience of the user during the journey is disappointing, which might lead to them ignoring your e-newsletter in the future, or worse, commenting about their negative experience on social media.

The customer journey mapping exercise can illustrate this scenario and highlight the opportunities. And the quantitative data from, for example, Google Analytics can add valuable background info to the customer journey map. For example, Google Analytics user journey reports can be used to identify the main traffic flows through your website or application. This information might inform the type of customer journey map that you workshop with your team or stakeholders. Also, the metric 'traffic sources' can assist in defining the relevant touchpoints for the customer journey map.

Basically, the qualitative data from a customer journey map and the quantitative insights from Google Analytics form a powerful combination to capture what your audience is actually doing and how they might prefer to engage with your business, product or service.

**Other tools**

Google also has a smart tool to identify how different marketing channels affect an online purchase, called The Customer Journey to Online Purchase[6]. In Google's words: 'We analysed millions of consumer interactions through Google Analytics and distilled how different marketing channels affect online purchase decisions'.

The tool generates a graphic of the marketing channels that influence your target audience's purchase decision. This is a smart way of showing the information, provided your business or product fits within the predefined industry categories. It's a snapshot view of your user's interactions with the business, which could be valuable in gaining buy-in from stakeholders or management when embarking on new marketing initiatives.

**It's all about knowing who your audience really is**

In today's digital and data-driven world, marketers can find numerous tools and methods to assist them in better understanding who their target audience really is and what they are looking for. The tools and methods borrowed from the CX and UX practitioners assist marketers in creating more products and/or services that truly meet their audience's needs and expectations, and ultimately benefit the brand.

6 thinkwithgoogle.com/tools/customer-journey-to-online-purchase.html#!/australia/arts-and-entertainment/large/generic-paid-search

# NEXT STEPS

**Feeling inspired?**

**TrinityP3 is a strategic marketing consultancy.** For the last 15 years, our belief has been that the creation of better results in business comes from changed thinking. We challenge our clients, and ourselves, to continually evolve in thought and approach.

**Marketing reverberates with the pace of change**

Technology continues to change society. Something powerful enough to change society inevitably challenges fundamental beliefs and ways of working that have shaped businesses for decades. Nowhere is this more apparent than in marketing, as customers and consumers increasingly control the way in which they engage with brands.

**TrinityP3 exists for one reason**

Our aim is simple. We want to improve the marketing output of every single organisation that engages us.

Generating improvement can mean challenging the norm and changing values within a marketing team or broader organisation. We guide our clients on this journey, emerging in a better place for the marketing team and its attributable effect on the organisation.

That's why we exist. That's our aim.

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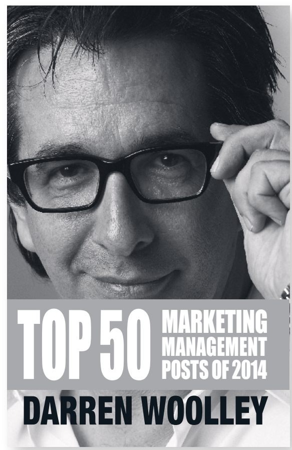


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