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## Optus: Behind the scenes of this year's most talked about pitch



By **Jade Psihogios** | 19 June 2025

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Optus's media and creative account pitch sparked a wave of speculation, and complaints about the intensity of rumours creating **uncertainty and pressure**, as adland waited to see who would win one of the biggest advertisers in Australia.

The pitch shortlist came down to GroupM, UM and Accenture Song. Incumbents Emotive and UM were **replaced by Accenture Song's new media unit and its creative arm Droga5**.

Cameron Luby, Optus head of marketing consumer & business, *told AdNews* that strong AI, automation, data and strategic creativity capabilities were non-negotiable capabilities.

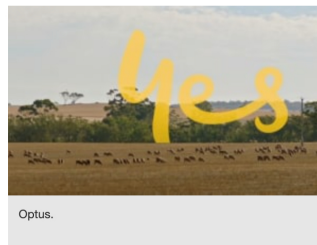
"Speed to market and adaptability mattered too, but chemistry and ways of working were equally important," Luby said.

"These are significant partnerships, so our executive team was fully aware and supportive."

The pitching process started in late 2024 and took almost six months. Optus began with capability reviews then moved to a shortlist, running strategic workshops and ending with internal evaluation sessions.

"We worked with (consultants) Trinity P3, who played a role in the initial agency selection process and then supported on benchmarking," Luby said.

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"We made sure agencies had plenty of opportunity to showcase their strengths without overloading them."



Optus assessed agencies through chemistry, ensuring an alignment on values, working style and cultural fit.

The agencies then had two weeks before a running a session on defining strategic challenges for Optus. Then the procurement process took off.

Optus reviews agencies every three years as part of the procurement process. It requires Optus to go to market for competitive pricing.

"Procurement are our partners and it's important that we demonstrate fair terms on industry benchmarks," Luby said.

"But the decision was based on who is right for the future of Optus, not who was the cheapest.

"It provided us with the opportunity to think about where we want to be in the long term, which is how we made decisions.

"The focus was on identifying partners with future-fit strengths, particularly in AI, automation and integrated storytelling while acknowledging and deeply respecting the impact and contribution of our long-standing partners."

"These are important and meaningful contracts, so that due diligence is critical."

The media and creative pitches were run parallel, which Luby said helped build an integrated and future-ready agency model.

"We ran the media, creative, production and B2B reviews in parallel, which let us see how agencies would collaborate across the full customer journey," Luby said.

"The longlist included more than a dozen agencies, which was narrowed to a handful of finalists in each stream for deeper evaluation."

Emotive held the Optus creative account for 10 years, working on campaigns including 'We're All In', 'Friends on a Train' and 'No Catch.'

Luby said that Optus's current agencies have been a huge part of the telco's success.

"We met a lot of great potential partners, and our current agencies have been a huge part of our success," Luby said.

"For our new partners, clarity of thinking, creativity, chemistry, AI and automation were all factors.

"Also, the ability to co-exist as a collaborative agency village. We couldn't be more excited for the future."

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