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Pitching is trending to 'brutal'



By **Chris Pash** | 30 July 2026

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The big global advertising groups are pointing fingers over heavy price discounting during pitches in a market leaning to the brutal side.

The insight emerged when Omnicom was briefing analysts on its [June quarter results](#), with organic revenue growth of 6.1% to just under \$US6 billion.

Analyst Adrien de Saint Hilaire of Bank of America asked about the pitching environment.

He noted "comments by one of your peers that perhaps one of your other competitors may be aggressively" pricing.

The analysts didn't name the competitor but only two others have so far announced June quarter results, Publicis Groupe and Havas.

Omnicom CEO John Wren welcomed competition.

"The new business environment is as brutal as it's ever been," Wren replied to the analyst.

"We're winning, and we're winning our fair share. We could always win one or two more."

On the competition, he described "both" as "very capable" companies.

"I think the competition out there that we see makes us better," he said.

"That's what I take away from not only our wins, but from the accounts that we didn't win."

Publicis Groupe, which earlier this month posted a [4.8% jump in organic growth](#) in the June quarter, raised pricing behaviour in a call with analysts.

CEO Arthur Sadoun said the financial pressure on "other" players has led to some pricing behaviour which is sometimes "not right".

He said Publicis doesn't take part when a pitch is going to be price-driven.

"We understand perfectly but we are not interested by that," he said.

In the first half of 2026, Publicis passed on about six pitches because they were seen as all about price.

"Let's be clear, this is not the norm," Sadoun said.

"Believe me, they ask for a very competitive offer ... most of them know that the outcome should be a win-win relationship. You really need to get that."

In Australia, TrinityP3 founder and CEO Darren Woolley said the media market is being particularly aggressive on pitching.

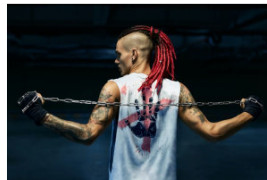
He's heard industry grumbles that some of the holding companies are offering extremely low price positions, particularly on traditional media inventory such as TV and radio.

"This is in response to clients using the media trading central to their RFP process," he told *AdNews*.

"It clearly signals to the agencies that price is a key determinant in selecting the winning media agency.

"Now, some of this can be achieved by media agencies using their principle media trading inventory, but it also results in the agencies demanding further discounted positions from the media owners.

"There are rumours about who is doing this more than others, but it is very difficult to prove as this all occurs under the NDA of the pitch.



Credit: [Some Tale](#) via Unsplash



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"Our approach is not to rely on media trading positions when we manage a pitch, but we do investigate the mechanisms agencies offer to drive and deliver increased media value."

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