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BUILDING A BUSINESS ON LOTTO TICKETS; THE PERILS OF CHOOSING SPIN OVER STRATEGY



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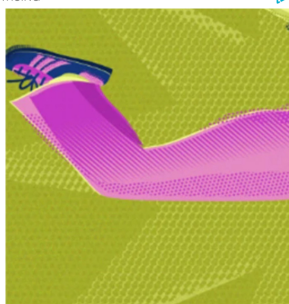
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TrinityP3's John Minty argues agencies are pitching at everything when in fact if they want to win more they should chase less.

In an industry obsessed with originality, it's ironic how unoriginal our pitch behaviour has become. Agencies who spend years shaping distinct points of view, curating bespoke teams, and defining bold values, suddenly turn into shape-shifting generalists the moment a new business opportunity arises.

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Any client, any category, any brief—we're in.

But at what cost?

The modern agency pitch machine is overworked, underperforming, and draining the very resources needed to build a sustainable business. Chasing everything doesn't increase your odds, it just spreads you thin. If the endgame is better client alignment and higher-quality revenue, then the real growth opportunity lies not in pitching more, but in pitching smarter.

As an industry we need to end the lottery ticket fallacy that many agencies still see in chasing the win.



We tell ourselves that more pitches mean more wins. But that's like buying more lottery tickets; technically true, but practically flawed. Time, talent, and money are finite. When we throw them at every opportunity, we dilute our point of view, burn out our teams, and compromise our best work.

Instead of increasing volume, we should be improving our bets. This requires evaluating before you chase.

What if, before committing to pitch, agencies assessed each opportunity the way clients assess them?

Call it what you like; a Business Partner Evaluation, a Fit Score, a Pitch Filter. The name doesn't matter. The process does.

At its core, it's a framework that blends data and instinct to help agencies make more strategic choices. That criteria might include:

- Leadership stability (e.g. CMO tenure)
- Creative freedom potential
- Financial health
- Cultural and ethical alignment
- Emotional resonance with the brand

Agencies can weighting each category according to their own strengths, vision, and lifecycle. Add in subjective intuition, yes, gut feelings matter, and you get a model that balances insight with instinct.

Based on the score, you might classify prospects like this:

- Below 0.65 – Do not pursue
- 0.65 to 0.80 – Consider with an alternative pitch strategy
- Above 0.80 – Go all in

It's a simple way to say yes with intention, and more importantly, no with confidence.

We also need to recognise that not all income is created equal. Agencies need to factor revenue quality into their decisions; reliability, profitability, repeatability, and expandability. Is the client stable? Is the work margin-positive? Can the relationship grow?

A high-scoring client in these categories isn't just a short-term win, it's a long-term investment.

What is your Pitch ROI? This is a metric we rarely measure.

Agencies love their metrics. We obsess over campaign KPIs, media ROIs, and social engagement rates. But when it comes to pitching, we often fly blind.

It's time we applied the same rigour to business development. That means measuring:

- Estimated cost to pitch
- Probability of success
- Potential revenue and its quality

High effort, low reward? Walk away. Low effort, high value? Run toward it.

Pitching shouldn't be the only route to growth. Smart agencies are shifting from a reactive to proactive approach. They identify white space in their portfolio, target sectors they can uniquely serve, and create tailored propositions before the brief ever lands.

They don't wait to be invited, they initiate.

When you shape the opportunity, you rarely compete on price. You compete on relevance.

And so, this isn't about pitching less, it's about pitching with purpose.

It's about valuing your time, protecting your team, and playing a longer game. It's about making decisions that align with your values, your culture, and your creative ambitions.

Because pitching should never feel like speed dating with a PowerPoint deck.

It should feel like meeting someone who already gets you.

John Minty is a Senior Consultant at TrinityP3.

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