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AGENCIES MARKETING NEW BUSINESS **B&T**

'PITCHING ISN'T SEXY': AGENCIES' PITCHING SATISFACTION IMPROVES BUT PERNICIOUS POOR PRACTICE PERSISTS IN AREAS



Tom Fogden

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Overall agency satisfaction with client pitch processes has improved, according to TrinityP3's latest State of the Pitch report, though there are some poor practices persist.

The new report, which studied 54 pitches across 24 different categories of advertiser and a variety of geographies, found satisfaction increased to 3.22 out of 5, higher than both 2025 and 2024, which stood at 2.99 and 3.13, respectively. That's regardless of whether the agency won the pitch or not, before you ask.

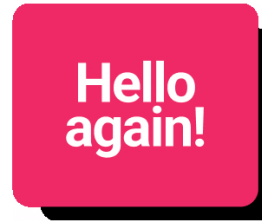
ADVERTISING



The report also found that the number of extremely negative experiences in pitches had decreased from 12.1 per cent of responses to 5.1 per cent. Though it should be noted that this State of the Pitch surveyed looked at 26 fewer reviews than last year.

"The number of four-star ratings went up this year, overall," Darren Woolley, global CEO of TrinityP3, told *B&T*.

"But when you drill down into the data, you find that there are a handful of marketers and



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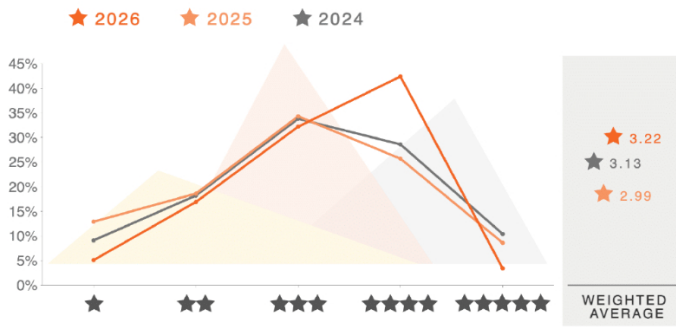


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some categories of marketer who are definitely making an effort to run better pitches.”

Q28. Beyond the outcome, how would you rate the pitch process with 5 stars being world-class and one being the world’s worst?



— Source: TrinityP3.

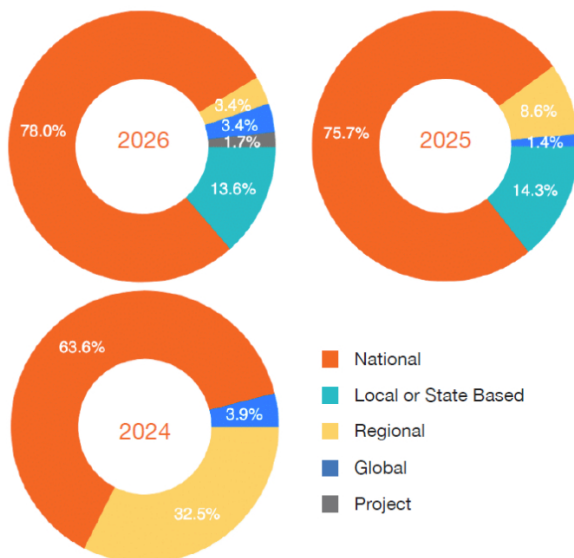
Who’s Reviewing?

The diversity of clients reviewing their agency relationships evolved over the past year, with TrinityP3 recording Banking, Financial and Insurance Services accounting for 13.6 per cent of pitches—up from 9 per cent last year. The number of public sector pitches halved year-on-year to 5.1 per cent. Healthcare, Beauty and Pharma clients accounted for 8.5 per cent of reviews, down from 10.4 per cent last year. Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste services; as well as Tourism, Travel and Accommodation clients accounted for 6.8 per cent of pitches.



Perhaps more interesting, however, is the scope of pitches taking place.

Q7. Was the pitch for a local, regional or global project or appointment?



— Source: TrinityP3.

National pitches, once again, accounted for the preponderance of reviews in 2026. However, the number of global pitches more than doubled year-on-year—admittedly from a low base. Regional pitches have all but vanished compared to 2024.

The proportion of project-based pitches was low, too, which may seem to jar with some of

trade press reportage you've seen recently. However, that number corroborates, rather than contradicts, the growth of project pitches, according to Woolley.

"A couple of indie agencies contacted us [about the survey] because the methodology has them filling in information about every pitch. One indie sent me a confidential list of almost 100 pitches they'd been invited to participate in over the past 12 months—that's two a week—around 70 of those were projects," said Woolley.

"Of those projects, their win rate was one in 10. But the project wins will never make it to a press release sent to the trade media. No one is championing that they won a project. A lot of that [poor behaviour] is happening in those project pitches and it's flying under the radar. If we think it's bad, it's probably worse because we're looking at a sample that is more in the medium to upper group [of pitches] based on size."

One executive at an experiential agency told B&T that volume of pitching is not uncommon. They added that the growing use of agency panels has compounded the problem.



— Darren Woolley.

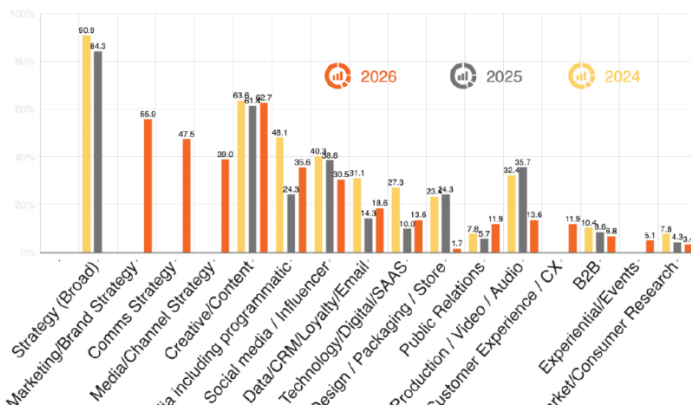
"The big thing this year was that we looked at state-only pitches. They're generally poorly run. Whereas national pitches are much better run and global pitches, because of the complexity and amount of time, they're a big cost but also a big win.

"At best, this is a litmus test looking at the better end of the pitch pool."

Most of the pitches that took place in 2026 were seeking Creative and Content services —"the undisputed backbone of agency pitches," according to TrinityP3—and have accounted for more more than 60 per cent of reviews over the past three years.

The number of Paid Media pitches bounced back to 35.6 per cent after a noticeable drop in 2025, while demands for Production capabilities took a sharp dive this year, possibly due to the increasing number of clients taking production in-house with in-house design and production capabilities.

Q8. What disciplines or capabilities was the client looking for? (select all relevant)



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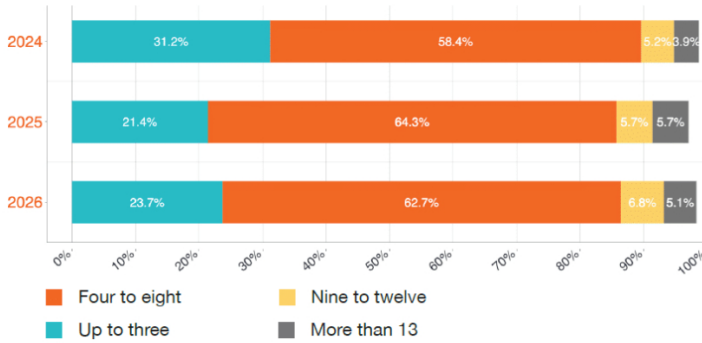
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sticking point. Many of the pitches (62.7 per cent) had between four and eight agencies participating. Only 23.7 per cent kept the list to a lean three or fewer.

“As an industry, we can and should work together to collaborate on a better process that equips marketers and their teams better. If you look at something like the UK’s Pitch Positive Pledge, this is a clear example of what can be done to help achieve better outcomes which serves both marketers and their agencies,” Woolley said in a press release.

Q12. How many agencies, including yours, were initially invited to participate?



— Source: TrinityP3.

“There are times... the incumbent is purely dragged in just to keep them happy and keep them on the business until the marketer makes the decision,” said Woolley.

“Having said that, I think marketers and procurement are starting to realise that the pitching process is not the way to review an existing relationship. Pitching is the way to choose a new relationship for a whole stack of reasons... If I was an incumbent agency, I would look them in the eye and ask ‘Is this a legitimate review and do we have an equal opportunity of winning this?’”

The remedy is an honest evaluation of the work, according to Woolley.

“What is the quality of the work compared to the competitors? Are the financials still fair and reasonable or has our scope of work changed? Have we kept the contract up to date? How well are they working with other agencies or the in-house team? Do a full review. Then if you aren’t sure, have a few meetings with agencies that are equivalent to the agency you’re with. Not a pitch, just a meeting,” he said.

“Pitching isn’t sexy. It makes for great stories. But there’s a lot of admin.”

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