



THE PITCH QUESTIONS YOU CAN'T ASK THAT WE RAN OUT OF TIME TO ANSWER



By **DARREN WOOLLEY** 达伦伍利



THE YOU CAN'T ASK THAT PANEL AT CANNES IN CAIRNS SAW DEE MADIGAN, EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT CAMPAIGN EDGE; MELISSA FEIN, CEO OF INITIATIVE; DARREN WOOLLEY, FOUNDER AND GLOBAL CEO OF TRINITY P3; AND AUTHOR JANE CARO JUMP INTO THE MOST CONTENTIOUS ISSUES IN ADVERTISING AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THAT EVERYONE WAS TOO AFRAID TO ASK.

At least, that was the idea. It transpired that there were *so many* questions that everyone was too afraid to ask that we've had to come back for a third bite of the cherry. Last time out, Woolley answered the unanswered questions about everything to do with adland. This time, he's taking on pitching.

Graham Webster, CEO of Enth Degree has **also answered some of the questions that went unanswered** in the You Can Ask That session on how to win new work. Check that out once you're done here. Here's what Woolley had to say:

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Prior to the event, I had shared, on LinkedIn, questions on pitching that I regularly get asked.

Unfortunately, many of these questions and a few more on the day were left unanswered, until now. So here are the answers to the pitch questions you can't ask, answered.

**A new CMO has just been appointed – how likely is it that they pitch their accounts?
What can you do to save the account?**

A new CMO will often bring their own perspective to the role, and this can mean throwing out the past strategy and campaign as not invented by them. They may want to bring in their team, being agencies that they have worked with previously. And changing agencies is a fast, low-risk way to flag that things are happening around here.

As the incumbent, have the agency leadership team meet with the CMO as soon as possible. But do not go into selling mode, take these meetings in listening mode. What are they thinking? What are they wanting? How are they wanting it? Remember, everything you have done to this point was for the previous CMO, there is now a new marketing leader and you need to align with them as quickly as possible.

What is the biggest screw-up a client has made in a pitch?

A marketing director went into a pitch process and as we go to the crucial stage, took a call from their CEO as we were standing on the steps of the first agency to present over the next three days. They were informed that the pitch was off because the CEO had just sold the company to their biggest competitor. How did they not know that?

How do you stop clients from ripping your pitch ideas off?

Firstly, do not sign an agreement that transfers all the intellectual property created in the pitch process to the client. Because if you do they are not ripping you off, you are giving it to them.

Secondly, use the global copyright convention © to indicate that there is copyright in the work being presented and this was created by the agency on a particular date. This is virtually never used by advertising agencies in a pitch process. But if you want to demonstrate you are serious about your intellectual property, add the copyright mark to all of the work presented. Sure, it is expensive to litigate, but it will give the client cause to stop and consider the implications of ripping you off.

How often are pitches decided before they even begin?

Almost never. Most clients will have an agency or two in mind that they think they would like. But a properly run pitch will give them cause to review and assess those initial beliefs.

Why do marketers fall for promises the agency cannot deliver?

Because most marketers are genuinely positive and optimistic in nature.

When a client is ghosting you during a pitch, is it because they are negotiating with someone else?

Pessimistically, yes. In reality, it is often because there is some embarrassing hold-up in the process that they are reluctant to share with the agencies.

Why do clients really believe it when agencies promise unrealistic discounted media costs?

A better question is why are clients looking for the lowest media cost? The media trading exercise is a very one-dimensional test of a media agency's trading skills. But because they are shopping around on price, they want to achieve the lowest possible. And what are the implications if the agency cannot deliver? Fire them? Take them to court? Or even worse, have the agency fudge the numbers to look like they have.

What is the strangest agency pitch you have ever seen?

I heard about a creative pitch by one of the big tech platforms where they invited the agencies into a theatre to perform the 1970s rock song that best represents the agency. The audience was the marketer from the company. And like America's Got Talent, any agency that did not score well was out of contention.

Have you ever seen an agency crash and burn in a pitch?

Yes. It is embarrassing. For everyone involved. The agency. The client. And for us as the consultant.

Why can so many agencies walk out from a pitch thinking they've nailed it, meanwhile the clients feel these agencies haven't listened to or asked enough questions about their business to really understand them?

This happens quite a lot. This is because agencies will often judge their own performance on how well they presented. In doing so they miss how well the clients were engaged. It means that the agency walks out having said everything it wanted to say about itself. Perhaps if the agency talked less. Asked more. And listened the most?

If you have more questions on pitching, please email them to people@trinityp3.com – all questions will be treated with strict confidentiality.



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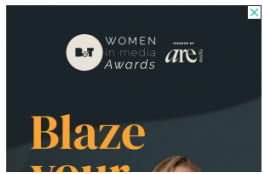
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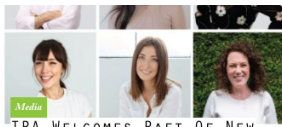
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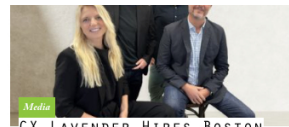
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