

News

Analysis

The Work

The Knowledge

Power List

Agency Report Cards

Events

Directories ▾

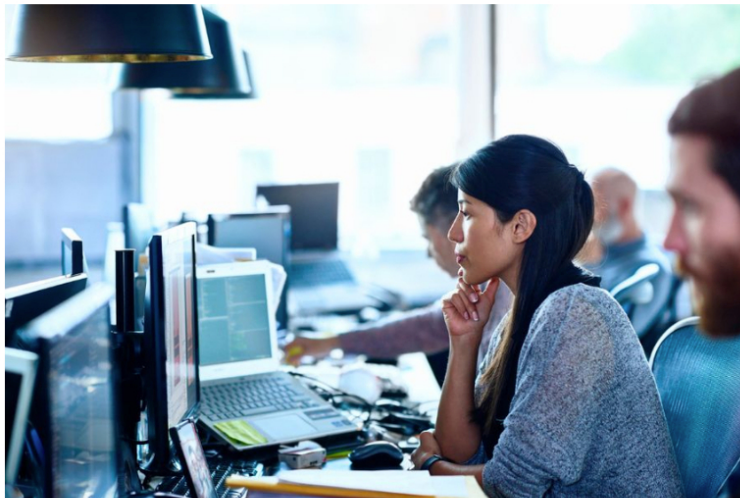


ADVERTISING, DIGITAL, MEDIA, OPINIONS

Darren Woolley | Dec 12, 2022

Where did all the agency juniors go?

Over time, the proportion of agency staff on an account roster described as 'junior' has shrunk. Today, it is nearly non-existent.



Hearing there is a talent crisis in the advertising industry, I am wondering if the real problem is that all the junior staff in agencies have disappeared. Don't worry; it didn't happen overnight. But it did happen.

Two decades ago, when we started assessing agency resources against the scopes of work delivered, there was a balance of junior, mid-level and senior roles in most agency resource plans. Conversations over what constituted each, in terms of work experience, were held with agency bodies at the time, and a consensus emerged that four to five years of experience was the point to move from 'junior' to 'mid-level', with 'senior' being reached after 10 years of experience or more. It was a rule of thumb rather than anything hard and fast, as the advertising industry always practised meritocracy in some shape or form.

This was when agencies had junior, middleweight and senior copywriters and art directors. They could become creative group heads, associate creative directors, and creative directors. Their career progression was mapped out through their title progression. It even led, at times, to a career extension as an executive creative director, chief creative officer and even the occasional creative chairperson.

Then came the technological revolution and the rise of digital advertising. Suddenly a new stream of talent and capability meant everyone was junior in those early days. The time it took to go from junior to middle level was compressed. All at once, three years was enough experience to move you to a higher level of capability and expertise. There was still a career path. It was just accelerated and expedited by the demand for people with digital skills.

But these days, we never see junior copywriters, art directors, producers or their equivalent account coordinators and executives. It is as if they have disappeared. Instead, they have become unicorns, even on LinkedIn. Try searching for a junior anything and see how rare they are.

Is it because newly minted graduates and recruits to the advertising industry are immediately mid-level and middleweight in their skills, capability, and experience? Is the time it takes to go from junior or graduate to fully fledged operator measured in months or even weeks rather than years? I would genuinely like to know.

Why? Because the most common agency fee arrangements are based on hours and cost. Whether project fees or retainer, the underlying value is the number of hours you buy in agency staff. And not all agency employees are equal in experience, capability, or cost per hour. So having a measure of what constitutes an entry-level role and how long that person would be in that role before becoming a mid-level version.

Yes, I acknowledge the influence of a meritocracy here and supply and demand, with specific high-demand skills and capabilities accelerating the process. But statistics would suggest this is the exception rather than the rule. So instead, it would be good to have an accepted standard for what constitutes a junior, mid-level and senior person in any role. It would highlight the exceptional, such as the young account executive who rose to senior account director in the space of three years. Or the digital strategist who was fully capable on the first day of their first job after graduating from university.

We recently worked with a marketer concerned that their agency was expensive. We demonstrated that the

FOLLOW US



Top news, insights and analysis every weekday

Sign up for
CAMPAIGN BULLETINS

[My Account](#)

MOST READ

- 1 Marketers react to SPH Media inflating circulation numbers
- 2 'Good PR is knowing what to share and what not to'—has Harry damaged his reputation beyond repair?
- 3 The only 2023 marcomms trend report you actually need to read
- 4 Culture's changed. Has your marketing?
- 5 SPH Media circulation scandal: Industry body refutes CEO's claims, call for transparency
- 6 Life after likes: will more brands follow Lush in going anti-social?
- 7 From following marketing trends to creating them — a digital, mobile-led future is already emerging in APAC
- 8 Jack Ma gives up control of fintech giant Ant Group
- 9 CASE STUDY: How Nescafé optimised its Facebook presence in the Philippines
- 10 Can L'Oréal's new luxury skincare line Shihyo shake up the beauty industry?

We recently worked with a marketer concerned that their agency was expensive. We demonstrated that the most senior people were executing even the most basic creative adaptations of existing work in the agency at a rate commensurate with that seniority. Now, if that experience meant they could achieve it in far less time, that would be more acceptable. But, alas, they could not.

So, if you are still reading, I have two requests for you. First, if you are a junior in an agency with a commensurate title, please connect with me on LinkedIn. I would genuinely like to meet a modern-day unicorn. Second, if you are more senior, let me know—how long do you think is a reasonable number of years of experience to go from entry-level to mid and from mid-level to senior in your discipline or field? Is it five years or three years, or is it why no juniors work in advertising (and media) agencies anymore?

Darren Woolley is the founder and global CEO at Trinity P3



Source: *Campaign Asia-Pacific*

Tags

TALENT | AGENCY | TRINITY P3

Feedback



RELATED ARTICLES



Advertisers not feeling good about media talent pool



Time to reimagine talent retention

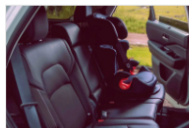


Why talent is moving from agencies to tech ...



How are agencies managing the expat talent exodus?

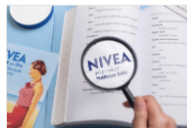
JUST PUBLISHED



December 2022 Australia advertiser of the month: Uber



Publicis appoints Mindshare's Jessica Zhang as ...



Beiersdorf expands partnership with OMD in APAC, ...



2023 Edelman Trust Barometer: Business is only ...



BECOME A
MEMBER >



LOGIN
MY ACCOUNT >



SIGN UP TO OUR
BULLETINS >

FOLLOW US     

Terms & Conditions / Contact Us

 © Haymarket Media Group Ltd.

Help and Information

About us
Feedback
Newsletter Archive
Magazine Archive
Site Map
RSS
Advertise
Membership
Corporate Membership

Network

Portfolio
The A List
PRWeek Asia
40 Years

International

Campaign Asia
Campaign India
Campaign Japan 日本
Campaign China 中国
Campaign US
Campaign UK
Campaign Middle East
Campaign Turkey