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Pitching Isn't Broken, It Simply Needs Modernising

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Jeremy Taylor, managing director at TrinityP3, argues the industry needs to stop the endless loop of complaining about pitching and instead deliver a better, simpler framework for the process



For years, the advertising industry has circled the same conversation like a song on repeat: "the pitch process is broken." Complaints about the bloated processes, the speculative work, the cost be it financial or simply the emotional toll. Everyone agrees something must change. Yet nothing happens.

But what if the industry has been asking the wrong questions?

The fact is, pitching isn't going away. Clients will always need to review their agency relationships.

As it does for every service industry, the pitch still plays a vital role in agency selection and in establishing healthy and productive client-agency relationships, but the issue is that while marketing has evolved rapidly in recent years, pitching has not.

As an industry, we need to move away from the question that is so often asked: "What should we do instead of pitching?" Rather, the

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questions we should be asking are: "What is the most appropriate way to pitch?" and "How can we make the pitching process better."

To my mind, we can all benefit from a pitching process that puts five principles at its centre. It is about making pitching: faster, fairer, more focused, more flexible, and not forgetting about building in some fun.

If pitching has one end goal, it is to find the right long-term partner. The process involved should then reflect that valuing cultural fit over theatre, real collaboration over performance, and clear direction over chaos.

The default pitch process used by the wider UK industry was established three decades ago and more, when advertising was much simpler - all about producing creative ideas, and not much else. The industry has evolved almost out of recognition since then, with ever-increasing layers of complexity, but the basic pitch process is almost unchanged.

At TrinityP3, we have put fast, fit, focused, flexible and fun at the heart of all our pitches. And marketers (whether they use an intermediary or not) should be using these principles at the heart of their pitch, too.

Instead of instantly defaulting to a bloated, decades-old, largely obsolete process, what if we start with a simple but important question: "Should you even be pitching?" We have created a checklist for marketers considering a pitching approach. It asks basic questions, such as 'Do you think this is the best approach?' And are you actually ready to go to market? You'd be surprised how many marketers rush to pitch without considering these.

And even if the answer is yes, my advice to marketers is don't just roll out the usual decades-old playbook.

Build a pitch process that actually reflects what a great agency relationship looks like in the real world. If it's a 20 million pound media account, the process for appointing the agency will likely look a lot different to a 200,000 pound PR tender.

We all need to look deeply into what key attributes a client thinks they want and we need to move beyond lengthy, unnecessary presentations and introduce more appropriate presentation tools and tightly defined workshops that are more like auditions than showreels. And all along being respectful of everyone's time, energy and ambition.

This isn't just a better pitch. It's a better way to build the right partnership - one that's fit for today's challenges, not stuck in yesterday's rituals.

Pitching isn't broken. But it is vital that it is done better - more appropriately, with the focus always on the end-result of high-performing, appropriately funded and long-lasting relationships.

Read more from Trinity P3 [here](#).



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Jeremy Taylor

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