

Thought Leaders

# The "Thingamajig" in the Room: Why Publicis is Playing Dress-Up as an Indie

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Darren Woolley writes Le Truc ANZ is a "tactical weapon intended to heat up" the market. If it works, "it's going to be very hard to beat"



We love a good 'disruptive' buzzword almost as much as we love a long Friday lunch. But last week, Publicis Groupe ANZ didn't just drop a buzzword, but a whole French thingamajig.

Enter Le Truc.

Launched officially in New York in 2021, and now ANZ, it's a "creative collective" designed to solve those weird, hairy, multidisciplinary problems that traditional agency boxes can't handle. Publicis is essentially telling the market it has built a shapeshifting strike team – a boutique indie soul trapped in the hulking, data-fed body of a holding company.

It's a bold claim. But looking at the latest TrinityP3 New Business Report, it's also a deeply necessary one.

## Understanding the Hold-Co Identity Crisis

Our research highlights a massive structural shift called the "barbell effect". On one end, you've got Publicis and the newly merged Omnicom-IPG mega-network flexing their massive muscles. On the other, independent agencies have staged a coup, snatching a dominant 65% share of total wins in 2025.

Why? Because clients are thirsty for "founder-led agility and senior-level accountability". They want the poetry, not just the pipes.

Le Truc is Publicis' attempt to have its croissant and eat it too. By creating a collective that feels like an indie, it's trying to stop the value migration toward boutique shops.

Will we see more of this? Absolutely. WPP's recent move to consolidate its creative resources into WPP Creative is proof that the Big Four are tired of watching the indies have all the fun, and all the creative-only pitches, which rose to 30% of the market last year.

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## An Admission of Guilt?

There's an elephant in the room, and perhaps it's wearing a very expensive French beret? If Publicis needs Le Truc to break silos and share talent across Leo, Saatchi & Saatchi, and Publicis Worldwide, isn't that just a polite way of admitting the current network structure is a bit... clunky?

Every day across our business, clients are increasingly talking to us about unbundling services. They'll give the media pipes to a network but hand the poetry to a specialist. Le Truc is a strategic attempt to re-bundle that magic.

It's an admission that the old 'Power of One' might have been more of a 'Power of One... eventually, after three meetings and an argument about fees.'

We are living through a period of industrialised creativity in which the efficiency dividend is king. Clients are under massive cost pressures and demanding higher transparency on fee reductions, driven by AI.

In this environment, a new "thingamajig" might sound like a risky experiment. However, our report shows that the majority of appointments in 2025 were long-term agency-of-record positions, not just projects. This suggests that while clients are nervous, they are desperate for stability. If Le Truc can prove it offers the human premium of high-concept strategy that AI can't touch, clients might just stop feeling like guinea pigs and start feeling like they've found the integrated intelligence the report says they're looking for.

## Heating Up the Pitch-O-Meter

Hold onto your hats, because the local pitch market is about to get sweatier than a Sydney train in February.

We recorded 441 pitches in 2025 – a 107% jump in visibility. With Publicis now boasting a massive win-share (thanks in part to the Atomic 212° acquisition), it is the undisputed volume leader.

Le Truc is designed for "category-shifting moves". As the Omnicom-IPG merger triggers a wave of potential conflict churn in sectors like finance and auto, Le Truc will likely be the shiny new proposition that Publicis uses to poach disgruntled clients. It's not just an experiment, but a tactical weapon intended to heat up a market that is already being "reshaped and stretched".

## A Big Bet

What does this do to a local market already being transformed? It forces a scale polarisation. If you're a mid-sized network agency that isn't a Big Two titan or a specialist indie, you're currently in the squeezed middle.

You're being asked to compete with the massive AI-driven data engines of the holding companies and the senior-led agility of the indies.

Le Truc is Publicis' bet that the future belongs to those who can be both scale and specialisation at the same time.

It's a bit like a giant trying to dance the ballet – it might look a little awkward at first, but if it lands the jump, it's going to be very hard to beat.

Just don't ask what the French word for 'overhead' is.

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