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Agencies still flunk pitch process as unpaid work, delays persist: TrinityP3

By Staff Writer



TrinityP3 says Australia's agency pitch process remains plagued by long timelines, unpaid work and poor communication, despite a modest lift in satisfaction scores from agencies this year.

TrinityP3 has released its 2026 'The State of the Pitch' report, shedding light on ongoing challenges in the pitching practices within the industry. The report indicates a slight improvement in pitch satisfaction, with the average rating increasing from 2.99 to 3.22 out of 5. Agencies have rated Australian marketers and procurement teams with a score of 3.22 out of 5.

The report surveyed agencies on 59 pitches over a six-month period, covering 24 industry categories with agency fees ranging from \$50,000 to \$10 million. Consultant-run pitches accounted for 17% of the pitches surveyed, up from 15% the previous year. Procurement and finance-run pitches scored better than those managed by marketers.

Darren Woolley, Global CEO of TrinityP3, commented, "For the last few years we've used the American grading system on this report and it feels like agencies last year gave marketers a D and this year they might be scraping a C." He further stated, "The problem is that, three years into the report, there are still too many marketers and/or their procurement teams who are scoring a D or even an F when it comes to how they run a pitch."

The report highlights that more than 80% of pitches did not compensate agencies for their time. The number of pitches taking six to 12 months doubled, and almost 30% required agencies to assign intellectual property as part of the process. Telecommunications, tourism, and education sectors were identified as having protracted pitches lasting over four months.

Marketer-managed pitches, representing 33% of all pitches, often experienced delays. Procurement teams were the fastest, with only 13% of their pitches extending past three months. Woolley noted, "There are absolutely valid reasons why pitch timeframes blow out because of complexity and stakeholders causing the process to be delayed. But we also need to recognise there are sectors where these challenges appear to occur systematically."

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40% of consultant-led pitches took 4-6 months due to multi-stage governance structures. Additionally, 27% of agencies reported receiving no feedback during the pitch process. The Electricity/Gas/Water, Food & Beverage, Home Hardware, and Charity sectors were noted for poor communication and lack of feedback.

Health Care Products, Beauty & Pharmaceuticals, Home Hardware/Building Supplies, and Utilities sectors had extended payment terms up to 120 days. Major corporate players are enforcing 90 to 120-day payment terms on agency partners. Woolley remarked, "The complaints when it comes to pitching are in many ways perennial. But this year's numbers again highlight that there are some very valid reasons for complaint with some firmly entrenched pain points."

Only 20.8% of marketers provided 'Very clear' scopes of work, while 33.3% provided 'Not clear' scopes. Woolley emphasised, "For example, more than 80% of pitches the advertiser didn't pay the agencies for their time, the number of pitches that took six to 12 months doubled, and almost 30% of the pitches required agencies to assign IP as part of the process."

TrinityP3 recommends stronger industry-wide guidelines for selecting agencies. Woolley suggested, "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

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By Rachelle Tognetti - AI Evangelist, JAFAC, Adobe | Partner Content



Agentic AI sees the modern marketing leader carrying a new mandate: To go beyond AI adoption and design how humans and systems work together. It requires marketing to operate distinctly differently – and crucially, as a system that learns, adapts and executes at a scale and speed we've not beheld before.

of what can be done to help achieve better outcomes which serves both marketers and their agencies."

The report is in its third year in Australia and is expanding to the USA, Canada, Germany, and Asia-Pacific. Woolley stated, "This is the third year of State of the Pitch in Australia. The survey is also now moving into its second year in the USA and Canada and set to be rolled out in Germany and Asia-Pacific later this year."

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2 1



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