



NEWS

Howatson and Co to renew AFR brand identity

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by LAUREN MCNAMARA



The Australian Financial Review has named Howatson and Company as its creative agency of record, following an invitation-only pitch process.

Nine's AFR said it was "looking to the future", seeking a renewed brand identity. It hopes to refine the brand while also staying true to its 70-year history.

Howatson and Co has been engaged to assist in this process, with its remit including brand strategy and creative.



While typical pitches continue to prove problematic for agencies according to Trinity P3's [recent State of the Pitch report](#), Mumbrella understands this one was comparatively more respectful.

The pitch was invitation-only to a handful of agencies, and run by Nine's marketing team rather than external procurement. It focused on chemistry and relationship fit, and avoided the timely and costly process of multiple rounds of strategy and creative.

Chris Howatson, CEO and founder of the agency, described the AFR as "one of the world's premier news sources".

"[...] To be trusted to further its influence is a very special task," he said in a media release on Tuesday.

The AFR claims a cross platform readership of 5.43 million people (February 2025), and describes itself as "the country's most read premium business masthead".

Vera Straubinger, head of brand and acquisition at Nine, said it was clear from the first meet-and-greet that the agency shared a passion for the AFR brand.

"We're excited to partner with them as we embark on this next chapter and build on the AFR's legacy for new audiences," she said in the release.

The AFR has previously engaged creative agencies including BMF, which [in 2022, developed a new brand platform](#) for the publication, 'Make It Your Business'.

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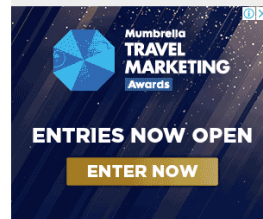


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Hopefully they steer clear of positioning themselves as independent like stablemates Sydney Morning Herald and The Age when they are quite the opposite.

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