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by KALILA WELCH



2023, if nothing else, was a huge year for pitching. Calls of 'pitchapalooza' were rife, as the industry scrambled to keep abreast of the active RFPs in market.

Speaking to Mumbrella in April, GroupM CEO Aimee Buchanan told Mumbrella she "hadn't seen anything like this", when thinking back to the pitching frenzies of the past.

Eight months on, she still says it's "been one of the biggest years for pitching she can remember".

"We still have pitches on this week and there are some big decisions still to be made."

"I have often said that pitching shows the best and worst of agencies," she adds. "Yes there is the pressure. The focus. The relentlessness of it. But, there is nothing better than seeing the team rally, the story evolve, the young guns sparkle in the spotlight and your people rise."

But despite the rate of pitching, Buchanan says 2023 "been a really satisfying year".

"I know that our agencies (and all the others out there) put their heart and soul into pitches, and it's amazing to see the relationships that are forged in the trenches of a pitch that endure and go on to create really strong and productive working relationships. There are the jokes born out of a tense moment that become the rally cry for teams for years to come and the moments of light relief that make it all worthwhile."

For TrinityP3's Darren Woolley, it is clear that the jump in pitching had created challenging conditions for many agencies.

"This year we have seen a number of major global media pitches, some postponed by the global pandemic, others who are following their contract schedule," he told Mumbrella. "But there has also been an increased number of significant local pitches. There has also been reported an increase in smaller, often project based pitches, with agencies being put through the rigors of a much larger pitch."

TrinityP3's 'State of the Pitch' survey currently in market has set out to detail these trends, with results expected in the New Year.

But for now, let's take a look back on the year that was in the world of media pitches.

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Sanitarium (\$20 million)

Tying up the first major pitch of the year, IPG Mediabrands' Initiative took home the win for Sanitarium's above the line (ATL) media account in February. Independent agency Connected is understood to have landed the FMCG brand's digital media account. Media billings across Sanitarium's brands, including Weetbix, Up & Go and So Good are thought to be worth \$20 million.



Forty Winks (\$20 million)

Sleep retailer FortyWinks was another early out of the gate, commencing a full review of its agency roster in February. Indie agency Hatched took out the media remit, worth a reported \$20 million, beating out the incumbent, Omnicom Media Group's Hearts & Science.



Priceline (\$13 million)

Priceline Pharmacy was next, taking its media account to pitch in Melbourne for the first time in nine years. The \$13 million account was pried away from Omnicom's PHD in favour of IPG Mediabrands' Initiative.



BMW (\$20 million)

At the end of March, automotive brand BMW added its media account, thought to be worth as much as \$20 million, to the pitching pool. Incumbent Atomic 212 managed to retain the account against a number of international holding group agencies, also managing to extend its remit to include BMW New Zealand.



Momentum Energy

Another to take its media account to pitch in March, Momentum Energy looked again to incumbent Havas Media Network, expanding on a six-year relationship.





Nestle (\$50 million)

In April Mumbrella revealed that Nestle was the next to join the so-called 'pitchapalooza', taking it's \$50 million media account to pitch for the first time in five years. Currently sitting with incumbent UM, the account is home to big name FMCG brands to the likes of KitKat, Allen's, Nescafe, Milo, Maggi, Uncle Tobys, Nespresso and Purina.

The pitch process is understood to have started formally only recently and is ongoing ahead of Christmas.



Mitsubishi (\$50 million)

On the same day in April, Mumbrella reported that another auto account was up for grabs, revealing Mitsubishi was in the midst of a lengthy media pitch process in South Australia. Ballparked at around \$50 million, the account was successfully defended by GroupM's Wavemaker, cementing a relationship that already extends more than three decades.



Unilever (\$40 million)

Making for the third pitch revelation in two days, Unilever became the second major FMCG giant to take its media account to pitch in April. Thought to be valued in the realm of \$40 million, Unilever's family of brands includes Lynx, Dove, Ben & Jerry's and OMO.

The pitch was part of a broader review across multiple markets, with GroupM's Mindshare winning out over incumbent PHD to take home the win in the local market.

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TPG (\$41 million)

Also in April, telecom business TPG went to market for a media partner to handle its TPG, Vodafone, iiNet and Internode brands – an account understood to be worth around \$41 million. Starcom emerged from the pitch on top, winning out over incumbent, Wavemaker. The pitch did not include Felix Mobile, which was launched at the end of 2020 and is handled by This Is Flow.



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Ferrero (\$17-20 million)

As part of a global review, Italian confectionary giant **Ferrero chose Dentsu's iProspect** as its new media agency partner in November. The account, understood to be valued between \$17-20 million, had been held previously by GroupM's MSix, however the agency chose not to participate in the latest competitive pitch process.



HONDA

Honda

Later in November, **Mumbrella revealed that Honda had sent out a RFP for its media account** after 17 years with Public Groupe's Zenith. The pitch



Kia Motors (\$30 million)

Part of the Hyundai Motor Group, Kia Motors set out to review its media agencies around June. The previous arrangement had seen Melbourne indie Advertising Associates handle the business' above the line (ATL) spend, while Havas Media Network had work on automotive brand's digital media **since 2017**. The outcome of the competitive pitch saw Havas dropped from the agency roster, with a consolidated media remit worth more than \$30 million handed to Advertising Associates.



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Later in November, [Mumbrella revealed that Honda had sent out a RFP for its media account](#) after 17 years with Public Groupe's Zenith. The pitch process is in its early days, with Zenith confirming it will not be contesting the account.



planning and buying, including YouTube and BVOD.



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Kalila Welch

Kalila Welch joined the Mumbrella editorial team in November 2021. She took a brief career break in mid 2023 to complete her Masters of Journalism before returning to Mumbrella in October 2023.

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The activewear brand pitched its media account a few months ago, selecting independent agency Murmur to handle ATL media, while Zenith won the digital media remit.

- Capilano

Indie agency Slingshot [picked up media for the honey brand in September](#).

- Inghams

Australia's largest integrated poultry supplier also [appointed Slingshot to handle its media strategy, planning, and buying in November](#).

This list was compiled based on the understood value of media accounts pitched in 2023, as well as industry consensus.

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