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# 34 Advertising Agency Search Consultants

By PETER | Published: MAY 7, 2019



## Advertising Agency Search Consultants – The Personal Shoppers Of The Ad World



I've updated the list of search consultants. 34 might not be the absolute number after updating. But, I can not update the URL – so, there. Let me know if I am missing any consultancies. Thanks.

Before I get into the subject, I want to make an important point. Whether or not your agency has the chops and appropriate expertise to get the attention of a search consultant, please try to look and act *different*.

Yes, you might be a great social media agency. But, I bet you have at least a dozen look-alike competitors. Ask how you will stand out under the scrutiny of expert consultants. Ask me to help you.

### THE SEARCH CONSULTANT

Advertising agency search consultants help clients locate the perfect agency out of hundreds, even thousands, of small and large agency options. It is estimated that about 10% to 15% of all searches use the services of a consultant (I am thinking about dollar volume, not total agency searches.) I suspect that the number of consultant-led pitches is well over 50% for clients that have large budgets, complicated accounts and now, highly specialized agency requirements.

### SHOULD YOUR AGENCY CONTACT SEARCH CONSULTANTS?

Should your agency contact the search consultants on this list? Well, yes *and* no.

Here is the drill. Most of these consultants work for larger clients and they have hundreds of agencies to keep track of. They get lots of incoming from agencies every day — see the interviews below. Based on my 28 years of conversations with search consultants, I can tell you that most of the incoming agency

information gets ignored even in a fast-paced world where consultants need to keep abreast of the agency universe. Why? Agencies get ignored because most agencies do not really have a *realistic* reason to get on the consultant's radar.

Realistic? Consultants are primarily interested in a core set of agency attributes. Obviously, they are looking for agencies that match their current searches. However, in general, any new agency (new to market or new to them) needs to have some distinctive attribute to get a consultant's attention. That means having a good reason for these busy consultants to pay attention to *you*. What might that mean?

Here are some examples of what I would get my attention if I were a consultant:

- Are you seriously creative (like really creative and can prove it?)
- Have you been discovered by the trade press?
- Can your agency handle really large, complex accounts?
- Do you have international offices?
- Did your team just leave a hot agency where y'all did famous work?
- Do you have media planning and buying expertise?
- Do you have demonstrable digital expertise? You can't just say we do social media. Did you crack mobile advertising?
- Do you have deep experience in an important client category?
- Are you known for your strategic chops?
- Is your name as ignore-free as Barton F. Graf 9000?
- Is your agency or pitch totally Unignorable like Canada's John St.?

Get the picture?

The bottom line is that you need to think about what agency attributes will be of value to the consultant. Do you have some special sauce that a consultant needs to know about for *their* business and clients? Before you make any contact, please take the time to understand what search consultants look for.

## EXPERT OPINIONS



First, my opinion.... do not waste a consultant's time.

I have valuable interviews with advertising industry experts in my book on pitching: ***The Levitan Pitch. Buy This Book. Win More Pitches.*** (Buy it at the top of this page). A couple of interviews are with

industry-leading search consultants. Here are two responses that go directly to the question... "*should my agency make contact with a search consultant?*"

The first answer is from Russel Wholwerth of External View Consulting. The second is from Darren Woolley of Australia's TrinityP3 — both are on the master list.

***PL: I assume that you get a lot of incoming from agencies. How could a small to mid-sized agency get your attention? What attributes should they have before they make contact?***

*they have before they bother making contact.*

**Russel:** *We get at least 20 to 30 inquiries from agencies every week. Most agencies act as if they have no clue how we operate or that they will need to really stand out to generate interest. Great work will always get our attention. Also, agencies that are off the standard deviation curve excite us. Too many agencies sound and look alike.*

**Darren:** *Interestingly we have noted a change in the marketing mix. Even advertisers from multinational companies, with a global or regional agency alignment are increasingly interested in small to mid-size agencies to improve and often compensate for deficiencies in the aligned agency. Therefore med-sized agencies with particular strengths are increasingly important and in demand in the agency mix. As are smaller agencies that can articulate and prove a core specialist competency that makes them distinctive from others is a real benefit.*

So, to answer the “should you make contact” with national search consults question... I’d do these three things to start the process.

1. Make sure that your agency can stand out in a national or international search by having something special to sell. Brand distinction rules here. These are good days for specialists. Be one.
2. Understand the needs of the consultancy you are pitching before you make any contact. Do some research and don’t just mass mail every consultant. Use your marketing gray-matter to think through how to sell what you have to sell. You may only have one shot.
3. Make sure your agency is listed in consultant agency databases.

On to the list. Yes, it is unwieldily. That’s why you need to take the appropriate time to study each consultant before you make any contact. Otherwise, you will be wasting a lot of time. Especially, yours.

## The Consultant List

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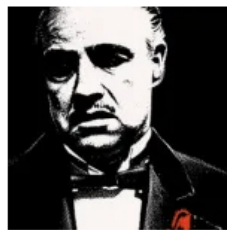
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## 4 Comments



**Darren Woolley**

Posted February 24, 2015 at | [Permalink](#)

Thanks for including us in this list Peter, but it has made me realise I need to change the company name to AAAAAAsia TrinityP3 to get to the top of the list.

[Reply](#)



**Jeff Ginsberg**

Posted February 18, 2016 at | [Permalink](#)

Intriguegraphics.com

I've been in this business a long time and handled some of the biggest names in the CE industry, Housewares, Jewelry, Food and Wine & Spirit. Not many people know my name. Jeffrey Ginsberg. Can we talk?

[Reply](#)



**Robby Berthume**

Posted August 10, 2017 at | [Permalink](#)

Hi Peter, I'd love to add my agency matchmaking company, BullandBeard.com to your list!

[Reply](#)



**Chuck Meyst**

Posted February 21, 2018 at | [Permalink](#)



Peter – Still a great list but some of the players aren't playing anymore. But that's to be expected. Was surprised to see one prominent player explaining how they choose to ignore 4A's rules & regs. What's missing (thank goodness) are the "aggregators" or directory folks who practice data scraping to build their offerings.

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### Why Peter?






I work closely with small and medium ad agencies to deliver customized strategic business development plans.


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