

# Managing specialist agencies with collaborative model

While not ideal in terms of time and cost management, relationships with multiple agencies are a solution to the growing number of specialisms in marketing and advertising that need to be provided to marketers, for them to reach their respective target audiences.



Although there could be an argument for reducing the number of agencies on a client roster, there is an equal argument for retaining the specialist agencies and then creating and managing a collaborative model, which will meet the needs of the brand - and therefore the marketer.

Johanna McDowell, MD of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS) says, "In any organisation, the marketing director or manager has an eco-system that sees him/her central to operations, with the C-suite being their first level of interaction. Surrounding the C-suite - and still within the marketing eco-system - are the agencies that the marketer must deal with.

"Sectors under the watch of the marketing director include customers, suppliers, logistics, procurement and a variety of agencies such as media, digital and more.

"More often than not we find that there is little to no communication between these agencies, leaving the marketer to cobble together mini mosaics of communications in order to see and report on the bigger picture."

An organisation actively involved in a network of international players, the IAS stays abreast of local and international trends in order to keep successful marketers ahead of the curve; providing solutions and best-practise methodologies to ensure agency communication that prevents downtime.

The IAS Model on Collaboration is designed to get the various agencies within the marketing manager's eco-system to communicate effectively with one another in a manner that fits seamlessly within a bigger picture that makes sense to all. This model works for multiple agencies in collaboration. These agencies could be in the same agency group or in different agency groups - the communication issues are the same.

"The marketer's communications must always be in the best interests of the brand and the end user, which is why the bespoke Collaboration Model speaks to the needs of each marketer, understanding that one size does not fit all in the industry, as no two sets of circumstances are the same.

"The Model helps the marketer to understand who the lead agency is in any project, and enables him or her to retain effective communication with all agencies through methods of collaboration that suit their specific eco system."

In designing the Collaboration Model per client, the company undertakes a confidential survey among all appropriate agencies, which gives it a picture of the overall eco system, and where lines of communication may be down.

"Years of experience in agencies across all spheres of the system enables us to review what is causing communication issues, and develop a strategy for our clients to improve those areas."

The Collaboration Model, a first in South Africa, is currently being rolled out nationwide. The company sees this as a most ethical and practical solution to overcoming the constraints of ineffective communication in any marketer's eco system.

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