

The value of chemistry between agency and client

 By Johanna McDowell

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The key to a long-term relationship between the advertising agency and client is long-lasting chemistry that works.



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Companies spend thousands to get their brand marketing right and in doing so rely on their advertising agency for its unique marketing flair. Perhaps the most important ingredient to a successful long-term relationship is good chemistry between client and agency.

Building sincere interpersonal and professional relationships is important to producing a successful campaign and enables the agency to deliver an effective marketing drive, that not only meets the client's objectives but also stands out from the rest.

Chemistry between an advertising agency and the client is essential because it allows for a productive working relationship that encourages free thinking and a platform for both clients and agency to express ideas and opinions honestly and clearly.

Chemistry that works between an agency and client creates an energy that encourages both parties to think out of the box and produce innovative ideas and campaigns. More importantly it creates a climate of acceptance and trust.

Developing chemistry is not easy, but if an advertising agency understands the brand ethos of the client, producing a creative campaign that fits their vision can be achieved successfully.

“ Agencies must have their fingers on the pulse in terms of innovation and believe in their abilities in order to guide the client towards the design and implementation of a successful advertising campaign. It is also important for senior partners from the agency to be involved in the campaign in order for the client to feel assured that the entire agency is looking after their account. ”

Maintaining and nurturing the working relationship between the client and agency is not about long lunches, but one of respect, trust and confidentiality.

Understand the action plan

Frequent account mishandling could result in a breakdown in trust, and it is essential that the agency creates a stable environment. Tight briefs that clearly outline the strategy is vital for clients and agency to fully understand the action plan to avoid misunderstandings in the future. An important component to a good working relationship which is often neglected, is the complete transparency in the costing; and up to date and accurate invoicing and quoting at all times.

A breakdown in chemistry can be a consequence of the agency, who are naturally creative people, pitching a groundbreaking campaign the client does not accept and this often results in the agency becoming inhibited in the future.

Often clients want 'award-winning' advertising without really understanding what that means. While it is important for an agency to conceptualise an advertising campaign that works, it is equally important that an agency not force their ideas onto the client. Finding that balance is good chemistry.

Perhaps the most important element to chemistry is creative energy. Most often, the reputation of an agency is a result of that particular energy they possess. Embedding that energy within the DNA of an agency seems to be the common chemistry factor among the most successful agencies.

ABOUT JOHANNA MCDOWELL

MD of the Independent Agency Search and Selection Company (IAS), and partner in Scopen Africa, with a background that includes being on both the agency and the client side of

the fence, Johanna McDowell is well-placed to offer commentary on marketing and advertising in the South African and international contexts. She built her career in marketing and advertising since 1974, holding directorship in both SA and British advertising agencies. She was MD of Grey Phillips Advertising in 1988.

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