Enhancing CLIENT-AGENCY Relationships

2015 ANA Survey Research

ANA surveys are based on topics identified by the ANA and its membership as critical issues and emerging trends that nearly all marketers face today.
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In first quarter 2015 (between January 28 and February 25), ANA conducted parallel surveys among ANA members and agencies on issues related to the client/agency relationship. The survey covered issues including:

- **The overall strength of the client/agency relationship**
- **The agency's role as a business partner**
- **Agency compensation**
- **Process management (i.e., client approvals, briefing)**
- **And more — including how agencies work with other agencies, agency talent, and procurement**

The survey was completed by 126 ANA members and 105 agencies, providing the opportunity to compare and contrast responses from the two groups. Agency participants self-identified as being from full service agencies, i.e., media and creative (58 percent), creative agencies (23 percent), media agencies (12 percent), and specialty/other agencies (7 percent).

ANA would like to acknowledge Marc S. Strachan, vice president, on premise strategy and multicultural marketing at Diageo North America for providing the inspiration for this survey.
Key Findings

First, the good news on client/agency relationships. Both clients and agencies agree that:

- Their client/agency relationships are strong.
- A long-term client/agency relationship is important.
- They trust the other.

Further, both clients and agencies agree that the agency is a valued business partner, plays an important role in the client’s business strategy, and is influential in driving business results.

However, there are pockets of dissatisfaction.

- Clients and agencies are not in alignment on the fairness of their compensation arrangements. Agencies have much lower levels of agreement that compensation agreements are fair. Both clients and agencies are lukewarm on the value of performance-based compensation as a motivator of agency performance.
- Clients and agencies are not in agreement on whether clients provide clear assignment briefings to agencies. Only 27 percent of agencies believe clients do a good job (and zero percent strongly agree). However, 58 percent of clients think they perform well on briefs.
- Clients and agencies are not in agreement that the client approval process works well. Only 36 percent of agencies are in agreement (and only 2 percent strongly agree) versus 54 percent of clients.
- Clients and agencies have different views on the value procurement adds to client/agency relationships. Only 47 percent of clients agree that procurement adds value, while just 10 percent of agencies agree.

Other key findings of the research:

- Both clients and agencies agree that clients recognize the agency for great work, but a smaller percentage agree that clients inspire the agency to do their best work.
- Clients and agencies agree that agencies work well with other agencies — but the level of agreement among clients is much lower than it is for agencies.
- Clients and agencies have modest levels of agreement that agencies have the right talent to meet the needs of clients over the next two years. Clients, in particular, do not have strong agreement.
- Both clients and agencies agree that in-house resources (at the client) are increasingly becoming an option for client communications needs. A previous ANA report, “The Rise of the In-House Agency,” indicates an increasing shift in client sentiment to taking more services in house.

To foster a more-productive relationship, both constituents agree on the importance of:

- Clients providing better briefing and streamlining approvals. The ANA and 4A’s will be collaborating to determine how best to accomplish this.
- Agencies being more proactive and having a better understanding/greater empathy of client business.

“It is as much the client as the agency who can make the business successful.”

—Survey Respondent
### Detailed Findings

#### Strength of Client/Agency Relationships

Both clients and agencies agree that their client/agency relationships are strong — 87 percent of clients and 86 percent of agencies agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong> Our agency relationships are strong.</td>
<td><strong>87%</strong></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong> Our client relationships are strong.</td>
<td><strong>86%</strong></td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Importance of Long-term Client/Agency Relationships

Both clients and agencies agree that a long-term client/agency relationship is important — 89 percent of clients and 97 percent of agencies agree. Interestingly, agencies are much more likely to strongly agree — 74 percent versus 37 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong> A long-term client/agency relationship is important.</td>
<td><strong>89%</strong></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong> A long-term client/agency relationship is important.</td>
<td><strong>97%</strong></td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.*
Enhancing Client/Agency Relationships — 2015 ANA Survey Research

Detailed Findings

**Trust**

Both clients and agencies agree that they trust the other — 78 percent of clients agree that they trust their agency and 79 percent of agencies agree that they trust their client. Those are very encouraging results, especially considering reports over the past year of transparency issues between agencies and clients. Note that recent industry news on agency rebates broke after this survey closed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong> I trust my agency.</td>
<td><strong>78%</strong></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong> Clients trust the agency.</td>
<td><strong>79%</strong></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Agency as a Valued Business Partner/Role in Business Strategy and Driving Results**

Both clients and agencies agree that the agency is a valued business partner, plays an important role in the client’s business strategy, and plays an important role in driving business results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong> The agency is a valued client business partner.</td>
<td><strong>86%</strong></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong> The agency is a valued client business partner.</td>
<td><strong>74%</strong></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Agency as a Valued Business Partner/Role in Business Strategy and Driving Results

### The Agency’s Role in Business Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong> The agency plays an important role in our business strategy.</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong> The agency plays an important role in our clients’ business strategy.</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Agency’s Role in Driving Business Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong> The agency plays an important role in driving business results.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong> The agency plays an important role in driving business results.</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.*
**Compensation**

Both clients and agencies agree that agency fees are an important consideration in client/agency relationships — 86 percent of clients and 84 percent of agencies agree.

Clients and agencies are not in alignment, however, on the fairness of their compensation arrangements — only 40 percent of agencies agree that their compensation agreements are fair versus 72 percent of clients.

### Importance of Agency Fees in Client/Agency Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency fees are an important consideration in client/agency relationships.</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency fees are an important consideration in client/agency relationships.</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Compensation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our compensation arrangements are fair.</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our compensation arrangements are fair.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compensation

Both clients and agencies are lukewarm on the value of performance-based compensation as a motivator of agency performance — 50 percent of clients and 53 percent of agencies agree that performance-based compensation motivates agency performance. Levels of strong agreement are very low, at 16 percent and 14 percent, respectively.

Performance-Based Compensation

### Client:
Performance-based compensation motivates agency performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>50%</strong></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Agency:
Performance-based compensation motivates agency performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>53%</strong></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment Briefing

Clients and agencies are not in agreement on whether clients provide clear assignment briefings to agencies. Only 27 percent of agencies are in agreement (and zero percent strongly agree) versus 58 percent of clients. There is a great opportunity here!

Assignment Briefing

### Client:
We provide clear assignment briefings to our agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>58%</strong></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Agency:
Clients provide clear assignment briefings to agencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>27%</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Client Approval Process

Clients and agencies are also not in agreement that the client approval process works well. Only 36 percent of agencies are in agreement (and only 2 percent strongly agree) versus 54 percent of clients. There is also opportunity here!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong> The client approval process works well.</td>
<td><strong>54%</strong></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong> The client approval process works well.</td>
<td><strong>36%</strong></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.*

Client Recognition

Both clients and agencies agree that clients recognize the agency for great work — 76 percent of clients and 75 percent of agencies agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong> We recognize the agency for great work.</td>
<td><strong>76%</strong></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong> Clients recognize the agency for great work.</td>
<td><strong>75%</strong></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Client Inspiration

A smaller percentage agree that clients inspire the agency to do their best work — 58 percent of clients and 47 percent of agencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong>&lt;br&gt;We help inspire the agency to do their best work.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Our clients help inspire us to do our best work.</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Agencies Working Well With Other Agencies

Clients and agencies agree that agencies work well with other agencies — but those levels of agreement differ. While 88 percent of agencies agree, 65 percent of clients agree. Meanwhile, only 11 percent of clients strongly agree versus 36 percent of agencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Our agencies work well with other agencies.</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong>&lt;br&gt;We work well with other agencies.</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Agency Talent**

Do agencies have the right talent to meet the needs of clients over the next two years? Clients and agencies are in overall alignment here as 56 percent of clients and 64 percent of agencies agree. However, clients, in particular, do not have strong agreement (only 6 percent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client: The agency has the right talent to meet our needs over the next two years.</th>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency: We have the right talent to meet the needs of our clients over the next two years.</th>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.*

**Procurement**

Clients and agencies have different views on the value procurement adds in client/agency relationships. While 47 percent of clients agree that procurement adds value, only 10 percent of agencies agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client: Procurement adds value in client/agency relationships.</th>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency: Procurement adds value in client/agency relationships.</th>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In-House Resources

Both clients and agencies agree that in-house resources (at the client) are increasingly becoming an option for client communications needs — 54 percent of clients and 47 percent of agencies agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-house resources are increasingly becoming an option for my communications needs.</td>
<td><strong>54%</strong></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-house resources (at the client) are increasingly becoming an option for client communications needs.</td>
<td><strong>47%</strong></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fostering a More Productive Client/Agency Relationship

Clients and agencies were each asked two open-ended questions on how each constituent could foster a more productive client/agency relationship.

**How Clients Can Improve**

*Clients were asked, “What could your organization do to foster a more productive client/agency relationship?”*

Top responses:
- Better briefing
- Streamline approvals

*Agencies were asked, “What could your clients do to foster a more productive client/agency relationship?”*

Top responses:
- Streamline approvals
- Involve the agency earlier
- Treat agencies like partners
- Better briefing
- Be more transparent

Both constituents agree on the importance of clients proving better briefing and streamlining approvals.
How Agencies Can improve

*Clients were asked, “What could your agency do to foster a more productive client/agency relationship?”*

Top responses:
- Be more proactive
- Have a better understanding of the client’s business
- Integrate/collaborate with other agencies
- Increase transparency

*Agencies were asked, “What could your organization do to foster a more productive client/agency relationship?”*

Top responses:
- Greater empathy for client perspective
- Be more proactive
- Listen
- Develop talent

Both constituents agree on the importance of agencies being more proactive and having a better understanding/greater empathy of client business.
It’s the brief, stupid!

The brief is the foundation of the agency work product. Over the past year, there have been numerous conversations in ANA committee meetings regarding subpar assignment briefs being developed by clients which, in turn, lead to disappointing work from agencies. Initially, this was a bit of a surprise. The briefing process has been around forever, therefore shouldn’t best practices already be well established and in wide use? Apparently not.

Briefing may be more complicated now than ever. Media is hyper-fragmented, clients are working with multiple agencies, there is more project work, the pace of change is faster than ever, and agencies have been disintermediated to some extent (due to factors including clients using more in-house resources, production decoupling, and clients working directly with media companies).

Agencies emphatically believe that clients do not provide clear assignment briefings. Not a single agency respondent (out of 105), “strongly agreed” that clients provide clear assignment briefings to agencies! Clients must take note of this and commit to change. Bad briefs are frustrating to agencies and cost clients both time and money — for agency rework and the resulting agency fees — not to mention the opportunity costs of subpar creative in the marketplace. Both clients and agencies agree on the importance of better briefing to foster a more-productive client/agency relationship.

ANA will focus attention, going forward, on helping the advertising community improve the assignment briefing process. We’ll work with the 4A’s to strongly incorporate the agency perspective.

Deliverables are to be determined but could include:

- Conducting additional research to get a more-specific understanding of what’s currently wrong with the assignment briefing process.
- Identifying clients with “best in class” briefing processes (perhaps doing that with strong input from the 4A’s) and identifying the characteristics of such briefings.
- Holding ANA committee meetings (specifically, the Agency Relations Committee) and/or School of Marketing classes that focus on assignment briefings.
- Asking 4A’s to share their learning and perhaps developing some joint ANA/4A’s guidance on assignment briefings.

A related “pain point” identified in the survey is the client approval process. Only two percent of agencies strongly agree that the client approval process works well. Both clients and agencies agree on the importance of an efficient client approval process to foster a more-productive client/agency relationship. Many solutions to this issue are fairly obvious: have fewer people involved in the client approval process, reduce the number of approval layers, and provide access to senior-level decision makers earlier in the process. As we move forward on our work to improve assignment briefings, we’ll also incorporate learning along the way on optimizing the client approval process.
About the ANA

The ANA (Association of National Advertisers) provides leadership that advances marketing excellence and shapes the future of the industry. Founded in 1910, the ANA's membership includes more than 650 companies with 10,000 brands that collectively spend over $250 billion in marketing and advertising. The ANA also includes the Business Marketing Association (BMA), and the Brand Activation Association (BAA), which operate as divisions of the ANA. The ANA advances the interests of marketers and promotes and protects the well-being of the marketing community. For more information, visit www.ana.net, follow us on Twitter, or join us on Facebook.

Additional ANA Resources

Marketers are encouraged to tap into the various resources of the ANA to learn more about the marketing industry:

ANA Marketing Knowledge Center: To find articles, toolkits, case studies, and presentations on a range of marketing topics, visit www.ana.net/mkc, or to submit a customized information request to our Research Service, visit www.ana.net/asktheexpert.

ANA Survey Research: ANA surveys are based on topics identified by the ANA and its membership as critical issues and emerging trends that nearly all marketers face today. To access survey reports, which allow you to tap into members-only research and perspectives, please visit www.anasurveys.net. To join our survey panel of more than 1,000 marketers and participate in industry leadership, please visit www.ana.net/pulsesurvey.

ANA Insight Briefs: ANA Insight Briefs are compilations of the ANA's best resources on a given subject. Filled with charts, quotes, and client-side marketer case studies, they provide today's busy marketer with top-line information on the hottest topics in marketing. For more information, please visit www.ana.net/insightbriefs.

ANA Committees: ANA committees offer members a forum for sharing best practices, the opportunity for peer-to-peer networking and benchmarking, and the ability to learn about new industry developments through the exchange of ideas with guest speakers and fellow committee members. ANA committees also often take leadership roles in shaping industry issues. For more on ANA committees, please go to www.ana.net/committees.

ANA Conferences: The ANA helps the marketing community stay abreast of cutting-edge trends and best practices via a comprehensive calendar of national conferences. In addition, the ANA goes on the road to offer members a portfolio of peer-to-peer gatherings that afford opportunities to discuss special needs in a convenient, informal setting. Find more information at www.ana.net/events.

ANA School of Marketing: The ANA School of Marketing offers marketers on-site training sessions and full-day classes that help marketers grow as brand builders. Find more information at www.ana.net/schoolofmarketing.
## The Relationship Overall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Statement</th>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client: Our agency relationships are strong.</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: Our client relationships are strong.</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client: A long-term client/agency relationship is important.</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: A long-term client/agency relationship is important.</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client: I trust my agency.</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: Clients trust the agency.</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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## The Role/Contribution of the Agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Statement</th>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client: The agency is a valued client business partner.</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: The agency is a valued client business partner.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client: The agency plays an important role in our business strategy.</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: The agency plays an important role in our clients' business strategy.</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client: The agency plays an important role in driving business results.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: The agency plays an important role in driving business results.</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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## Compensation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Statement</th>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client: Agency fees are an important consideration in client/agency relationships.</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency: Agency fees are an important consideration in client/agency relationships.</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client: Our compensation arrangements are fair.</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: Our compensation arrangements are fair.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client: Performance-based compensation motivates agency performance.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: Performance-based compensation motivates agency performance.</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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## Appendix A - Summary of Statement Results

### PROCESSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client: We provide clear assignment briefings to our agencies.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency: Clients provide clear assignment briefings to agencies.</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client: The client approval process works well.</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: The client approval process works well.</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### QUALITATIVE FACTORS — THE CLIENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client: We recognize the agency for great work.</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: Clients recognize the agency for great work.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client: We help inspire the agency to do their best work.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: Our clients help inspire us to do our best work.</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### QUALITATIVE FACTORS — THE AGENCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client: Our agencies work well with other agencies.</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: We work well with other agencies.</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client: The agency has the right talent to meet our needs over the next two years.</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: We have the right talent to meet the needs of our clients over the next two years.</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### OTHER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Top 2-Box</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client: Procurement adds value in client-agency relationships.</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: Procurement adds value in client-agency relationships.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client: In-house resources are increasingly becoming an option for my communications needs.</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: In-house resources (at the client) are increasingly becoming an option for client communications needs.</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

What Could Clients Do to Foster a More-Productive Client/Agency Relationship
(verbatim highlights from open-ended questions)

1. Clients: What could your organization do to foster a more-productive client/agency relationship?

Better Briefing

- Provide clear, concise creative briefs and stay on strategy.
- Clearer briefs.
- Be better and clearer about creative briefs.
- Deliver better briefs to the agencies.
- Give them better direction.
- Better training on agency management, including brief writing.
- More collaborative cross agency briefings and brainstorming; better briefs.
- Introduce a standardized strategy brief and process.
- Give clearer briefs.
- Involve all our agencies in the upfront briefing process.
- Be clearer with real objectives.
- Be clear and concise with the ask.
- Consistent process for approvals and feedback.
- Give more clear direction.
- We could certainly do deeper business briefings to help the agency.

Streamline Approvals

- Remove layers for more direct communication.
- Avoid too many cooks in the kitchen from multiple divisions.
- Create more clarity around the approval process and make it more streamlined so all materials don’t require approval all the way up through the CMO.
- Not have so many layers of approval.
- Fewer cooks in the kitchen.
- Focus the decision making to interaction to few at our company, rather than many.
- Faster, more-predictable internal approval process.
- Streamline approvals.
- Provide agencies with senior-level approval/feedback earlier.
- Get all senior-level stakeholders to approve the brief before work begins.
- A simpler approval process on work is also always a good strategy.
2. Agencies: What could your clients do to foster a more-productive client/agency relationship?

Streamline Approvals

- Fewer approval layers.
- Reduce the number of decision makers and allow the agency to present and discuss ideas with those decision makers directly.
- Clients could simplify their structure and processes to further enhance the work and efficiencies. Some clients, not all, have embraced a highly matrixed, complicated structure/process/method in several key areas that affect not only approval processes but the approval and implementation of short-, medium- and long-term strategies and execution, many of which are driven by “agency relations” and “procurement” departments. In our eyes, a far more streamlined, linear process would match clients’ calls for more simplicity and efficiency.
- Less complex process; nimbler teams.
- More single points of contact. Too many clients participating in strategic and financial discussions, many times without an understanding of the whole picture.
- Streamline the approval process and insist that lead agencies involve others early in the strategy process.
- Enable us to interact with decision-makers more frequently.
- Streamline the decision-making process. Involve fewer individuals in the development.

Involve the Agency Early

- Include us in the earliest stages of the process. We do our best work when we are deeply involved at the insights stage.
- Bring us into the process earlier.
- Brief earlier.
- Make sure that we are involved early enough in the strategic business objectives.
- Bring agency in earlier when developing business strategies.
- We are often called too late in the process to really drive as much cost savings and efficiency out of the merger/acquisition/rebrand brand change — and also leaving the client in a situation where they have to scramble, not get enough budget, and not achieve the brand they desired in the first place — when all these things could have been better managed if taken into account and presented earlier in the process.
- The strength of our relationships and the value we can provide relies on timing.
- Always invite us in early.
- Bring us in earlier.

Treat Agencies Like Partners

- Treat as partners that help to grow clients businesses, not like parts suppliers.
- View us as ‘marketing partners’ versus ad suppliers.
- Think about the agency more as a business partner than an external vendor.
- Treat agencies like partners versus vendors.
- Treat the relationship like a partnership.
- We want to be true partners.
- Treat agencies as partners not vendors.
- Desire to be seen as the strategic and operational lead in brand implementation.
- Treat the agency as partners rather than staff augmentation.
- Demand business partners who act like business partners.
Better Briefing

- Better briefs.
- Provider better direction and clear briefs.
- Better briefing with more time to add value.
- Better briefs.
- Better input and direction.
- Better briefs and stick to them.
- Provide clear input and background relevant to project or campaign at hand and either distill the information to prioritized elements or allow the agency to distill the info based on what it knows.

Be More Transparent

- Be more transparent about their organization and their goals.
- Greater transparency into actual budgets.
- More transparency and inclusion.
- Transparency and honesty on how the agency is viewed on a consistent basis.
- Transparency even on the hard conversations.
- Be more transparent. Communicate targets that both marketing and procurement must deliver to and help the agency deliver to both. This would allow for a mutually sustainable partnership.
Appendix C

What Could Agencies Do to Foster a More-Productive Client/Agency Relationship
(verbatim highlights from open-ended questions)

1. Clients: What could your agency do to foster a more-productive client/agency relationship?

Be More Proactive

- Be more proactive in driving alternative media options.
- Be more proactive.
- Come to us unsolicited with ideas that the agency knows we can afford/would be willing to do.
- Be more proactive than reactive.
- Be more proactive and bring more innovative solutions to the table.
- Be more proactive.
- Adapt a more proactive approach.
- Provide proactive ideas and thinking.
- It’s a cliché, but still, we are always looking to our agency for more proactive behavior and ideas.
- More ideas.

Have a Better Understanding of the Client’s Business

- Better understanding of our business needs.
- Understand our business better.
- Take deeper steps to reassess and understand current business challenges. Are you solving the same problem as 6 or 12 months ago?
- Have a better understanding of our strategy and the category.
- Spend more time in our office/get to know our business dynamics better.
- Know my business better.
- Really better understand our business. Execution is great, but we need more business acumen grounded in deeper understanding.

Integrate/Collaborate With Other Agencies

- Partner across holding company affiliates to bring integrated team that is more efficient and doesn’t add layers.
- They can work more collaboratively within their different groups as well as with different agencies.
  Too often there seem to be a turf war.
- Be more collaborative with other agencies to deliver the best results for the client, rather than protective over their share of wallet.
- More collaborative cross-agency briefings and brainstorming.
- Our key AORs need to communicate better with tactical agencies.
- Streamline their network P&L (have one!) to support our business, not theirs.
Increase Transparency

- Be more transparent.
- Be more transparent about resources and finances. Be open about their challenges working with us and suggesting realistic solutions.
- Increase transparency.
- Transparency in everything, candor when things are wrong.
- Transparent pricing and work/product reports.
- Continue to increase transparency,
- Be more transparent, less arrogant.
- Provide greater transparency to media activations.
- Transparency on what is working and what is not.
- Transparency on making money.
- Be more transparent with the work process.
- Greater transparency, especially at the holding company level.

2. Agencies: What could your organization do to foster a more-productive client/agency relationship?

Greater Empathy for Client Perspective

- More thinking like a client and sensitivity to what client champions have to do to foster an idea and bring it to fruition.
- Try to understand the client’s position.
- Agencies could do a better job of understanding the role of client marketers within their organization and the influencers that affect their work products.
- More empathy for client realities.
- Better understand their challenges and stress points.
- Better job of understanding the role of client marketers.
- Recognize that client needs go beyond great ideas alone. They need great ideas that address real business issues.
- Understand and contribute to the clients’ holistic business, not just the advertising or media.

Be More Proactive

- Continue to provide more ideas and initiatives to our clients. The best relationships are built by being on your toes with a client, not on your heels.
- Be more proactive — think big, hit clients with more ideas, push the envelope.
- Provide added value initiatives.
- Become more proactive with involvement, discovery, ideas.
- More relevant, unsolicited ideas.
- Be more proactive in coming up with strategic solutions for clients.
Listen

- Listen to feedback better.
- Listen hard to their needs.
- Listen to client concerns.
- Listen more carefully to client needs.
- Listen more, speak less.

Develop Talent

- Always be looking for new talent to infuse the agency.
- Hire more well-rounded talent to be sure efforts are aligned with business objectives.
- More training/skills development in business, technical areas, client verticals.
- Insure we have the right talent, services, and solutions.
Appendix D - Client Survey

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Please answer for your “average” agency relationship.
Scale: Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Agree; Strongly Agree

1. Our agency relationships are strong.
2. I trust my agency.
3. Our compensation arrangements are fair.
5. The agency is a valued client business partner.
6. The agency plays an important role in our business strategy.
7. The agency plays an important role in driving business results.
8. Procurement adds value in client-agency relationships.
9. We provide clear assignment briefings to our agencies.
10. We help inspire the agency to do their best work.
11. The client approval process works well.
12. A long-term client-agency relationship is important.
13. Agency fees are an important consideration in client-agency relationships.
14. In-house resources are increasingly becoming an option for my communications needs.
15. Our agencies work well with other agencies.
16. We recognize the agency for great work.
17. The agency has the right talent to meet our needs over the next two years.

What could your agency do to foster a more-productive client-agency relationship?

What could your organization do to foster a more-productive productive client-agency relationship?
Appendix E - Agency Survey

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please answer for your “average” client relationship. Scale: Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Agree; Strongly Agree

1. Our client relationships are strong.
2. Clients trust the agency.
3. Our compensation arrangements are fair.
5. The agency is a valued client business partner.
6. The agency plays an important role in our clients’ business strategy.
7. The agency plays an important role in driving client business results.
8. Procurement adds value in client/agency relationships.
9. Clients provide clear assignment briefings to agencies.
10. Our clients help inspire us to do our best work.
11. The client approval process works well.
12. A long-term client/agency relationship is important.
13. Agency fees are an important consideration in client/agency relationships.
14. In-house resources (at the client) are increasingly becoming an option for client communications needs.
15. We work well with other agencies.
16. Clients recognize the agency for great work.
17. We have the right talent to meet the needs of our clients over the next two years.

What could your clients do to foster a more-productive client/agency relationship?

What could your organization do to foster a more-productive productive client/agency relationship?

For classification purposes, what best describes your agency type?

- Full service agency (media and creative)
- Creative agency
- Media agency
- Specialty/other agency
Enhancing 
CLIENT & AGENCY 
Relationships