



Myths and Truths

of working with an agency

Working with an agency has the potential to be exciting, creative, thought-provoking, productive and even fun—truly one of the best parts of your job. Or among the worst.

Tapping into our 30+ years of experience, we offer these fundamental truths to help you get the best from your agency partner.



Myth

The agency selection process should always include a comparator, even if you know who you want to use.

Truth

RFPs that are sent to multiple agencies for the sake of process and fairness are generally anything but that. If you've found an agency partner that meets your needs, can work within your budget and you feel good about, go with them. It's very unlikely that the RFP process will change anything, and the engagement process and getting started have now been prolonged.

It acts with the cerebral cortex to
movements by coordinating the
muscles. It controls the
contain signals in the
the level of
smooth
ready instead of
coordinated
of
subordinate
been many
three, but
comparative
and substance
towards the
with a
of muscle
and
postural reflexes, and maintenance

control of muscle action, which is
ic neocerebellum (superior vermis
res), is closely associated with cerebellum. Normal muscle action involves
sides, the various members of which
ther as a unit. In any given action,
the
contracts and the
weakly at
a large
checking the
the synergists
the fixa-
contract
group
ready.

of the cerebellum
its body
cerebellum
important
computer
the cerebellum
proper
necessary
disease
etc.)
Predominant among them are ataxia
coordination, hypotonia, tremor



Having agencies tackle your strategic and creative challenges on spec is **the best way to determine which agency is the right partner.**

Truth

While there is absolutely a place for spec work, your current/real marketing challenges are probably not it. A smart agency works collaboratively with clients to develop the right strategic and creative solutions, and competitive spec work is, by definition, not too collaborative. If you're interested in learning how an agency works creatively and strategically, give them a hypothetical challenge with a solid amount of background information and input. If you like how they think, select them and then approach your real challenges as a team.



Myth

Agencies bring out the big guns for new business pitches and then give smaller accounts to the B team.



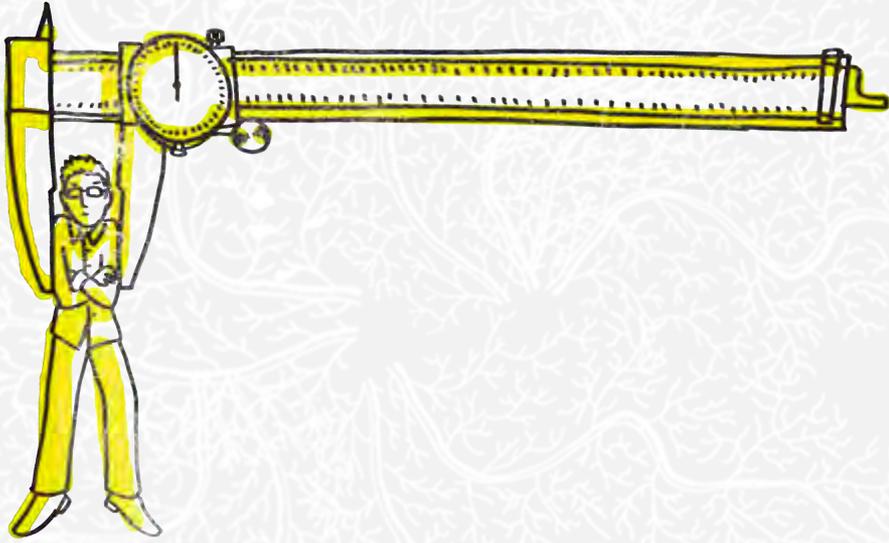
Truth

While there may be some unfortunate truth to this out there in the agency world, the best agencies don't have A, B and C teams. They do have multidisciplinary teams that are just right for various accounts. If you've been burned by this before, it's ok to ask, "Who will actually be working on my account?" during the agency selection process.

It starts with the cerebral cortex to
movements by coordinating the
muscles. It controls the signal
to maintain equilibrium in the
muscles, and also the level of
movements smooth, re-
sponding to the level of
coordinated movements and
subordinate movements.
There have been many theories
One theory, based on comparative
and substantiated by experimental
studies, the cerebellum is
with a somewhat different
of muscle activity, equilibrium and
postural reflexes, and maintenance

control of muscle action, which is
the neocerebellum (superior vermis
area), is closely associated with cere-
bellum. Normal muscle action involves
sides, the various members of which
act as a unit. In any given action,
the various muscles contract and the
muscles contract weakly at
times, as in a horse checking the
gait, the synergists contract, the fixa-
tors contract, and the group
contract. The synergists contract
weakly, the fixators contract
weakly, and the group contract
weakly. The synergists contract
weakly, the fixators contract
weakly, and the group contract
weakly. The synergists contract
weakly, the fixators contract
weakly, and the group contract
weakly.

of the cerebellum, the
with both the cerebellum
cerebellum, the cerebellum
important to the cerebellum
impulses from the cerebellum
the cerebellum. These cerebellum
proper, the cerebellum
necessary muscles for equilibrium
disease (cerebellar atrophy, etc.)
Predominant among them are ataxia
incoordination, hypotonia, tremor,



It's all about metrics and measurable ROI, all the time.

Truth

It's important to establish key performance indicators at the onset of a campaign/launch/initiative. But not all marketing successes can be quantified. Determining the success of a campaign should include a mix of KPIs that are both quantitative and qualitative. This approach accounts for things like ROI, as well as the changes in emotions and beliefs that marketing may be able to achieve.



Myth

Agencies do not like to share work.

Truth

Most of us are actually quite good at playing nice in the sandbox. Different agencies have different strengths and core competencies. Some of the most impactful campaigns may leverage the skills of several agencies, ranging from social to PR to traditional advertising and media. Being a good agency means doing the best work for our clients and if that means partnering, we're all for it. Like any good playdate, make sure the rules (roles and responsibilities) are clear from the beginning, and we can all have fun together and create impactful work.



Myth

If you share your budget with the agency, **they'll spend it all—and then some.**

Truth

Knowing the total available marketing budget helps agencies develop plans that are appropriate in scale and scope. Is it possible that the occasional big-ticket idea will fall outside of parameters? Of course it is. But any agency worth its salt will present these as additional-scope, pie-in-the-sky ideas in addition to the most relevant, in-budget solutions.



Myth

The best presentation is representative of the best work.

Truth

Agencies are full of thoughtful, creative, often introverted people who do great work—but aren't necessarily the greatest presenters. When your agency team is presenting work, listen for authenticity. Expect them to bring a strong point of view and to share insights that support the work. And then talk to each other. Collaboration leads to great work, and is best served by real people in real situations.



Myth

We've already finished the strategy/UVP/positioning. **So let's jump in at the creative phase.**



Truth

Yes, sometimes this makes perfect sense. More often than not, though, it simply doesn't. We've seen a rising trend to skip the "tough" stuff. Let's be honest, some might argue that strategy is not the sexy part of marketing. Sure, the deliverable is not all that shiny—often words on a page that will rarely be seen externally—but so essential to marketing success. Best of all, any good agency is capable of scaling their approach to strategy to ensure it meets your specific needs. Sometimes you simply need validation from outside experts to get it nailed. Regardless, skipping this essential step with your agency can do some serious damage to your marketing efforts.



Myth

It's too expensive to include my agency in my upfront planning.

Truth

Honestly, it can often cost more when you don't include your partners. While the immediate ROI may not be intuitive, planning with your agency can add significant value to the planning process. Partners provide outside perspective, unexpected insights and fresh ideas. Plus, being involved early in the process gives your agency the ability to be even more deeply immersed in your business. Some of the most compelling ideas that lead to the best work only reveal themselves when you get to know someone on a deeper level. A good agency partner will help you see the forest through the trees.



We don't need to nail down our strategy—it is fluid.

Truth

Let's face it, moving targets breed ineffective work. A little extra time spent solidifying your goals at the onset of a project can help keep everyone moving toward the same goal. Ensuring everyone has a clear understanding of expectations is essential to the success of any project. Without a clear vision and alignment, frustration can emerge and the divide between teams can widen. By tapping into your agency for a little outside perspective, they can be your ally in helping run a successful, relevant, business-building initiative. A clear strategic path will save you heartburn, stress and money. And you might actually enjoy the process.

Truth

Be externally audience-centric, not internally company-centric. We often see our clients bringing great insights gleaned from deep experience within their specific space. Sometimes those insights are based on perceptions passed throughout the company and not always validated. There is tremendous value in validating those perceptions. Audiences change. Motivations change. What held true a few years ago could be drastically different now. More often than not, you are not your product's target audience. And even if you are—you are innately biased. Real, authentic customer perspective can be the difference between marketing success and failure.



Myth

We can always “fix it in creative.”

Truth

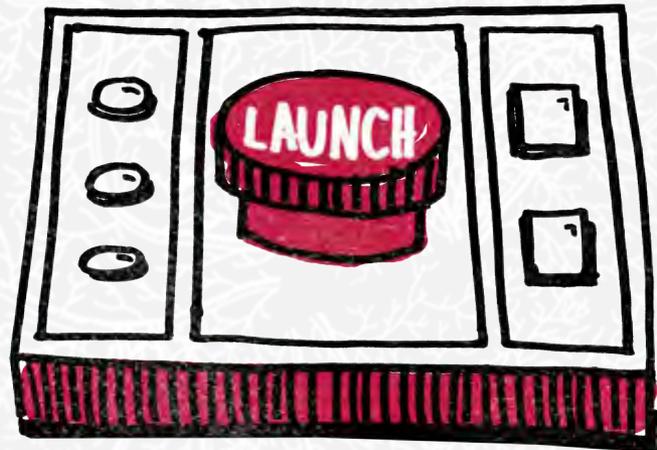
The best creative is built on a thoughtful strategy. You may not know how to craft and execute the work, but knowing your strategy and having clear business goals will keep your agency team on track and focused on the right things. This is essential for quality work.

It acts with the cerebral cortex to coordinate movements by coordinating the activity of muscles. It receives signals from the cerebellum and helps to maintain equilibrium. It helps to regulate the level of consciousness. It receives signals from the cerebellum and helps to coordinate movements. It receives signals from the cerebellum and helps to coordinate movements. It receives signals from the cerebellum and helps to coordinate movements.

control of muscle action, which is the neocerebellum (superior vermis area), is closely associated with cerebellum. Normal muscle action involves the various members of which act as a unit. In any given action, the various members of which act as a unit. In any given action, the various members of which act as a unit. In any given action, the various members of which act as a unit.

of the cerebellum. It receives signals from the cerebellum and helps to coordinate movements. It receives signals from the cerebellum and helps to coordinate movements. It receives signals from the cerebellum and helps to coordinate movements. It receives signals from the cerebellum and helps to coordinate movements.

HEADING ON THE HEAD SCRATCHERS



Myth

It's best to have all your tactics and channels finalized and perfected before launch.



Truth

Yes, executing a disciplined planning process is not only prudent but critical to your overall marketing efforts. However, now more than ever, there is also an opportunity to pilot, rather than perfect. We encourage our clients to set aside some budget to experiment and capitalize on new, unforeseen opportunities that develop along the way. Some of the most effective, impactful, engaging marketing has come at the 11th hour. Today we can be more nimble and respond to the market quickly.

Myth

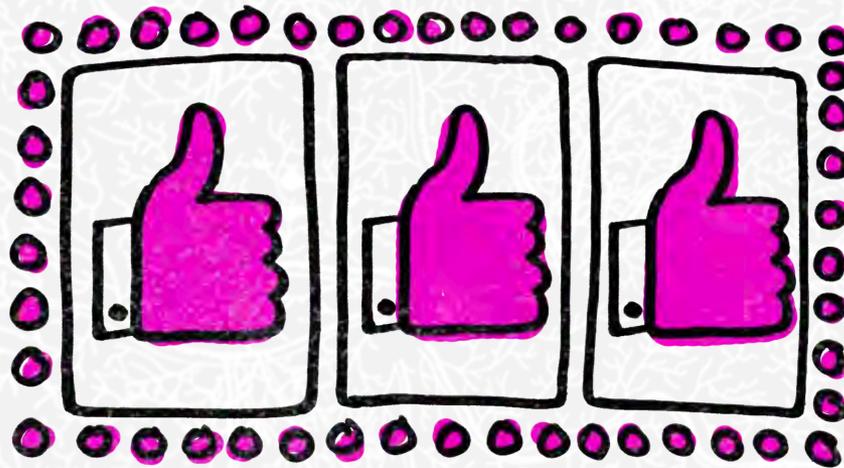
It's only necessary to get buy-in (approval) at the end of the process.





Truth

Okay, let's set aside our egos for a minute. Whether you are the true decision-maker or not, it is a mistake to not involve other invested stakeholders at the right times throughout the process. Knowing who is responsible for setting the course of action is one of the most important factors in determining the success or failure of a project. Skipping this step has led to some spectacular train wrecks and reworks throughout the history of marketing. Keep your decision-makers involved throughout the course of a project to ensure success. The vision from the executive team doesn't always match the understanding from the product managers. Know whose vision matters most and drive to it.



Myth

It's essential you reach creative consensus internally.

Truth

Make no mistake, large-scale consensus often breeds mediocrity. If you're not willing to take a little risk, you're wasting your money. Push your internal stakeholders. Be a champion for great work. Get comfortable being a little uncomfortable. Achieving a unified vision takes decisiveness and guts. In corporate environments, there can be many, many cooks in the marketing kitchen. Some have eyes on sales forecasts. Others on what you can and can't say from a legal or regulatory perspective. And there is often a middleman/woman trying to represent them all. Amid multiple roles and responsibilities, a unified vision can fall by the wayside.

