



THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

Six industry execs candidly discuss the challenges and opportunities of the agency-client relationship

As the industry continues to evolve, so must the agency-client relationship. How can pharma clients and their partners collaborate successfully in the face of mounting pressures? James Chase chairs a candid discussion with seasoned execs from both sides of the agency-client divide



James Chase
Editor in chief, MM&M



Martin Skelton
Managing director,
global healthcare,
Interpublic Group



Kristin Patton
Principal, KBP
Associates, contracted
to Zogenix



Zoe Dunn
Principal, Hale
Advisors



Matt Brown
General manager,
ICC Lowe



Shwen Gwee
Founder and host,
PharmFresh.TV
(now at Digitas
Health)



Janie Rodriguez
Senior manager,
primary care, OAB
marketing, Pfizer

STAY

TRUE TO YOUR

BRANDSELF™

authentic communication
is at the heart
of great creative

and that inspires a great
experience for everyone
Call Matt Brown @ 973.451.2212
& do your BrandSelf™ some good

ICCLOWE
think>feel>act

ICCLOWE
europe

ICCLOWE
trio

ICCLOWE
pace

ICCLOWE
redshift

ICCLOWE
thermal

ICCLOWE
srg

ICCLOWE LinHealth
mumbai

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



ALL PHOTOS: BILLBERNSTEIN

James Chase (MM&M): Each of you has worked closely on at least one side of the client-agency relationship. Drawing on your experiences, what are some of the biggest challenges you've encountered and how has the environment and the dynamic changed?

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): My greatest experiences were early in my agency career, with some really fantastic clients who saw it as an iterative process and a fun process. Over the years, that's really been challenged by pressures from all over.

It used to be that agencies were in a very safe place. It was about creative. That was the environment. But now the pressures of cost, and of timing, and of different dynamics, have changed the environment for creativity and, therefore, the environment for agencies.

If we could go back, I wouldn't do it over, I'd just go back... back to those days when we were free to strut around. And that's not just an agency thing. I think that, for both sides, there was a heyday, and there was a fun time, and it was enjoyable.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): I grew up in agency life, too, for 20 years and now I've been doing the client side for about three years. Nothing frustrates me more than to sit at a pitch on this side of the fence now, and see nothing but safe, safe, safe. So I wonder where both parties have lost the tolerance for showing both sides of the equation. You have to do a good job, you have to show your client that you heard them, that you're meeting the requisite requirements that were posted to you... but push the envelope, for God's sake. Because, as an agency, that's the only way you're going to stand out.

Whether we like it or not, there is more and more perceived "genericism" among the agencies. It breaks my heart to say it because I was in a lot of those situations trying to pull out something that made us stand out, but I think it's because so many people have lowered the baseline for what's acceptable.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): I've had the benefit of sitting on both sides; I spent 6-7 years on the client marketing side, and then on the

agency side with PR companies doing social media. I think a lot of times the client side tends to have this view of just looking in the box, and I think a lot of agencies hire people that only think inside the box. They think we have this regulatory environment where we can't go outside the box.

Unfortunately, the traditional way that the client side has been bringing up account teams or brand teams is through the sales force, which is not a marketing person, but somebody that has been dropped into that role. They don't think that way [about marketing] and they don't have that exposure to really understand how to even manage the right agencies.

When I was on the client side, I met with 14 agencies because that's what was needed to launch a brand, right? If you don't have somebody in place who understands how each one of these functions works across the entire franchise, or across the entire landscape – whether it's managed care, consumer, HCP, how they all work together – then it becomes this skewed view.

I think clients are very much at fault for doing the whole, "I want something new and creative and innovative," and then the minute you show it to them, they go, "Okay, we've done it before, right?"

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): We have spent most of our time, lately, working on the concept of organizational readiness with our pharmaceutical clients. Everybody is wrestling with this idea of the fact that we need to do business differently. Unfortunately, I feel like agencies are often lost at sea a little bit because they are struggling to bring new things to the table. It's like, if you make donuts this way all the time, and then [the client] asks, "Well, can you make me a cookie, too?" you'll say, "No, because we can only make donuts." So something needs to change in order to allow for that new opportunity to happen, and the way it is right now, it can't. You often still have this scenario of brand folks rotating on and off a brand account after 18 months, and within those 18 months, there are three different jobs on that brand.

So when they come into their agency, and they say, "I want to see something new, I want to see something different," it's because they're

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



throwing the baby out with the bath water of whatever the last person did who was in their job for 18 months, who threw that-guy-before-that's job out with the bath water. But they're only going to be there for 18 months. And the truth is that most really great, big ideas take longer than 18 months to actually get up, get launched, see through and get results. We have to change that.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): I think the client-side person needs to be strategic about the way they work and a lot of times, you can't really learn strategy without being somewhere for a period of time, and doing it, and seeing the results of what you've gotten, and then optimizing on it. So with this rotational schedule, sometimes we lose some of that strategy. It's seeing how all the different agencies work together, seeing what agency is best for what purpose, and seeing how something can prolong itself, rather than "let's start from scratch" every single time.

“What marketing wants to see is whether you have an ability to understand my business”

— Janie Rodriguez, Pfizer

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): This morning, I asked a product director, “What's your advice for everyone in the agency-client relationship?” because she served on both sides, too. She said, “You know, keep the objective foremost in everyone's mind. If you change the strategy, bring it back to the main objective. Sit down together, figure out what the plan of action is, and then really make sure that everything ladders back to that objective and that will keep you safe.”

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): I'm not sure that, as clients, we do a great job in the beginning of helping agencies understand the objective upfront. Not just the business objective, I think we cover that off, but what's the client's objective? Because we're held to a scorecard, and we expect that our agencies are going to be partners in helping us achieve that. I think that gets held closer to the vest than it should, and if there was transparency in that from the beginning ... well ... any agency who wouldn't rise to that occasion probably shouldn't be your agency.

Martin Skelton (IPG): Because of the churn that you mentioned, the agencies often end up actually being the holders of the brand, they're

the brand stewards. So if the marketers come and change everything too quickly without really listening to their agency's advice, then I think they often lose things.

Janie Rodriguez (Pfizer): I think that the whole pitching process is broken from the beginning in the way that it's managed. I mean, we have this person that comes from procurement and manages the process, where the client gives input and then the agency's the repository. But there's never really a true dialogue of what it is that the brand is looking for. What have we done historically that we hate? Where would we like to go, and what are the land mines that are stopping us? That discussion never happens. It's this very static document that we complete – this is what we want, this is what we need – but there's no context around what we're doing.

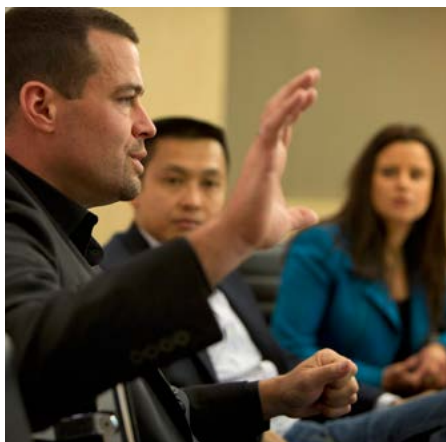
So when the agencies come, it's either something safe, or it's something outrageous. But really what marketing wants to see, regardless of what you present, is whether you have an ability to understand my business. Can you see beyond what's in front of you? Can you help me solve my main problem? Can you identify my main problem beyond what I've just told you? Then, what else can we do? Is this campaignable? Can we push the envelope a little bit more on what you showed me? Does it have legs? And sometimes we just see this one-dimensional snapshot. We don't see the campaignability of what you presented. But it needs to start with that pitch process, how we brief each other and communicate at the very beginning.

Martin Skelton (IPG): From the agency side, I would agree that often you get an RFP, and you do a pitch, and it becomes very apparent that half, or even most, of the people in the room didn't really have any input into the RFP. And so they're expecting one thing, and you're presenting another... and we're very careful, usually, to answer everything in the RFP, in case we get dinged for missing something out. So I think the best pitches usually result when there is a significant amount of time given to having the key decision-makers talk with the agency – not just a Q&A that's emailed back, but some real kind of qualitative interactions, so the agencies can get it right and meet their needs.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): I think the other broken part of that model is that you always either issue the RFP, or get the RFP, and it says, “bring the team who will manage the business.” But you can only have five people, and they all have to be available on this day, and it's Memorial Day.

When I sat on the agency side, that was really a struggle because

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



you can have really great day-to-day people who are maybe mid-level managers, but they might be terrible presenters, you know? That doesn't mean that they're not going to be good on the business.

And I don't care how many times we put it in writing, we have sat in so many pitches where you knew you were not going to see that [agency] person again. Or if you did, you saw them once a quarter, so they could say, "Yes, I promised you I would stay on top of the business." Or by the time you award the business, the person who attended the pitch doesn't work there anymore, or they've been moved – and that's not acceptable. Because I think the strength and the foundation of a good agency-client relationship relies on that chemistry. You practically wind up living with these people. Sometimes, you're seeing them more than your own family.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): So what's changed? You know, I'm a big fan of *Mad Men*, and in *Mad Men*, those people who are on the account are on the account. They said, you know, "I want the creative from Don because he's the best one to give us creative," and Don really does give them creative. I mean, he's really reviewing the materials.

But is that real? Because what you're saying is completely accurate. There's this big bait and switch. But it's not somebody trying to be manipulative, it's not the agency trying to pull one over on you. It's rather that it is quite impossible to say this is the team you're going to get.

I believe that part of it is because billings have really changed. It's not sustainable for an agency to be able to place a specific team and just keep that team on the account, because the account cannot sustain that team. And if you do that, it has to be a two-and-a-half-times multiple for every dollar brought in for every team member you have. Because that's literally what the agency budgeting model is. This person costs two-and-a-half times whatever we pay them, and that's what you, the client, are going to have to pay in order to keep them.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Right, and then we don't want to pay.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): So then we get into a dollars-and-cents thing, and so what do you do? I mean, I'm curious. I don't even know what you do.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): It's turned into a numbers game, basically. And with a pitch, you want to see the team that's going to serve you, but honestly, the best team for you is after they get to know you.

At Vertex, I had the good fortune of partnering with Matt when he was at Ignite Health, and one of the things they did was to hire the main account person after we had gotten to know each other for a while. They basically found somebody who was like my twin or something. We ended up getting along, and I knew why immediately – because he spoke my language. So it was after they got to know me that they actually hired somebody specifically for my needs because they were my AOR. Again, you have years of data that the agency doesn't know about, and yet [the agency is] expected to figure all that out over two weeks. And then when you judge them, it's like, "Oh you missed that insight." Two weeks versus years of data is very different.

"It's not sustainable for an agency to be able to place a specific team and just keep that team on the account"

— Zoe Dunn, Hale Advisors

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): Beth, my business partner, spent 10 years at Pharmacia and Pfizer, and spent a lot of that time working with the Center of Excellence, and evaluating agency partners in different areas. When she talks about it, her perspective is that it really ends up being about the person, about the relationship.

If this team of people comes in, and even if they don't nail it, if they seem like people you want to work with, that you want to call up everyday, if you feel that natural trust—I don't know how you get that in 90 minutes at a pitch—but if you feel a connection, you are more likely to hire them than the other guys who maybe nailed it, but who you don't really like.

And that's kind of critical. So it makes it even worse, then, when those people disappear. Because you're, like, oh, but I really liked you. You know? I wanted to hang out with you, go out to dinner with you. And now you're putting this other guy on it.

Janie Rodriguez (Pfizer): There's never an interview process, right? We always interview people from whichever agency we're going to work with, but it's after the pitch that you get handed this team of people that you have never seen. You don't know their backgrounds. It's typically, oh, here's your team. And, of course, many of them are not going to work out because they may not have the skill sets you need, or the chemistry is not there. Maybe the trust side takes a little longer, just like any relationship?

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



So why doesn't that (an interview) happen? That would be great, from a brand manager perspective, to have that ability to interview whom your team's going to be.

Martin Skelton (IPG): But we need some more wiggle room. I think what has happened, from the *Mad Men* thing—apart from the martinis—is that there used to be wiggle room, so that there was time for people to think about the brand they worked on. Now, agencies are held to utilizations because that's what they have to report to their clients, and the wiggle room is being squeezed out, and we've just got to work on what we've got to get done and deliver it on the day. I think that's a shame, and I don't know what to do about it. But that is the problem.

“This used to be so much fun. I mean, we loved it. But right now, I think it's just a transactional process”

— Matt Brown, ICC Lowe

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): And that's what I think is driving sort of the rebound, frankly, of some of the more independent, or smaller, networked, boutique type of shops. I mean, I'm seeing them invited much more into pitches that would have been the big name, big networked pitches, and they win them because they have the flexibility and can do things that the others can't. And I think that's going to happen more and more.

James Chase (MM&M): In other words, personal relationships usually trump agency-client relationships?

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Yes, and I think just the ability to be flexible. It goes back to understanding what the hiring client's objectives are, and what they have to work with. It's just the nature of the beast that a small independent can do things, investment spend, make sacrifices, push the envelope a little more without having to, you know, try to sell that in, and sort of steer the cruise ship up to WPP or whoever it's going to be, to get the permission to do it.

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): It's funny, because I think the same thing is true from an agency perspective about the client side, that some

of these mid-tier, smaller, new commercial entities that are coming, are much easier to navigate as well.

Janie, I love what you said about the procurement process. I thought it would be an agency that introduced that as being the big challenge, so I applaud it. Because I do think, going back to that statement about the way it used to be, we would never start an entire process by filling out Excel spreadsheets. And I feel like a majority of my time in the pitch process is literally [spent working on] one-pagers, capabilities and Excel document before I even get to the point of saying to a team, “What do we think about this brand? How are we going to approach it? What's the creativity behind us?” Sometimes, you don't even get there. Sometimes the pitch process ends with the capabilities, because the time doesn't allow... and that's a real shame.

I'm always the idealist in the room, but I feel like we've lost a love for the game. This used to be so much fun. I mean, we loved it. But right now, I think it's just a transactional process. It's a task. Have we checked the five boxes? Then, if we checked the five boxes, don't deviate from those.

Martin Skelton (IPG): From sitting at the holding-company level, before you even get to the pitch, to get through some of our larger clients—in order to even be invited to the pitch process—you have to already have delivered such competitive rates and rebates, that what actually happens is that you have demotivated your agencies from really wanting the business. Because you're asking for our best people and our best thinking for a margin that's barely going to keep the lights on. So, in many cases, the whole process squeezes out the agency motivation to actually deliver.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Well, I think it's forced agencies to rethink operating expenses, because that's something they can control, rather than the rates they can command from a client.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): As you guys are talking about this, I'm thinking how much of a parallel it is to ACA, and to the new relationship that we are going to have with our consumers. We have this very, very, strong payer who stands in the way between our products and our customers, and who truly makes a decision about whether or not that customer is going to get our product based on only two things: how much it costs and what the data is. That's it. It's like procurement action. Here is this procurement person who doesn't really have any idea about what value the agency has, or the creative that they show, or what they've done for other clients, or what awards they've won,

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



or even just sit there in the room, and go, “Wow, these are super smart people that you’re bringing to us.”

They really care about price, how much you’re going to charge them, and have you checked all of those boxes? Is the data there for you to make that decision? It’s ironic, that we’re all facing that same challenge.

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): All that stuff is important. We all understand the climate that we’re in. So it’s not to say that cost and timing and milestones and all that stuff are not important. It’s just that, maybe, it used to be that you did that stuff after you did your pitch, and then you sat down, and you worked collaboratively to build a scope. And you reached an agreement about what the value proposition was. And it was part of this sort of on-boarding.

“There’s that whole approach of, ‘We do that, but as soon as we win, we’re going to hire the team’”

— Shwen Gwee, PharmFresh

Now that stuff is decided even before you walk into a room to do creative. We’ve sort of flip-flopped the priority, and then that sets the environment for the working relationship going forward. So if you’re the agency, and it’s all procurement driven, you’re thinking, well, do I give just flashes of brilliance, and then just give them an affordable and efficient team? Or are you going to give them the full monty, throw everything you’ve got at it?

James Chase (MM&M): So what you’re really talking about is commoditization of the entire process.

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): Absolutely. And, by the way, we [agencies] have done it to ourselves. As soon as digital came, we all said, oh, we all do that. Then the big agencies fought over the two-hundred-thousand-dollar clients, and then everybody went after everything, and we just completely commoditized ourselves. So we’re as guilty of blame as the procurement end.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): Then there’s that whole approach of, “We do that, but as soon as we win, we’re going to hire the team.”

James Chase (MM&M): So by starting with the spreadsheet, starting with the costs... to what extent, and in what ways, is this commoditization actually hurting the output, in terms of the work that gets done, and even further down the line, maybe even in terms of hurting health outcomes?

Janie Rodriguez (Pfizer): Well, when people [on the pharma side] come and go, companies change vendors, consolidation happens – which is a very painful process – and it doesn’t give agencies the ability to truly cultivate talent, because also on your end, people are coming and going. I think that ability to have a day-to-day person, however you call that, account manager, VP ... to have a person that you know is going to take care of your business, who is going to manage the day-to-day process. It doesn’t happen very often. They are so rare to find within an agency, and when you find one, you just want to hold onto them, you don’t want to let them go, and I think it happens with that churn.

I’ve been there where I had an agency. I couldn’t support a consumer AOR anymore. So what happens with this awesome person that I had? She was let go. Then, what happens? Agencies no longer have that ability to have a pool of talent at the bench that you can pick from.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): I think certain skill sets are really hard to come by. You get in a bidding war for getting somebody good, and they’re constantly on the verge of being poached. You become like a stalker for these people. You’re like, “Don’t leave me!”, you know? They’re so good.

And something I’ve noticed, too, from both sides of the fence, is that your account person, who is really the person you’re asking – you’re sort of speed dating and then marrying after the pitch – has become less strategic, in general. I think they become an implementation person or a client-relations person. And I don’t know if that’s because of the rise of the strategic planning department, and that skill set became a crutch for account management? I don’t know, but I think it has undermined how clients perceive their agencies – especially if that person is not strong. Because your team becomes the agency, even though it shouldn’t be that way.

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): I’ve always had the rule, throughout my career, that I would never go to a client meeting without a creative person with me, without my creative partner. If it was reconciliation, I’d still have creative with me, because it always created a creative environment. There was always opportunity to talk about the work.

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



There was an opportunity to keep it in a creative discussion.

The problem is that over the years, either travel budgets have gone down, or I don't want to pay for two people to go... I just want one. So what happens is that we've become very account-driven organizations. Then, the conversation's only about the business, it's only about getting things done, it's only about the task. We've lost the creativity and the dialogue, at every opportunity, to create this creative environment. So, slowly, you move away from the magic.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): And from a client perspective, a lot of us see the account person as the sales person. So whether or not the account person has earned that by their behavior, that's the lens right off the bat.

“When you talk about the cost model for agencies, strategy is the most expensive billable hour you can get”

— Zoe Dunn, Hale Advisors

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): But the whole concept of having a strategy group in an agency, separate from the account team, is pretty new. I mean, it's really the last five to 10 years or so.

Here's the thing. When you talk about the cost model for agencies, strategy is the most expensive billable hour you can get. If agencies are forced to constantly drive down their cost, they can't afford to have strategy, which is billing out significantly higher than your blended rate. They can only afford to give you strategy for a small portion of the time before it starts to lose them money.

I don't know that that's going to change, I really don't. You're absolutely right, Matt. We put ourselves in that place. We kept driving our prices down to answer the calling. And we said, “Digital is cheap, we can do it really cheaply.” So we kept driving down our own billable rate, until we found ourselves in this situation.

But if that's going to stay the way it is, then somehow we're going to need to bring strategy back to the brand. We're going to need to empower you guys to be more strategic. So that's going to involve an internal change, as well, because, right now, there is no incentive for innovation on the brand side.

You are not incentivized to be innovative. You're incentivized to spend your budget and to get a certain return, and to do that year over year over year.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): I think that depends. No agency can sell the same model to Pfizer that they're going to sell me at Zogenix. I mean, we're not going to hire the same people. So an agency is going to have to model, to pick the best of the right services if it's a network, or position itself if it's an independent boutique, to the needs of the client.

Frankly, [if you're an agency] don't chase the one that's not going to buy you. I mean, I can't tell you how many people have come and tried to solicit our business, and I can always tell right off the bat, they're not going to be the right partner. And it was a huge investment on the agency's part to try to stick that square peg in the round hole.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): Why are they not the right partner?

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Because they're trying to sell the big, standard, agency model, and we are not that company.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): And you can't support it.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): If you're one marketing person, you need a brand partner; introduce me to an account person who used to be a marketer in pharma—and I do need payer, and I do not need a six-roster creative team, you know?

So you have to really ask the questions, and you have to look in the mirror at yourself when you're on the agency side, and say, “Before I invest 60K to pitch this, I'm going to say I'm not the right partner for you, or I'm going to pick only the parts, and I'm going to have to tell my management why I didn't also go for the payer.”

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): Well, that's part of it, too. But how is the agency going to say that they're not going to bid on it? How are they going to be honest with themselves? I mean, their goal is to drive additional revenue. If you're interested in giving them the RFP, they're going to answer it, because they want the business.

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): We actually say no a lot.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): That's great. I find that unusual. I mean, I'm not on the agency side anymore, but my experience with senior management was they wanted us to bid on it, no matter what.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): You've really got to do the due diligence, look at your hit rate on a pitch and say, “These

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



are the kinds of businesses we win, and these are the kinds we don't." Then you have to be willing to walk away.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): It's expensive to pitch everything.

Martin Skelton (IPG): I think often what happens is the agencies don't know enough to know whether they're a right or a wrong fit.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Yes, they don't know the right questions to ask.

Truthfully, one agency I'm thinking [that said no to us] is still top-of-mind for the next opportunity. I more respected the fact that they said no, rather than they came in and did a bad job, which would have turned me off in the future.

“Operating in this dual universe, it's more work for me because I am the one in the middle ”

— Janie Rodriguez, Pfizer

Janie Rodriguez (Pfizer): At Pfizer, at least on my brand, we're using this hybrid of an AOR, plus another agency that's not our AOR. The volume of work is insane, so we utilize this other agency to do, you know, tactical work, such as slide kits or mailers or updates – and they're quite good. They're cranking things out, and they've gotten really good at the data. I want to give them more stuff, but they are very clear about what they can deliver.

So, sometimes, I find myself in this conundrum. I mean, we need some continuity of sorts, but is the AOR what we need? I'm not really sure. Because operating in this dual universe, it's more work for me because I am the one in the middle consolidating all the information. And I will sit in a regulatory/compliance meeting, and our reviewers don't know if this piece came from the AOR or if it came from the boutique agency.

Again, it goes back to the best way to manage cost, but it creates these other inefficiencies within the system.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): I think that agencies execute tactical beautifully and that they can be terrific if you're utilizing them in that way. And if you have the strategic vision to be able to give them direction, and the confidence to say, this is what I'm looking for, and

allow them to execute on it, then it does become very cost effective.

If you give up that strategic perspective and just put it in the hands of your agency, then it becomes even more inefficient, because they're trying to figure out what's in your head, you're telling them, but not really giving them the whole story.

So Janie, I feel like, even though it may seem inefficient, you're actually operating in a more efficient manner. You're using the strategy from your big thinkers, from your expensive, big agency partner, but they're probably giving you a lot of good strategic ideas, and then you're translating that through to the tactical people who are getting it done in volume for a lot less money.

So it is kind of a perfect scenario in a way. Now if that bigger AOR wasn't also trying to do the tactical stuff. If you had really just somebody who was helping you with the thinking, and then a bunch of doers who were just cranking it out for you, taking that thinking and making it happen, that would be even more efficient.

Martin Skelton (IPG): But probably, the rate card that was negotiated is the same for both of them, so you're not paying for premium, for the strategic AOR, you're probably paying the same price for both.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): Right. That's why the strategic AOR is swapping out people right and left on you, because they can't afford to give you that strategy at that rate, without executing on it. This is the big conundrum, you know. It's dollars all over the place.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): This comes back full circle to everything I think we're saying: where is strategy now? Is strategy the brand person that's going to own it, and therefore, work with all the different agencies and consolidate and be the strategic thinker to filter out what they need, and not just, “Okay, you know what, we'll take tactic 13, 14, and 17, because that's what my budget can afford.” That's usually how it's done these days, right? And then we lose strategy altogether.

Then, on the agency side, what you're saying, the account person has become less and less strategic because their strategic offering is in a centralized resource which charges \$450 an hour, and so you're not going to use them all the time, and the whole team is just about execution. So where does strategy lie? We've lost strategy.

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): There was a great article in *Forbes* a couple of months ago that said the biggest competitor for advertising agencies, going forward, is the consulting companies because they're the ones that are now winning all the strategy.

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



In fact, we had an RFP about a month ago, and it was the first time I had heard Accenture on a call. They own the strategy, and now they're buying up small execution shops. What's interesting, though, is that they're commanding a pretty high dollar for that strategy. So clients are paying for that strategy, but they're not paying for it in the context of an agency.

I had this vision for ICC Lowe to offer medical strategy, customer strategy and engagement strategy. So we built all three and we built it purposefully. I decided we can't keep losing strategy because strategy builds great creative. And what I feel that groups like Accenture cannot do, is creative.

“We're putting people who are making \$150,000 on changes coming out on a medical-legal review”

— Matt Brown, ICC Lowe

So at the end of the day, building a strategy to me was not about just being this great strategic partner. Yes, that's important. I want to give you insights. I want to tell you how your customers are engaging. I want you to understand the underlying beliefs and behaviors that are there. That's all important. But at the end of the day, I want to deliver great creative.

And now, following on from that, we've created an execution studio that offsets some of the cost of that strategy. So we can do efficient execution in a similar way to what you're using your agencies for, Janie, but we tried to build it in a single agency.

We can't just throw strategy out, or else the creative product goes away which, again, goes back to what we talked about earlier, in that we're losing the creative piece of it. It's going to mediocrity and, therefore, we're just executing. And then it's about cost and time, and then the consultancies come in, and they do great strategy, and then they execute.

Martin Skelton (IPG): Also, strategy doesn't always come from the planning group, or the strategy group. It may be the medical or the scientific person who's been working on the slide kit who understands the data well enough to actually define a strategy that actually makes a difference. So if you don't have those kinds of groups within a consulting environment, you don't have the people who actually understand the clinical data.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): Right. But if the brand side is willing to pay more for a strategy because they understand the importance of it, wouldn't there be an opportunity for a model to truly segment them as two halves of the whole, and allow your clients to choose which they're purchasing? Do you have to own it all the way through, is what I'm saying?

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): I think it's the middle piece that has to actually shrink down a little bit. Let's offer great strategy and let's get execution done efficiently. What needs to come down—and Kristin hinted to it before—was the idea of loading up eight people on a core team. What's ends up happening is we're putting people who are making \$150,000 a year on changes coming out on medical-legal review, instead of saying, no wait a minute, there's a more efficient way to do that.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): It's a waste of resources.

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): If clients can look at a different model and say, you know what, don't just ask who's on my core team? Who are the six people who are going to be dedicated to my business full time? Ask what value proposition you're wanting to communicate. And then let me show you strategically what we're going to do. Let me show you the great people who are going to understand your brand at a leadership level, account and creative, and then this great execution. After that, it's not an eight-person dedicated team. We're going to use these resources to deliver on that. If we can push more towards that, then the core team shrinks and agencies can start affording more strategy and execution.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): So it would be three to five good people?

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): Absolutely.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): So here's another issue that I have. My husband's an attorney. He bills a lot of money hourly and uses that time period efficiently in quarters of an hour, in eighths of an hour, when he's working with his clients. But the model for attorneys didn't start out that way.

You used to hire attorneys on a project basis. You wanted to get divorced? You hired an attorney to get you divorced, and they'd do it soup to nuts, and they're not billing you for a quarter of an hour here, quarter of an hour there.

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



The reason they switched to that model is that they felt like they were doing too much work and not getting enough money for it. So they moved away from the project fee to an hourly fee. Well, agencies, likewise.

But I really feel like this hourly thing is messing us up. Here's the thing. If you [the client] reduce our hourly rate to a blended rate of \$140 an hour, well, we're still going to want the same amount of money out of you. We're just going to bill you more hours to get to what we think it's going to cost to do that work. Right?

So it's a bunch of hooley. It's garbage. We know how much it costs us to get something done. It's a simple calculation. Take a person's salary, two-and-a-half times their salary, that's how much it costs to have this person in the agency, and we know if we have six clients how much we're going to have to get from those clients, based on the amount of effort we're putting in, in order to carry that load of that person.

“Because of ACA and a variety of other things, that price pressure is only going to get worse”

— Kristin Patton, KBP Associates for Zogenix

If the procurement person would stop dragging down our hourly rate, if we could all work a bit more on a project basis, on a retainer... that's where the model is so different for PR than it is for marketing. Because PR often works on a retainer, and they're there to do a certain job, whatever that job might be, however many press releases they have to write, however many media people they have to contact, they're on a retainer, and they know that they have that contract for X period of time.

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): You know, that was the real shame with digital agencies, because I used to be at Ignite Health, and we were fixed fee, and I'm a big fan of that.

The problem was when everybody started doing digital, then digital agencies started doing AOR, too. Well, then, they got procured differently. Procurement would procure digital and say, okay, a fixed fee for a website is whatever, and it was value-priced in some ways. But then everybody could do websites and so it became, well, how many hours can you do it in? So now innovation isn't valued, necessarily, it's just another one of the pieces in the puzzle.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Why is that happening? If you look at it from the client's perspective, what do you think we, or they, are facing that's driving that? I mean, that goes back to looking at it from the perspective of your buyer. What's the motivation for somebody who's managing a brand? I mean, if I were an agency, and I was going in to pitch, I would ask you share with me your performance objectives for the year, and what's your scorecard for the marketing team. Then I would build my pitch to help show how I was going to make that happen.

We used to have a saying when I was on the agency side: You never get fired for hiring Accenture, or you never get fired for hiring Saatchi, or “insert name here.” That's because, as a client, as a marketing person, or even as a procurement person, you're going to be held accountable for the agency that you bring in, and that agency does not come with a small price tag. Frankly, it's often the biggest percentage of the budget outside of samples. So your decision making is going to drive your professional growth, and it's not all about getting the cheapest price. Maybe in some places it is, but I have experienced, in the last few years, that that's only one factor out of probably five or six. And because of ACA and a variety of other things, that price pressure is only going to get worse. So if we start to play a price game, the quality's going to tank. And it already is. I think we all agree with that. But I think it's a matter of helping your client define what good looks like, and what is success going to look like, and then help them to achieve it.

Martin Skelton (IPG): But isn't that idealistic in the current climate? It's getting worse, right?

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Yes, I think it's idealistic, but again, I think the ability to do it is all over the map.

Martin Skelton (IPG): So who's going to go first?

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): I think the smaller, specialty companies are going to start it. Because, again, you're not trying to steer a cruise ship in that environment. You just don't have the same pressures that way.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): I agree. What you have identified has truly become the barrier to great creative. The barrier to great innovation is getting caught up in these nuts and bolts and not really just trying to help your client win, because that's what is has to be about, right? It's helping your client get done what they need to do.

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): To tell you the truth, if I were still on the agency side of the business, the thing I would be most nervous about is not my direct competitive agencies, it's the vendors. And I know "vendor" is a very bad word. Because they're getting good. They're getting better and better. They're cheap. They're good enough, frankly, and I think it's speaking exactly to the model we were just talking about. It's, I'm okay with that, because as long as my AOR is doing this, and my extended marketing team is doing this, I'm good with paying this to a vendor to do good enough.

Not everything has to be the A-plus, and a lot of times, I feel like the agencies are trying to sell A-plus, and it comes with a price tag.

"Can you imagine if you said, we're not going to give you great stuff, we're going to give you just good enough?"

— Martin Skelton, IPG

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): The other problem is those agencies that do just what's good enough for the client because the client only knows that much. Then the new client comes along, and it's definitely not good enough, or in this new age, especially with digital, more companies are forming their own digital centers of excellence, digital people, which get inserted on the brand team, and they get to judge now.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Yes, yes, yes.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): Now the digital expert's in the room, and they're going to judge you, and they're going to say, that's not even close to standard. So then you've got to scramble and figure out what to do next, because you don't actually have that expertise in-house.

Martin Skelton (IPG): It's also really difficult to sell, in a pitch, just good enough. Can you imagine if you said, we're not going to give you great stuff, we're going to give you just good enough?

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Yeah. I wouldn't do that in a pitch.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): Like, we were going to give you something great, but now we've decided we're going to give you something that's just okay.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): So here's a real-world example that happened to me recently. I had an agency approach me. They knew that our AOR assignments had been given. They were honest. They came to me and basically said, "Tell me which problem isn't solved yet. Because I can say to you that we can do whatever you want, and we probably can, but I'm not going to waste my time or yours. Just tell me the one thing that isn't crossed off the list yet."

That's where they're starting, and I think it was really smart. I mean, they got an audience. They're about to get a bigger audience. They'll tackle one problem, and they take the accountability for the organic growth after that. They're just asking for the chance, and they're not asking for a million dollars. They're asking for a \$25,000 project.

James Chase (MM&M): Despite all the pressures we have discussed, most of the agencies I speak with still tell me that they want a strategic seat at the table. They want to be a true strategic partner to their clients. Do clients still believe in agencies for strategy?

Janie Rodriguez (Pfizer): Oftentimes, it depends on the organization, it depends on their culture. I mean, I'm relatively new to Pfizer, and having your agency as your strategic partner is very important here. It's talked about a lot. But I came from somewhere else, and this idea of partnership, or having the agency be the strategist, was a big no-no. That's what the marketers were supposed to do. It was their job. So I think it's hard to strike that balance.

But there are particular points in time where you need those strategic services. It's maybe not all the time, it's not all year round. But there are times when the planning process is coming up, and you need to think very hard about what you are going to do with this brand next year, about where you need all of those hours to sit down. There are very particular points in time where those hours are going to be needed. But unless you're a launch brand, you could minimize those hours.

I know you don't want the account person to be an end-all, be-all. But there has to be some glimpse that they can think strategically, and sometimes it doesn't even exist because it's so tactical in nature.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): And creative, too, I would argue. I mean, I've seen every range from a creative team who comes in, and they do a great job of selling me beautiful creative that absolutely does not fit the situations that we're in.

So it doesn't have to be a crazy strategic discussion, but every person in the room should at least be able to show that they understand the

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



business and can contribute something back. It doesn't have to be something that's going to change our world, but I hope at least that everyone there, number one, has a role, and number two, can speak intellectually, about the challenge.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): What you're saying, really, is that everything should be insights-driven, whether it's the creative, the strategic thinking, and all that kind of stuff. Your whole account team needs to understand those insights. But a lot of times, depending on the company, that level of insights-driven, integrated thinking has been lost to "What can we sell that we're going to get the most money from?"

And sometimes companies will come up with the tactics, and then back-end the right insights to fit into that.

"I think ROI is such a bad word. It really is. I hate it. I hear it and it kind of gives me the shivers."

— Zoe Dunn, Hale Advisors

Janie Rodriguez (Pfizer): Think about what [clients] have to do. We have to prioritize what we do based on ROI. So we're just doing all these crazy things at the same time. I have a limited budget, so I have to look at all my tactics, what has worked in the past, what hasn't – and those with the highest ROI are going to make the top list.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): I think ROI is such a bad word. It really is. It's like this curse word. I hate it. I hear it and it kind of gives me the shivers. It's not that I don't believe that we are here to sell a product. We are, that's what our job is. But sometimes ROI is not so easily quantifiable, and if the direction for the agency is "This needs to generate an ROI, then there are a lot of things that are going to get sacrificed.

Creativity is going to be the first thing to go out the window, because if it's something creative, but it cannot easily be measured, it cannot easily be quantified, then everybody's going to back away from it. They're going to say, well, this might be a great idea, but it's going to take us, like, four or five years to really know what the impact is because, again, of that 18 month kind of parameter that we're all operating within, we won't know. We won't be able to do it in 18 months. We won't be able to do it and make an impact.

It's one of the greatest challenges we face when we talk about

ROI. But I think that just throwing dollars at the problem is not the right solution, either. Just throwing dollars at something that you can measure doesn't make it the best course of action, either.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): But I think it can work really well, and I've seen it work really well, if, as a brand manager, you have fiscal responsibility. Yes, you're accountable for it, and frankly, it's a big part of what you're being evaluated on. But there are also these other things that you have to deliver on.

And, as an agency, if you understand what your client has to deliver on, then you bring the ideas to meet one of those. And if you don't think the idea is going to meet the ROI one, that's okay. That's really for the client to decide, and say, wow, this is a really cool idea, and it's a hot button for this issue, and I think that will help me achieve this one, even though I'm not going to prove the ROI on it.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): As long as you build into the strategic framework an understanding of how you eventually get that ROI. Otherwise, PR would never even exist, right? There's no ROI attached to PR. It's all awareness, for goodness sakes. You can't calculate branded lift in sales from awareness. It's one of those things where you have to understand how it works and how all the pieces fit together, and where you calculate the ROI. Other than that, it's KPIs all the way, you know?

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): I see social media as fitting in to that category, but there's been this strange thing that marketers feel like social media goes in the marketing category, and I say to them, no it does not, because you will not get your ROI. So if that is part of it, whether it's creative or not, there is no ROI.

Having a social media component to your strategy is critical. You don't have a choice. You need to be able to engage with your audience the way they want to engage with you. However, if you're going to put the same restrictions on it, then it's not going to get you anywhere.

So, if you're going to say, we're dumping money into this social media thing, we don't know where it's taking us, so we're going to stop dumping money into it. Well, it needs to almost be looked at as that PR vehicle then, because you will have to constantly be supporting it and putting resources behind it in order for it to succeed down that line.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): We need to kind of take it away from marketing, just for that idea, and keep it solidly in the hands of communications, where they're used to those kinds of initiatives.

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): But I wonder, what's the agency and client relationship aspect to that? I think that when clients put up the walls sometimes, it's because we're getting sold all the time—whether it's our AOR trying to up-sell, or it's a new agency trying to get in, or it's a vendor, or it's a publisher.

I don't know what it's like for you, Janie, but I must get six to eight calls or emails a day from somebody introducing themselves, or from a past relationship. That kind of thing, and frankly, agency management, is about one-fifth of my job. There's a thousand other things going on.

So when you look at the kinds of ideas, and how you want to sell them in, and how do you foster a long-term relationship, my long-term relationships with agencies are because they sold me. But when they tried to sell me, they were selective about it, and they tried to sell me something that actually met a challenge we had. And it wasn't selling for the sake of selling, because selling for the sake of selling is only building that wall higher.

“The agency-client relationship is just like any other relationship—you get out of it what you put into it”

— Matt Brown, ICC Lowe

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): I think, with social media like any other channel, it depends where you are in the funnel. There are certain types of social media you may use as a channel at a lower part of the funnel, which may result in ROI, but like every other channel with a digital frame, if you're doing it at the top of the funnel, you're not going to get ROI right away if you measure the results of that.

Another part of social media, I think, that you can calculate a sort of reverse ROI, if you want to call it that, is things like preventative measures, like a crisis management. How much would it have cost you if you'd just let that get out of hand versus managing the conversation on social, on print, etc. That's a whole thing where you don't really see the sales lift, but the cost of not doing it is going to be much higher.

James Chase (MM&M): So are you still seeing resistance from clients on social media on the grounds that it is not measurable?

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): Well, first of all, there's a lot of argument over where it should belong. Whose budget is it coming out of? And

then it's, “Oh, wait, you have to pay that much? But social's free.” Then you have to go borrow budget from marketing. So marketing gets involved, and then marketing says, “This is one of our programs, because we're already doing this.”

But they're not really doing it, they're just using social as a channel to push something. They're not engaging.

Martin Skelton (IPG): Then, regulatory gets involved and pours a big bucket of cold water on the whole idea.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): So there are certain companies that are way ahead. They understand where social fits in. They have people that actually work on it. They have centers of excellence. They get it and they are willing to push it right to the end. And I've done things that I never thought would be possible three years ago. Most of these platforms didn't exist three years ago, anyway.

But then, there are other companies where you bring them the simplest thing, like a YouTube channel. Just take a video you have, put it on there. But no, can't get it through... it's YouTube. Can't turn off this, can't do that... I've even heard account teams say they won't let us do it because you can't turn off comments. But you can.

So, again, the knowledge, the strategy is sometimes not built into teams – on the client side or the agency side – in a way that they understand what it actually is there for and how to use it to achieve the goals. Then, the strategy's lost, and people just think about implementation, and “can't do it, no, not going to do it.”

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): I think the agency-client relationship is just like any other relationship – you get out of it what you put into it.

If you are a client who doesn't value the agency, if you see them as a vendor and not important, you're not going to have quality conversations.

If you are an agency that believes your client isn't going to value your strategy and your creative, and that it's only about cost, you're not going to make yourself available. You're not going to make that drive. You're not going to offer to bring additional people to the meeting. You're not even going to try to go down those paths to replicate the behaviors of the past that we used to do so well, if your belief system says they're not going to value it.

The other part of this thing is we've just become this culture of non-engagement. I mean, to sit down and have a conversation about shared goals and vision, and to talk about creative, about the love of the game, and a passion for the iterative process that is marketing and advertising. I think we just lost that.

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): And I think we're going to lose more. Affordable Care is going to be about what makes the payer happy.

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): But I will say that I do think the decade of the marketer is coming. I think that we're finally getting to the point where the marketer is king. It's not just about sales. That model doesn't exist anyway.

So the good news is, if it's going to be the decade of the marketer, and if finally the marketer gets to live, then maybe that forces us to get back to the love of the game and the passion for the process. Because it will be required of us to do great work, and to do great things, and not just simply add another script.

“If one of my agency people said to me, let me come shadow you for a day, I'd be thrilled”

— Kristin Patton, KBP Associates for Zogenix

James Chase (MM&M): So we're just waiting for the sales execs to rotate out of their marketing positions?

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): Right.

Martin Skelton (IPG): Right.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): Right.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Right.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): So to both of your points, I think relationship is really the key to fixing this, and I would really prescribe the same thing that I think anybody would prescribe for a healthy relationship, which is date night. Date night really works. It works in almost all relationship situations. When people start getting too far apart, when they start going on their own tracks, what's the most important thing you can do? Come back together, get a babysitter, shut all the noise out, sit across the table from each other and say, so what's going on with you? What can I help you with?

To your point, Kristin, what you were saying is, if somebody really understood my goals and objectives as a marketer, and they under-

stood what I have to get done, then maybe they could say, “Wow, you know, I was thinking of something totally different, but I hear you. I'm listening to you, and I'm going to try to change what I'm doing a bit so that I can get you what you need.”

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Once when I was at the helm of an account team, I really could see that that skill set was missing, and so I brought in some of my client buddies – those who were willing to do it – to share a day in the life of the client. I think that it built a lot of empathy amongst the account people to understand that their agenda is not necessarily my agenda for the day, and it helped them, I think, be better organic-growth experts, as account people... to say, this is what a client is dealing with every day, this is the best way to help meet their needs, this is what I should be sensitive to, or at least, empathetic to. I got great feedback from both sides of that equation.

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): So instead of doing rep ride-alongs in a non-sales-force model, we'll do a marketing ride-along. I love it. I think it's pretty good.

Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): If one of my agency people said to me, let me come shadow you for a day, I'd be thrilled.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): I think, a lot of times, too, the relationship part of it gets lost when the brand manager side of things start to treat the agency as vendors, and not the partners that they should be. And they don't spend enough time deep in the weeds with them, figuring out the strategy together. A lot of times it's, “Here's the assignment, go away, come back to me with three ideas.” And that's it, and you've lost that personal connection. And the passion it brings. Because when you get in a room, and you're together, and all this energy is being put into figuring things out, you really start to get into it, and really get a passion for what you're doing.

Martin Skelton (IPG): That kind of relationship also helps with agency [talent] retention, because people in agencies move. But they very rarely move when they have a great relationship with their client. It's usually when they don't feel valued or it's not going well when they start to think, “Oh, what else could I be doing? Let me take that headhunter's call.”

Janie Rodriguez (Pfizer): You need transparency and partnership, and sometimes I tell my agency, can you make me look good? Help me look good.

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



Kristin Patton (KBP Associates for Zogenix): Being transparent means both the good and the bad. So I'm sure my agency would say that there are days they want to wring my neck, and I know I deserve it, frankly. But I also would be the first to tell my agency you're the seeds, I think you're great. So you have to sign up, just like the marriage analogy, for the good and the bad. And you've got to be grownups about it. Some days you're going to have bad times together, and some days you're going to have great times together. But if you're okay with that, then it forms a solid foundation.

Martin Skelton (IPG): Well, it strikes me that the crux of what we come to is that there's a kind of ignorance that exists, a fundamental ignorance, of what it's like to be a client and what it's like to be in an agency. If we could break that down, I think that kind of underlying communication would solve some of the problems. Not all of them, but some of them.

“More agencies will have to start thinking holistically, and not just for the thing they were brought in to do”

— Shwen Gwee, PharmFresh

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): I think if we look outside our industry, and look at what marketers are doing, and how long they stay in their positions, and how they really manage brands, it's very different. They become the face of the brand. It's a very different perception of who they are and what they do compared to our marketers, which are sometimes just riding it along until they get out back in the field. And then they get their promotion.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): Part of that is the fault of the way that our industry has grown.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): It's a structural problem of how we've been set up.

Zoe Dunn (Hale Advisors): It's like we're trying to do damage control, all of us, all the time, to a system that is not working perfectly. It's like the world has evolved, and pharma is still back here. It's still at, “We can go and market ourselves to other people, and they will have confidence in us.” We've come out of the era of traveling sales people with snake oil, and now people believe in medicine and they

will listen to us, and they have confidence in us. But we're still operating in a way that's very much like the 1900s, you know, with taking sales people and making them into marketers and not giving them the tools that enable them to do it.

But I think there's so much hope. I feel like there's more hope now than there was 20 years ago when I started working in this industry. Because I feel like we're a generation that's kind of grown up together in this industry, and we are the ones who are going to change it. The fat cats who are waiting for their retirement, who are sitting in those VP, SVP levels, who are still operating business as usual, who came from the field and are now in those roles, they're going to age out. We are the ones who are going to be those new leaders, and we're going to say we want to do things differently.

The status quo is not going to work for us anymore, and we know that our industry has new pressures, new challenges, and we have to really reinvent what the pharmaceutical industry means to people.

We are now, more than ever, about outcomes. That's the new world. It's not just about being a manufacturer and making a pill. It's about making a healthcare solution, and addressing healthcare epidemics, and population health.

Shwen Gwee (PharmFresh): I think that's actually going to make a huge difference as more companies start thinking beyond the pill. More agencies will have to start thinking holistically, and not just for the thing they were brought in to do. Because so many times, you're one of seven or 14 agencies, and all you do is that one thing. But once everybody has to start thinking beyond the pill, and what else you can do to support the entire outcome, and the most positive and highest outcome, then you'll have to think different. You'll be forced to think different.

Matt Brown (ICC Lowe): The number one piece of advice I used to give to account people and to clients alike, was assume innocence. Assume that the client had the best of intentions, meant to communicate in the best way, and meant to ask and say everything. Assume that the account person or the agency person was doing all they could do to make things great, but assume innocence.

I think if we can go back to walking into the relationship – regardless of what the procurement process was like, regardless of how the relationship was established or the rules that are on the table today – create that enclosure, that safe place, sit down, assume innocence, and have that be the initiation of the relationship, maybe we can get back to the place where we really need to be. ■