

ECI Media Management's

Top 10

considerations for

a media agency pitch

The decision to review your media agency relationship, whether in one market or internationally, is a major one for any marketer. If planned and implemented effectively, with a clear structure, timeframes and KPIs, a review can be of huge benefit to the wider business and ultimately to profit margins. So what should marketers consider when embarking on a media agency pitch?

Laying the foundations

It's crucial to understand your needs, goals and current situation in order to ultimately achieve the desired outcome from what is often a long, labor-intensive process. As is so often the way, the more work that is done up front, the better the process and more satisfactory the result.

1. What is your desired outcome?

What is the reason for the pitch? What are your needs, and what do you want to achieve? Do you need a regional or global agency partner as opposed to local relationships? Are you looking for a stronger strategic partner or more efficient ways of working? Establish a clear set of internal KPIs based on your desired outcome.

2. How will you run the pitch?

Who will be the key decision-makers? Are you looking for a centralized or decentralized setup? Who will coordinate internally? Can you handle the entire process internally or do you need a consultant to manage it on your behalf?

3. What is the baseline?

In order to select the right agency partner, you need a deep understanding of your current relationship, including fees and agreements, media pricing and deliverables.

Running an effective pitch

There's more to running a pitch than sending out the briefs and attending agency presentations. From establishing timeframes and ensuring that all stakeholders are on the same page to establishing effective evaluation criteria, it's about creating a process which allows agencies to showcase, and be judged on, their capabilities.

4. What are your dealbreakers?

There is little point in an agency participating in a pitch process and creating a significant amount of work for all parties if they are unable to meet the client's basic requirements. A key example is non-competitiveness. Some advertisers don't tolerate their agency working with key competitors, and in those cases this is an increasingly relevant topic given the consolidation of the holding companies and how their agencies handle competitive clients. Sharing your non-negotiables up front will allow any crucial discrepancies to be addressed before the process gets underway.

5. What will the agencies present?

The agency presentations are the main part of the pitch process. It is here that they should convince you of why they are your ideal partner. Think carefully about the challenge that they should respond to in order to prove themselves. Make sure that the challenge(s) capture the essence of your needs and wants. AI is an increasingly relevant topic; ensure you include instructions for agencies to explain how they use AI in the handling of your business and what the benefits (and risks) will be for the performance of your campaigns.

6. Are you comparing apples with apples?

A process as business-critical as a pitch should not be judged on gut instinct alone (although there is a place for intuition, specifically in the chemistry phase). Subjective and objective evaluation criteria will allow the decision-makers to make true comparisons and better-informed decisions. It's important to have both the processes and resources in place to allow this analysis to be carried out properly.

7. Are you well positioned to truly understand the potential value of the bids you receive?

It's crucial to ensure that online strategy, planning and buying capabilities are evaluated and benchmarked: online is where the majority of media investments go, and is also the area with the highest value potential.

Post-pitch negotiations

The pitch doesn't end with the final agency presentations – in fact, the fun is only just beginning! The negotiation stage is crucial to creating the basis of the most productive relationship with the eventual winning agency, and there are important factors to look out for.

8. Have all bases been covered?

Negotiations will need to cover all aspects of the client-agency relationship, including team, transparency, services, fee level and model, and media pricing. If anything in an offer is unclear, ask the agency to clarify. Ensure you identify the right fee model for your business, including KPIs that agencies can and should be accountable for. You should also be given a detailed transition plan for the seamless transfer of your business to the new agency, without disruption.

9. Are there regular opportunities to assess the relationship?

It's important that the contract includes the 'right to audit'. This is to safeguard the relationship throughout the term of the agreement by allowing you to review and benchmark, from financials to performance audit.

10. Is your contract framework up to date/relevant?

Transparency continues to be a challenging topic in the media industry. It's therefore key to secure clear clauses including approach to inventory media.

A media agency pitch process is a long and complex process for all parties, with hours of presentations and hundreds, if not thousands, of pages of submissions to assess over several months. The key to a successful pitch is preparation and planning, and ensuring that adequate time and resources are allocated. At ECI Media Management, our team of pitch experts harnesses the power of our proprietary tools and processes, allowing them to help clients truly understand which agency is best placed to deliver on their business goals.

About ECI

ECI: HIGHER MEDIA VALUE

Technology is transforming the media landscape at an unprecedented pace. But in the right hands, change can be a force for good. ECI, the market's fastest growing global media management company, leverages these changes to help you drive higher media value from your advertising investment.

A modern, forensic approach

Ever since our formation we have championed a modern approach to media and financial auditing. As pioneers in the field of digital auditing, we include sophisticated analysis of programmatic activity in our audit model, and we pride ourselves on a forensic, fact-based approach which harnesses the power of our world-class talent and proprietary technology. Along with our innovative benchmarking capabilities, we are confident in our ability to empower our clients to drive higher media value and media-led impact on business performance.

Cutting-edge services

Capitalizing on today's dynamic, fast-paced media landscape to drive higher media value requires data-driven decision-making, global experience and a deep understanding of the latest technologies. At ECI we are proud to be able to offer these and so much more. Our promise to our clients is that we will deliver actionable insights on their media investments in a timely fashion, and that we will always balance quantity KPIs with quality KPIs to drive the maximum ad impact.

Global experience, local expertise

We are proud of our client portfolio, which contains some of the world's largest and leading advertisers. Our network of owned offices and leading affiliates supports them where they need us, across the Americas, Europe and Asia Pacific. We offer them high-level media intelligence and rigorous benchmarking and, ultimately, the insight, experience and savvy to ensure that their advertising investment and agency relationships drive higher media value.

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