

Pitch is not popular – on either side's part

I read "Keeping the pitch at bay" (*MW* last week) by Stuart Pocock with great interest. Last October Reardon Smith Whittaker (RSW) published a survey of client attitudes towards agency relationships – and it endorsed much of what Stuart said about agency pitches. It showed clients had mixed feelings about pitches – their attitudes polarised between excitement and trepidation in roughly equal measure. Nor was I surprised to hear that pitches attract between 300 and 500 man hours of marketers' time. The majority in our survey agreed with the statement "agency selection takes up more time than I would wish".

Stuart called for new relationships to be nurtured and managed from the start and in this I would agree. But the manner in which accounts are often resourced and run prevents this happening. There is a tendency for agencies to win the business, bed it in and then leave junior account handlers to manage it. Agencies should keep more senior manager contact with clients. Only senior managers are capable of conducting the kind of qualitative "issues based" reviews needed to flush out problems. And regular should mean every three months.

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