

How to get great work out of your agency

Although the marketing communications business has changed significantly since Brewer wrote its first ad nearly 50 years ago, the principles of a successful client-agency relationship remain pretty much the same.

1. Set clear objectives – Establish at the outset (ideally, with agency input) exactly what every program and project must accomplish. ROI is as important for advertising as it is for capital equipment or a new salesman.
2. Share what you know – Treat your agency as a partner, not an outsider. (And if you can't trust their people with sensitive data, get another agency.) Even the most talented professionals can't read your prospects' minds... or yours.
3. Don't be a bottleneck – Let the agency talk directly to key people in your organization (engineering, top management... even customers). This eliminates a filter and frees your time for other things. So does resisting the urge to micromanage.
4. Expect results, but not miracles –

If a goal is clear and reasonable, hold your agency to it. But don't expect steak for a hamburger budget (at least, not always), or ads while you wait. Agencies are in business to make money, too.

Agencies that are treated as full-fledged members of your team will usually go through walls for you... resulting in great work that leads to higher sales and growing market share.

(The above first appeared in "Sudden Impact," a Design News e-newsletter, in October, 2004.)