

Wanna Be a Tiger?

In Chicago, at the Synergy Agency Network meeting earlier this year, we were fortunate to have Dan O'Brien, Global Director of Advertising for Accenture, as our speaker. He spoke to us about "What clients love and hate about their agencies" and gave us an overview of their "Be a Tiger" campaign with Tiger Woods.

Dan has an extensive background as a supervisor with J Walter Thompson, prior to taking the position with Accenture several years ago.

I thought you might like to read some of Dan's comments.

As an agency, you are not sitting with the inner circle of the client's business, generally. You work with opinion leaders and gatekeepers, but you aren't building the value with the real decision-makers. Relationships need to be made in the corner office. You have to know how to make it work with the top brass.

THE FOLLOWING IS GREAT STUFF...KEEP IT POSTED SOMEWHERE

The Client's Perspective

TIPS TO BE MORE VALUABLE TO YOUR CLIENTS

1. **Get a copy of the client's business plan.** Read it thoroughly and tailor your conversations and recommendations around the top strategic priorities in that plan.
2. **Create a client dossier.** You know who the marketing director is, but who are the other players? What are their interests, hobbies, children, etc.? Have your people create these dossiers for their counterparts at the client? Have information on all kinds of people at all levels: marketing, finance, customer service, etc.
3. **Become media agnostic.** It expands your client's awareness. What are you really proposing? Are you trying to build your reel? Are you trying to push an expertise because you're comfortable with it? The best route is the PRESENTATION OF AN IDEA – then, you can figure out HOW to make it happen. That's what clients need. And it builds trust.
4. **Drive innovation.** An agency that shows forward-thinking is more valuable. Don't let your "day job" interfere with the need to bring new thinking to your client. Create a position of Chief Innovation Officer. Reward industrialization of new ideas, monthly contests, etc. Compete against each other and make it competitive! Vote on it and stay consistent.
5. **Have a broader view of the client's assets.** What can you do with those assets to drive awareness and exposure for the client's brand? How can you leverage those assets? Most clients are stuck in a rut. You can help them be more creative and innovative.

The Agency's Perspective

TIPS TO BE A STRONGER AGENCY

1. **When disaster strikes, ask the client to allow the agency to fire the person and not fire the whole agency.** Honesty and a fair chance is all you're asking for. This asks for understanding and patience.
2. **Establish your value, and then ask to be paid what you're worth.** If a client values the resources, they will be happy to pay you for it. And you may be able to ask for it at a later date if you feel that you have not been remunerated fairly. Don't ignore it.
3. **Seek value for your clients and demonstrate it.** Don't miss the opportunity to show that you are the client's advocate. Show that you have their best interest in mind. BE PROACTIVE! They will appreciate it and remember it. It will always win you points later. Fight for quality and intelligent expenses but the client always has the final say. BE SMART!
4. **Always ask for permission to do things that are out of the normal scope of activity.** Clients have set expectations. Don't change the rules or the parts and pieces without giving them the chance to review and approve your actions and/or recommendations.

BOTTOM LINE

- Ideas will always win. It's why we're in the business, and why clients need us
- Experiment, intelligently
- Most clients are willing to look wherever they need to find the resources they prefer
- Get paid for your INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY! Not just hours, but ideas. Seek incentives for growing the client's business. Measure with metrics you CAN control: i.e. awareness bumps. Take other issues out of the picture.