

LETTERS

# Agency Pitches: In need of a marriage counselor?

**AGENCY PITCHES**  
**in need of an umpire**

**BY TAMARA WOOD**

In need of an umpire are the health care advertising agency executives who are facing escalating costs, client mistrust, lack of understanding for their processes, client consolidation, and declining profit margins.

In the other dugout are the pharmaceutical clients, who are facing greater accountability to maintain the bottom line, internal management issues, time constraints, and cost pressures.

**AGENCY PITCHES**  
The solution begins in us. Change the way we do business. We will look at our agency with the agency as a team. We will look at our clients as a team. We will look at our agency as a team. We will look at our clients as a team. We will look at our agency as a team. We will look at our clients as a team.

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There are only two sets of people that I share finances with: my wife/family and the IRS.

Neither a consultant nor a client needs to know my costs, or my profits. Unless each of those parties is going to open their books to me and we are going to work from a cost plus basis — based on success and brand profitability.

What does the consultant charge? If the prospective client speaks directly with all agencies competing, is that time well spent?

Let's see. If I save on the consultant's fee can the agency bring in a more senior-level marketing person to work on the business? Can that money strengthen the creative talent? Add better production value?

Lastly, whenever the human race is involved there is never a level playing field. In any business, technology, carpentry, or advertising, we all work at developing personal relationships that we hope will provide us with a continual sale. The time and effort that both the client and agency expend are in the hope that these relationships develop into a mutual trust.

It's your brand. It's going to be your agency. It's worth your time.

**John J. Racik**  
GENERAL MANAGER

SENTRIX GLOBAL HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS  
A YOUNG & RUBICAM COMPANY

You can always get less for less, but you can't get the best for less. There's another great line from a Y&R house ad that appeared years ago, "...service not servitude." — **John J. Racik**

In this country, for the most part, we've gotten away from arranged marriages. Why? They don't work. Not for the couple getting married. Those two people want their voice to be heard. They want to determine their future. We all do.

The best client-agency relationships, like marriages, are those where each party works at them; where there is mutual respect; and where the words vendor and supplier are traded in for partner.

Every day our clients seek out those closest to the buying/prescribing decision. We deserve the right to the same type of access at the client.

All clients and agencies have processes, methodologies, and models to help improve efficiency and develop hypotheses to solve the challenges at hand; and, to anticipate the changes that will come in the market, and prepare for them. These are tools to help formulate strategy. They are ONLY tools.

Strategy development should include the agency's participation. Why? Because when that strategy has been hammered out, who's around to bring it to life? To give it a personality that will allow the market to embrace it? Not the myriad of consultants who have col-

lected their fee, and moved on. It's the advertising agency.

Let's take a look at compensation. I came across a great quote in my chiropractor's office today, "You can always get less for less, but

## What's Your Opinion?

Recently, a physician group based in Cincinnati began asking pharmaceutical sales representatives to pay for appointments with doctors. The 50-member physician group, the Queen City Physicians group, created a separate, limited liability corporation to schedule 10-minute appointments between pharmaceutical representatives and doctors at \$65 a visit.

According to the group, the plan was developed to clear clogged waiting rooms and to counteract the numerous free meals and events that pharmaceutical sales representatives offer as an enticement to get a few minutes with the doctors.

Is a fee-based appointment plan a reasonable strategy? Will pay-for-appointment scenarios become the norm? Does this strategy devalue the physician-rep relationship?

**WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?** Please e-mail your comments to [feedback@pharmalinx.com](mailto:feedback@pharmalinx.com).

