

Elements of a Successful Client-Agency Partnership

The success of a client-agency partnership relies on many factors. Any marketing program should focus on achieving core business objectives. Ideally, this involves using a highly strategic and creative approach that is realized through a results-driven, tactical execution. The following are the 10 characteristics of an ideal client, but many elements are mutually important.

- 1) **TRUST** – The client assumes the agency is acting in its best interest. It does not withhold information that is pertinent to the relationship or to the quality of counsel.
- 2) **ACCESS** - The client consistently makes itself available. It involves the agency at an early stage to support activities. Last-minute briefings often result in lost opportunities.
- 3) **CANDOR** - The client embraces straight-talk and is open to ongoing agency counsel.
- 4) **COMMUNICATION** – The client is committed to two-way communication to ensure that everyone is always aware of what's happening and of their individual responsibilities to achieve outcomes. Designating an internal person to be a single point-of-contact and having frequent "checkpoints," such as a weekly call or regular meeting, are common and effective ways to fulfill this obligation.
- 5) **BUY-IN** - The client ensures that its top management is aware of the program goals and that they are committed to their achievement. Executives get involved in relevant program activities as willing participants who are devoted to effective execution.
- 6) **RESPONSIVENESS** - The client is dependable for providing timely responses, such as signing approvals, meeting deadlines and pursuing spontaneous opportunities.
- 7) **COOPERATION** - The client allows the agency to work seamlessly in conjunction with its own staff and other communication suppliers who are pertinent to program success.
- 8) **UNDERSTANDING** - The client immerses itself in the program to realize what it takes to get things done, so it knows when to be patient and when to be judgmental.
- 9) **MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS** - The client and agency fully define all desired results from the outset and by when to achieve each expectation. The client shares a mutual commitment to success and fulfills its responsibilities to prevent failure.
- 10) **METRICS** - The client commits the resources needed to integrate tangible measures of success, which may involve internal tracking. The client conducts regular reviews of progress to evaluate program results against mutually agreed-upon criteria.

♦ Adapted from "Getting the Best from a PR Consultancy" by the
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