

# How to Get the Most Out of Your Marketing Agency

## By Blair Entenmann, President of MarketingHelp!

There is a saying in the advertising and marketing agency world that the work is as good as the client. Having worked on both sides of the desk (on the client and agency side of the business), I believe this is true. Most clients accept this concept of mutual responsibility. To keep your outside marketing resources properly motivated and stimulated to do their best work, we offer the following suggestions:

- 1. Cultivate a close personal and business relationship.** Working together in a climate of mutual trust and Confidence with open and honest communication is critically important. Develop compatibility in philosophy, work style and communication. Treat them as a "partner," not a "vendor."
- 2. Provide the opportunity to contribute.** Encourage input in the direction and management of the company or brand. Get them involved early in your strategic and tactical thinking. They have a wealth of information and resources to draw on that might help you make a better decision. Marketing and advertising people are very creative by nature and have many new ideas, approaches, and innovations. The more you involve them, the more motivated and productive they will become. Nothing demotivates an outside marketing resource more than being the last to know about a strategic change.
- 3. Trust your agency and be willing to accept their thinking.** Be open-minded and always evaluate their thinking or proposals on the basis of objectives, not on your own preconceived ideas. Listen to their input and recommendations with a positive frame of mind. Over-exercising your prerogative or judgment often demoralizes an outside resource. You must be willing to accept their judgment in areas where they clearly the have relative and relevant expertise.
- 4. Give efficient direction, backed by sound logic, and encourage directional improvement.** When giving direction, make sure they know exactly what is needed. This will channel and focus the agency directly on the assignment. Give them the license to build upon the core concept or suggest better alternatives that you may not have thought of. Clear direction avoids "wheel-spinning" on non-productive efforts that ultimately leads to no resolution.
- 5. Give proper recognition for their efforts and accomplishments.** Although you pay them a good hourly rate or media buying commission, thank you's can go a long way to getting a little extra effort or consideration when it's really needed. A simple memo acknowledging their efforts does more than say thanks; it builds greater and more productive involvement. Further, on internal documents, acknowledge the agency contributions. This will not only indicate to them that you want input, but also that their time and effort is indeed valued.

It certainly is not an all-inclusive list, but by following these points, you can build a better, more productive marketing team effort, which will ultimately mean higher sales, market share and profits.

Blair Entenmann is President of *MarketingHelp!*, a Grand Rapids based marketing firm specializing in helping clients catch and keep customers with better marketing strategies, programs and implementation. For more information, visit [www.mktghelp.com](http://www.mktghelp.com) or call 616-866-1198.