

4 Ways Companies Should Expect Modern Agencies to Behave

The training approach companies should expect from agency partners

- Get appropriately compensated for exclusivity.
 - Strong foundations are the foundation of any good business interactions and this is no different for agency/client relationships. As part of this, the agency should be looking to understand the team you have in place, what their abilities are, what their roles are and where the outages are.
 - Too often in our experience, the agency wants to jump into the work of the work. Which means that you are not going to get the benefit of agency helping your team understand the role of branding and marketing or the ways in which to evaluate and execute it. It is no secret that agencies historically make their money by keeping their work a bit of a "black box" for their clients. But the age of that has expired with the manifestation of so many tools at the hands of anyone related to brand/design/marketing.
 - What does this look like?
 - Questions around who is on the team, level of experience, background and skills
 - Conversations around what the agency can assist with OUTSIDE of the doing of the work
 - Best use of time and money on both sides
- They train you to build your capability.
 - A good agency will come in looking to "fill gaps" and be an extended part of your team while also looking for opportunities to "train up" your team so that the work continues to become more sophisticated and strategic over time.
 - The relationship should be led from the POV that teams can be "trained up" to be better marketers and branders. Should be looking to up the next level of sophistication in this regard.
 - Agency should be able to identify places where things are lacking/going well and how to address both.
- They provide a tiered way of approaching the work.
 - Whenever we get involved with a new client, one of the first things we do is get a lay of the land on where they are currently with brand/marketing/design efforts. We ask just as many questions around the team and capabilities/capacity as we do on what they think their branding and marketing work is.
 - Then, we come back with a tiered proposal that gives options for who does what based on this assessment.
 - This provides the foundation for debate and discussion to get to a mutually beneficial place for both sides. No black box, and no keeping things close to the vest on either side.
- They believe the best work comes from collaboration.
 - The best approach is to look at the client as the expert in their business and the agency bringing expertise of branding/marketing/design. (agencies of past putting their process "on top of" the client/one size fits all approach, which does not work. Have to get in and understand the business and how to best assist in making branding/marketing better.)
 - Good ideas can come from anywhere.
 - Our view is that the heavy strategy work should always be led by the agency with input from the client. However, if the client wants to take a stab at things like brand story, etc. we are more than fine with that. It is just that these tools are so fundamental to your business that you have to get them right. Same goes for design- logos, toolkits, etc.- agency again. First messaging track/communications plan- agency. BUT your team is always welcome to be part of the process and work alongside, as well as chip away at things as we go.
 - The work each of you do will morph, so you want someone to partner with you that will always have their eye on this and be offering new ways to elevate both sides.

