

## **Best Steps in Selecting an Advertising Agency**

Here is how a client/advertiser goes about hiring a new agency. This professional agency is like any other, governed by ethical behaviour and respect for each other's point of view.

If the advertiser already has an agency, it is professional courtesy to speak to the incumbent before placing the account for tender. Discuss the problem areas and see if the situation can be remedied. If not, then decide if the incumbent should be invited to participate in the selection process, or if the invitation should only be extended to new agencies.

### **Step 1)**

#### **Request for Information (RFI)**

The advertiser invites an agency or several agencies to make a "credentials and background presentation" or RFI. This contains information about the agency, its history, track record, and key people. The presentation can be submitted, or the agency can present in person. This gives the client an opportunity to test the chemistry between the two parties. Ideally, this relationship will endure for many years, and trust and compatibility are important ingredients. There is no charge for a credentials presentation or RFI. The client can invite as many agencies to present as he or she has time to interview and, on this basis alone, make a decision on which Agency they wish to award their portfolio.

### **Step 2)**

#### **Request for Proposal (RFP)**

Some advertisers may need to go further to settle on a choice. At this point, the advertiser should have a short-list of no more than three agencies. The advertiser may now request a "test" creative campaign.

Once an agency is asked to provide a communications strategy or creative, comprising copy, print mock-ups, tv storyboards, demo radio ads, tv animatics, digital concepts and the like, the client should offer compensation by way of a fee. The recommended fee is \$10,000 to each agency invited to tender for a small campaign.

Advertisers are discouraged from using the tendering process to require agencies to provide extensive, elaborate campaigns. This represents a huge amount of work for the agency, and is unnecessary to the decision process. Often this work is simply shelved, because the vital, almost-daily communication process between advertiser and agency which is integral to in-depth brand campaigns is not a part of the tendering process. Once the client has awarded the business, then the client provides a full brief accompanied by

all the necessary interaction to ensure that the best possible result is achieved, in a timely, cost-effective manner.

All intellectual property and creative work contained within the tender remains the property of each submitting agency, unless an agreement has been made ensuring adequate compensation to the agency.