

TIPS & TOOLS

5 steps to successful collaboration

Effective collaboration between agency and advertiser is the basis for successful ad campaigns. Advertisers and agencies are already largely in agreement about what constitutes successful advertising. But what does effective collaboration look like? To paint a clear picture of this concept, we offer 5 concrete dimensions that contribute to a successful collaboration in which everyone can give his or her best: the agency as creative source for inspiration and advice, and the advertiser as marketer and policymaker.

1.

Start

First of all, agency and advertiser must have a good understanding of each other's business, strategy, objectives, needs and expectations. Then, a natural next step is a detailed discussion between the two parties to define shared objectives that everyone understands and agrees with. This keeps expectations realistic and establishes a context in which mutual trust can grow with full respect for each other's roles and possibilities.

2.

Process

The collaboration must be founded on continuous interaction and exchange in which everyone demonstrates engagement and team spirit. Including executive management. This facilitates open and meaningful communication in which points of view can be challenged and feedback can be freely given.

3.

Competencies

What do we have to offer each other? Professionalism, talent, expertise, and the assurance that all staff members have benefited from the necessary education and training. Essential elements are: marketing knowledge of the highest order, strategic insights regarding the brand, and a clear social vision in which consumer and individual both have their place. The project is conducted interdisciplinarily, so that cross-fertilisation and a tightly-knit pattern of collaboration can develop. Here as well, support and encouragement from top management are essential.

4.

Values and standards

The basis of every success story: trust and respect, openness and transparency, communication and dialogue, sharing and exchange of information, empathy, mutual understanding, partnership, co-ownership, clarity and confrontation, stimulation and challenge, mutual trust, mutual inclusion and involvement, and passion for the work and the project at hand. The added value that these qualities generate makes mutual investment more than worth the effort.

5.

Evaluation(s)

Collaboration is an ever-evolving process – which is why continuous feedback is needed, as well as ongoing evaluation and, if necessary, corrective action. 'What have we learned, and what can we improve?' This signifies much more than the advertiser's interim assessments of the work that the agency is performing. It's about verifying together whether the goal has been reached – with regard to the results of the campaign as well as the engagement and the collaboration itself. A fruitful collaboration entails constructive evaluation: formally (once a year) as well as informally (when the right moment presents itself).

With this checklist, the ACC is offering you the possibility and the necessary information for starting up or adjusting an effective collaboration. Remember: value the work and the collaboration at all times, and be aware that creating advertising is a 'trade' in which training and experience are crucial.