



Is it Just My Agency? The 3 “C’s” to Successful Pipeline Building: Consistency, Consistency, Consistency

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Too many agencies prospect in fits and spurts.

Too many agencies are terrible at marketing themselves.

Too many agencies don’t take the time to build an organized new business process.

Winning new business starts with building a solid pipeline of potential opportunities.

Building a solid pipeline starts with developing and maintaining the 3 “C’s” of business development.

Absent of these 3 “C’s”, an agency’s efforts will be stunted, challenged, and frustrated.

The first and potentially most important “C” is **consistency of outreach**... being there as much as you can, as often as you can. After all, the “game” is a bit of an aperture marketing game. Today your prospect is fine, tomorrow they have their boss breathing down their neck, or a new initiative demands a new look and fresh ideas. Being there when they are ready to make a move means always being on the radar, not just when you can make the time.

The second “C” is **consistency of messaging** used in reaching out. Just like an advertiser’s brand, your “brand” needs to define itself in as compelling and as unique a way it can. Given at the end of the day, all agencies deliver the same “staff”, finding the reasons-to-believe your agency is able to get the prospect to a better place is central to convincing them that you can help. Show them you understand their situation, bridge their situation back to your work, then make your compelling case for why your “way” is better than the next agency on the block.

And the third is the **consistency of the methodology** used in your outreach. You can have the most outgoing, smartest salesperson in the world working on your behalf and if he/she isn’t organized in their approach, doesn’t have the right tools to reach out with, doesn’t have the right support to help develop lists and messaging and reporting, the program will eventually fall short.

Following the 3 “C’s” is particularly important in today’s economy. With fewer opportunities and more agencies knocking on the same door, doing it the way we’ve always done it isn’t going to win the day.

In a recent survey conducted by business development consultancy Reardon Smith Whittaker (www.rswus.com/surveys), 150 agency principals highlighted the consistency of the pain many are feeling in today’s market, stressing the need to be better stewards of the 3 “C’s”.

Is it just my agency?

Doesn’t seem to be so.

According to the survey, close to 60% of those responding state that their business is flat to declining versus a year ago.

51% of agency principals state that winning new business is “harder” or “a lot harder” than it was three years ago – as compared to only 40% agreeing with the statement in last year’s survey. So it’s clearly getting tougher, not easier to create opportunities.

What could be the root cause?

When asked, 37% of principals seem convinced that the top reason for the slowdown is the fact that there are fewer opportunities to be had (as a result of company consolidations and lower levels of spending), and that it is increasingly harder to break through to prospects (44%).

With the economy placing ever-increasing pressure on the advertiser’s financial performance (see RSW’s “A Client’s Perspective on Economic Conditions”: www.rswus.com/surveys) there seems to be ever-increasing pressure on a marketer’s time. With company cut-backs comes less time to talk to agencies. With less time and fewer dollars to be spent on marketing, advertisers are more hesitant to give the agency that simply wants to talk about itself any time. Reach out needs to be compelling, relevant, consistent and on-going. Reaching out with new thinking, best practices, or anything that can add value to the prospect’s world will only improve your chances of penetrating and getting on the radar screen.