

Thank you for choosing IntelOQuence as your partner.

We are pleased to be working with you and would like to offer some tips in helping our agency/client relationship thrive.

It's easy to forget there's a skill to being a client -- a skill well worth cultivating, since good clients get better results from their agencies. In a recent Conference Board survey, 31 percent of advertisers termed their relationship with their ad agency somewhere between "unsatisfactory" and "disastrous." Only 18 percent said they were happy with their agency. So by following a few simple tips let's beat that 18 percent and make this a successful partnership.

- **Define needs before you call.** Frame an elaborately formal Request for Proposal (RFP), or simply state your desire for a well-designed e-mail template. Large or small, know your goals before you talk to an agency.
- **Get your house in order.** Don't spring an agency on your company. Brief management and appropriate staff. Explain why the engagement is sought and what the goals are. Create buy-in. Distance the agency from any and all office politics.
- **Get to know the faces and the names.** Don't just get to know an agency's work and sit through the pitch. Meet the people you'll actually work with. You'll be seeing a lot of each other. (Regular meetings are imperative to keep things on track.)
- **Create a communications map.** Who are the go-to people, on your side? Distribute a detailed list of who handles what. Contact information is a must, preferred contact methods and times of day are a big help.
- **Never keep 'em hanging.** Responsiveness is way up there on the list of what agencies want most from clients. While they bust their rear ends meeting tight deadlines, remember: You're collaborating. Return calls. Answer e-mail. Have internal decision makers lined up when it's approval or sign-off time. When there is a delay, quickly inform the agency and keep your contacts abreast of when and how matters will be resolved.
- **They give as good as they get.** Is it possible for an agency to have too much information about and from a client? Talk, and don't stop there. Invite key account people to internal meetings. Add them to memo, distribution, and newsletter lists. The more tightly your agency is integrated into every aspect of your product, service, brand, and organization, the better its staffers can work. The more you make them think, the better they'll execute.
- **Good contracts make good partners.** Don't want your agency to work for the competition? Spell it out in advance. One company learned only after firing their agency that the proprietary code running their six-figure Web site belonged to the erstwhile shop. It's unlikely to happen to you, but an object lesson nonetheless.
- **They're partners. Trust them.** In an ideal agency/client relationship, trust and partnership are a goal and a state of being. Never regard your agency as a vendor. Share sensitive information. Understand rejecting ideas is inherent to the process, not indicative of failure. Hiring a good agency is retaining a team of smart consultants.