

IAS offers five comprehensive pitch processes

The Independent Agency Search & Selection (IAS) remains committed to provide the ultimate pitching experience for marketers and their potential agencies. It provides this service in a highly saturated market, by providing new pitch products that keep it ahead of the game.



"As the IAS, our role is to help marketers and agencies achieve the best possible results and we help maintain, retain and develop successful long term relationships between clients and agencies," explains Johanna McDowell.

"We advise agencies on market differentiation, positioning and credentials, pitch and review processes and on-going client relationship management.

"From what we call our flagship pitch, as an intermediary consultancy we guide marketers through the construction of the agency brief as well identifying your key criteria. In addition to that, we develop the criteria for selection for each phase of the process and notify successful and non-successful agencies at each stage of the process. Below is how we follow the process to ensure that we get the right pitch out of the agencies."

Constructing the initial report

In the initial phase, we prepare a report on the agencies that fits a particular client's brief which summarises all key agency details which allows a client to choose a selection of agencies in more details.

Thereafter, we issue a call for specific credentials and brief to selected agencies who meet with the IAS to discuss with agencies and view their tailored credentials and case studies, presentations plus any agency reels and portfolios.

Chemistry meetings

Unique to the IAS - and invented by our UK affiliate, the AAR Group - are chemistry sessions. These chemistry sessions are vital to the success of a possible agency appointment and are an essential ingredient, as well as an elimination process, within the entire pitching procedure.

Between five and seven agencies are selected for chemistry sessions following the credentials stage. Once Chemistry is completed, more agencies are eliminated before the final pitch stage.

Getting to the Pitch

During this phase, our client will have now identified a short list of three agencies that they would want to invite formally to pitch for their business. The IAS will prepare the pitch brief and manage the pitch process including Q&A sessions with

clients, and conducts planning and staging of the pitches and formal evaluations, which leads to the final appointment and negotiations.

We recommend that a remuneration negotiation take place with the two leading agencies, following the final pitch session, in order to ensure a strong pricing structure for both parties and a fair SLA.

The winning agency is appointed based on chemistry, content of pitch and pricing. IAS will facilitate the signing of contracts between the parties including remuneration structure, payment terms, exit clauses, service level agreements, key performance measurements and so forth.

Different types of pitches

IAS has recently added four bespoke pitch approaches to suit every budget without compromising client and agency cohesion and cost effectiveness. They are: The Tissue Pitch, The Chemistry Pitch, Pitch in a Day and the No Pitch-Pitch.

These provide even more efficient pitch process options that companies and marketers can use to select the "best-fit" advertising, marketing, communication, PR, digital and integrated agencies.

The Chemistry Pitch

The process does exactly what it says. A decision is made on which agency to appoint after the chemistry meeting, effectively enlisting an agency partner to then work on developing the overall scope of work.

The chemistry Pitch enables one to identify and appoint an agency partner based on their strategic approach, culture and relevant experience. There is no creative solution needed in the chemistry pitch.

Chemistry sessions are very specific; they are usually about an hour in length. During this process, it is all about who the client is, while we send the agency a brief and during the process, we expect that the agency will ask some searching questions as we look for them to demonstrate an understanding of client's business in terms of the industry.

Tissue Pitch

This approach is designed quickly to explore creative and strategic capabilities against a brief, but is a pitch that does need a fully worked creative solution. A Tissue pitch is all about ideas and it is speed enabling.

The No Pitch-Pitch

A No Pitch-Pitch enables one to deliver a fresh brief to an incumbent agency as if it were a new agency relationship. This gives an agency a chance to change an existing team and showcase new skills and creative approaches. Only the incumbent agency is asked to re-pitch for this business.

Pitch-in-a-Day

This pitch process is designed to really understand how an agency works, thinks and develops their ideas in an immersive way that includes client involvement.

The process is designed so that one can see the dynamics of the agency team and learn more about the agencies strategic and creative approaches.

Pitch in a day takes place in a workshop format where clients spend a day with an agency as part of a process. We would recommend a maximum of three agencies to be included in this process.

How to choose the most appropriate pitch process for your budget?

Every pitch process is different as every marketer has different needs and different marketing issues. There is no 'one size fits all' in pitching and it is very dynamic with lots of 'moving parts' along the way. Costs, effects on a brand's growth, requirements of the business C-suite all play a role in the pitching process selected by a marketer.

Our role as IAS is to advise each marketer on the best course of action, whether time or cost based, to meet their needs. This advice is important for all aspects of the marketing communication mix and can vary from very small budgets to very large, from very small tasks to all-encompassing marketing communication campaigns. In the end, it is about arriving at the best possible choices from the widest and most appropriate selection of potential agency partners.

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