

What is the Agency's Presentation Really Telling you ?

| Text/Patricia J. Fiske |

Selecting and hiring an agency is one of the most important decisions you will make in your corporate career. Whether you are hiring your first agency or have been through the process in the past and are hiring your second, third, or fourth agency, you know it's going to be time-consuming and the ultimate decision may not be easy. You have read the books on how other clients have selected their agency. You have spoken with the other decision-makers on your team and set your criteria. You have scouted the agencies in your market. You may even have hired an agency search consultant to help you through the process of finding and hiring an agency who will be best for you and

your company.

And now you are ready for the first round of presentations, a time for you and the agency to get to know one another. As the agencies make their presentations, consider these two ideas. How well they differentiate themselves from the other agencies suggests how well they will be able to differentiate you from your competition. How well they make themselves relevant to you suggests how well they will make you relevant to your market.

Joe Hoke, Worldwide Partners' Business Development Consultant, began studying this issue in earnest about five years ago. The difficulty clients face in reviewing agency credentials really jelled for him when

he viewed what should have been very different kinds of agency presentations. One was by a Norwegian agency, and one was by an agency in Central America. The problem, he observed, is that most agencies look alike and sound alike when presenting their credentials. And, the problem is international in scope. Joe's insight is backed up by agency search consultants—mostly advertising industry veterans who work with companies that want to change their advertising but who want professional help finding the right agency for the job—who had also stated their concerns about presentation styles that make each agency look just like the next.

Working with a client who had

recently retired, a former brand manager who had seen many new business presentations during his 30-year career, and an agency search consultant, Joe examined the credentials presentations from more than 40 agencies. Together, Joe and his colleagues identified several key patterns of sameness and areas where presentations need improvement.

Ask the agency to be relevant. You need to know, from the beginning of the presentation, that the agency has your business needs in mind. But what actually happens? It is usual for an agency to begin its credentials presentation by talking strictly about itself. "Hello, let us start by giving you some background on XYZ agency." Slide shows picture of the three founders. "It was founded in 1984 by an artist, a writer and an account guy." Slide is a chart of agency growth. "XYZ agency has grown every year since, even during the recessionary periods." Slide is a list of services. "By adding the services to deliver integrated marketing communications to our clients." Slide shows current (and even some historic) client logos. "We do work for..." and the agency will then give the names of the clients whose logos are on the chart. Slide of dense typography describing the agency's

purpose/philosophy is displayed while the agency describes its philosophy. Here comes the time-consumer. The agency shows a slide, or many, of the agency's process. All the while the agency is talking, in agonizing detail, about how it approaches a marketing communications problem.

The problem is that the processes are starting to look like everyone else's. So, how do you know which is best for your product or service?

The agency that deserves to make your short-list is the agency that makes its credentials relevant to you, that demonstrates they understand your needs, benefits, problems and opportunities.

Knowing you is the best way an agency can differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Look for a common theme. Superior agency presentations are focused on a central theme of overriding importance to your company. But what do you hear? Joe and the industry experts with whom he worked saw that many presentations lack unity, they were missing a central idea that made all parts of the presentation work together. As a good example of unity, Joe describes a presentation tactic used by a U.S. agency when it won an automotive account. The

agency's name did not appear on any of the slides used in its presentation. Instead, the agency simply put at the bottom of each electronic image: "200,000 cars." The point was unmistakable: the agency had the same determination as the client to sell cars, and did not let an emphasis on its own philosophy, image, or methods interfere.

Beware of buzzwords. Advertising, like other professions, has developed a specific business vocabulary, something like an internal "dialect" spoken by account executives, creatives, and media planners. Unfortunately, these words can interfere with the message you need to receive. "Branding" is one of those words. How often have you heard "branding" as a generic word? "Branding" is not an end in itself, but the means to an end. In a presentation to you, you want to know branding is not something done for its own sake. Brand-building is about increasing your sales and gaining you a greater share of the market. But when terminology specific to the advertising industry, such as branding, is overused, you hear a cold, clinical, message that obscures what the agency is able to do for you. Again, expect the agencies to speak directly to your immediate needs and concerns. They are the



agencies that are truly dedicated to helping build your business.

Listen for results. Agency presentations should be, to a very high degree, about results: either the results an agency's work has gained for clients in the past, presented in a way that is relevant to your company's needs, or the results the agency plans to achieve for you. If they don't show results it may mean that they don't achieve them.

Also listen to see if the agency gives credit where it is due to its client, because the client's insights are essential to effective marketing communications. An agency that does not explain how they worked with their client to achieve results is probably one that is too focused on itself, and may not appreciate the contribution of the people who hired them.

Style and content. Electronic presentations have been a standard industry practice for the past two decades. After his analysis, Joe observed that the misuse of electronic media, especially Microsoft PowerPoint, could detract from what is crucial in a business relationship: the human element. For example, many presenters put as many words on a single slide as possible, and then proceed to read out that text to you and your team. Have you noticed

from your own experience that in a darkened room, the "energy level" diminishes, and the rhythm of displaying screen after screen of text and graphics can put an audience to sleep?

But more importantly, PowerPoint can steal the "chemistry" that might otherwise be present between agency personnel and you and your selection team. The opportunities for spontaneity, for humor, for theater, can be lost.

The problem here is perplexing. Some new business directors for agencies have said they are afraid not to use PowerPoint, since it has been a standard presentation tool for so many companies. They fear you will think the agency is not technologically sophisticated if they don't use PowerPoint.

Joe describes one presentation, in which billings of \$100 million were at stake. The winning agency used no electronic media whatsoever. Instead, poster-sized cards were created and shown in consecutive order. This "old-fashioned" method of explaining just how well the agency understood its prospect's business was used with great elegance and refinement. It did not obscure the personalities of the presenters, and it made the client feel welcome to interact. In fact, presentations without electronics

frequently provide the best opportunities for agency and client to get to know each other.


Here are some things that you might consider when asking an agency to present to your company. One is, if an agency that you are considering believes it must include an electronic dimension in their new business presentation, watch to see how creatively they use it. They can also limit the use of that technology. In an hour-long presentation, a PowerPoint slide show can be narrowed down to five or ten minutes and the lights do not have to be completely turned out if the slides are bold enough. The key point is that you want the opportunity to get to know that agency.

Agencies that create the best campaigns for their clients are invariably the ones that understand their clients because they have asked the right questions. Strangely, many agencies are reluctant to ask questions of prospects. Perhaps they fear they will annoy you. So another thing for you to consider is whether or not you would appreciate the persistence shown by the prospective agency that makes telephone calls and asks intelligent questions. One of the marks of a good agency is that it has a good prospecting program, and this includes doing whatever it

微笑太陽

中國成功品牌的整合行銷戰略

takes to meet with you before the presentation, even if that means driving to an airport for a 15-minute face-to-face meeting, before the presentation.

And above all, the best agencies, and the ones most successful at winning new accounts (and then keeping them) are those that build relevance into all aspects of their research, and do not let the structure of the presentation obscure this. They are the agencies that stand out from a crowded field of competitors that increasingly look the same when they try to persuade you they are the best agency for the job. They start and finish their presentations with assessments of what needs to be done to build your business. And in doing that, they show their superiority, without having to talk too much about it. 

Worldwide Partners is a corporation equally owned by entrepreneurial marketing communications firms located in 55 countries. Its mission is to multiply the power of the idea by extending the reach of the lead agency. Its commitment is to create customers with marketing communications that respect and honor the consumer. With US\$4.1 billion dollars in billings and employing more than 5,000 people, Worldwide Partners is the 10th largest marketing communications firm on the planet.

After almost 30 years of successfully managing his own agency, Mintz & Hoke, in Avon, Connecticut, and winning business in good and bad times, Joe Hoke agreed to become a business development resource for Worldwide Partners agencies. Joe kept a diary of brilliant new business ideas in which he continually analyzed his successes and failures to understand what works and why. He hired some of the best consultants in the business and sucked every bit of knowledge he could out of them. Beyond advice he provides tools-processes and models that make new business and creative efforts work better.



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書號／71043
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《微笑太陽》通盤解說企業形象識別系統 (CIS)，如何成功包裝品牌，如何建立自己的品牌形象。從商標設計、商品包裝、各種媒體推廣等，一系列的呈現，讓人更清楚品牌在中國茁壯的過程。透過文字說明、精美圖片及VCD影片，一次三種媒體，帶您窺探WTO後中國商場上的一切變化。

最佳 合 夥伴

| 文 / 費萃夏 | 翻譯 / 仲曉玲 |

編按：從2002年5月起，世界夥伴公司執行長費萃夏（Patricia J. Fiske）將以此雙語專欄，討論本地代理商的價值，以及如何與全球傳播集團抗衡。

在你的企業歷程所作的當
中，如何選及雇用代理商是其中
最重要的決定之一。無論你是1
次雇用代理商，或在你過去的經歷
中，這已經是你2、3、4次
雇用代理商，你都知道這對是一
項費時間，且不容易作出最後決
定的工作。為了這項工作，你
並了解的客戶是如何選他們的
代理商，你必須和你團隊中其它
的決策者談談，並下你們對代理商
的標準。你也已在你的產業市場中
聽過一些代理商，你雇用一位
調問來專替你及你的公司
最適的代理商。

現在你已準備好一代理
商提案簡報，這是讓你及代理商彼

此認識了解的時機。當代理商進行
提案時，記住2點。這家代理商
如何他們與家代理商，意味
著他們將如何你及你的競爭對
手。這家代理商如何與你建立關
係，意味著他們將如何為你及你的
市場建立關聯。

服務於世界夥伴事業發展問
公司（Worldwide Partners'
Business Development Consultant）
（註1）的喬（Joe Hoke）（註
2），在5年前便對這項問題展
開研究。當他在2家分來自
及中美國家的代理商，理
而言應該常不同的提案時，
地發現企業客戶在評選代理商時所
面對的問題，那就是，大部分的代

理商所提出的經歷起來或聽起來
都相似，而這個問題是海
準。喬的也獲得代理商究
問的持——大部分企業中的
廣告人想要替廣告時，都會需要
這些專家替他們適合的代理商
——這些問也提出了代理商們如
出一的提案格，造成彼此相似
的問題。

喬最與一位已經，且在
過去30年當中過許多新式
商業提案的品牌經理，及一位代理
商究問一起工作，視來自
過40家代理商的經歷提案簡報，
喬與他的同事們發現了幾項要
似的提案模式及一些需要進的代
方。

要求代理商要切題 在提案的一開始，你知道這家代理商了解你的企業需求。但實際發生的是，通常這家代理商會開始嚴謹地談論起他們自己。「大家好，讓我首先為大家介紹我們公司。」於是幻燈片秀出3位創始人。「我們公司是在1984年由一位藝術家、一位作家及一位會計師合夥成立。」接著是一張組織圖表。「我們公司自成立後便不斷成長，即使在經濟不景氣的時候……」。然後幻燈片又再秀出他們所提供的服務。「透過增加這些服務，我們為客戶完成整合行銷的工作。」幻燈片於是再秀出一些現在或過去服務過的客戶的企業標誌。「我們替這些公司服務……」，然後說出這些在圖表上的公司名號。

當代理商描述他們的經營理念時，幻燈片也秀出密集的排版文字。花時間的事來了。代理商秀出許多說明其公司歷程的幻燈片。他們一直談論許多讓人不耐煩的細節，以及他如何解決行銷溝通問題。問題是，這些過程開始讓他們像任何其他家代理商一樣。你究竟如何才能知道誰才會是最適合你的

產品及服務的代理商呢？

值得被你列為候選的代理商，應該是那些將他們的經歷與你產生關聯，而且了解你的需求、優勢、問題及機會的代理商。

找尋共有的主題 好的代理商提案簡報應該是將內容專注在對你的公司最重要的中心議題上。但你聽到什麼呢，喬及他的同事們發現，許多代理商的提案內容缺乏整體性及讓簡報中所有部分貫連奏效的中心概念。喬以一家美國代理商贏得汽車客戶的提案技巧為例，說明一個好的提案整體性。這家代理商的名號從未出現在任何一張簡報的幻燈片中，相反地，他們只在每個電子畫面的下方秀出了「20萬輛汽車」。他們的論點很明顯，這家代理商有著與客戶相同的銷售汽車的決心，而不讓任何像是他們自己的經營理念、形象或方法阻撓客戶對提案內容的理解。

當心行話 廣告如同其他行業一樣，已發展出一套特有的商業語言，一種像是廣告AE，創意人及媒體規畫師會使用的一種內化的用語。不幸的是，這些行話會干擾你需要接收的訊息。「品牌打造」就

是其中一個例子。你有多常聽到「品牌打造」這個共通語詞？「品牌打造」本身並不是一個結果，而是一種達成目的的方法。在提案簡報會中，你會想知道品牌打造並不是打造品牌而已。「品牌建立」是關係著提升銷售及增加市場占有率。但當特定的廣告界專有名詞，就如「品牌打造」被濫用時，你只會聽到一個把代理商可以為你作的事變得疏遠、僵化的訊息。再次強調，你期望代理商直接地解決你的立即需求及問題，他們才是真正會為你奉獻並幫助你的生意的代理商。

聽取成果 代理商的提案簡報，大多應該是成果導向的。不論是這家代理商將過去曾為客戶達成的成果呈現出與你的公司需求相關，或是這家代理商計畫為你達成的成果。如果他們不說明成果，那或許意味著他們無法作到。

同樣得聽聽這家代理商是否為他們的客戶依期達成承諾，因為客戶的了解對有效的行銷溝通是不可或缺的。一家不說明他們如何與客戶一同合作達成目標的代理商，可能會太過於重視自己，而不會珍惜雇用他們的人所作的付出。

風格及內容 電子簡報在過去20年中已成為一種標準的產業慣例。在喬的分析之後，他發現對於電子媒體的錯誤使用，尤其是微軟的簡報軟體，會減損商業關係中的重要因素——人的因素。比如說，很多簡報人會將一張幻燈片上寫滿了文字，然後再逐一唸出給你及你的團隊聽。你曾注意過嗎？在一間沒有燈光的房間，「能量基準」降低時，一幕幕展示著圖表與文字的螢幕會讓聽眾想睡覺嗎？

但更重要的是，簡報軟體會竊據了原本可能出現在你及你的團隊和代理商人員中的「化學作用」。例如一些自然反應，幽默感、戲劇效果等的機會都會喪失。

這個問題是很難理解的。一些代理商的新任業務總監說到，他們害怕不用簡報軟體，因為它已是很多公司都在使用的標準簡報工具。他們怕如果不用簡報軟體，客戶會認為這家代理商不夠科技化。

喬描述一家代理商為預算高達一億美金的客戶提案時所作的簡報。獲勝的代理商並沒有使用任何電子媒體工具。相反的，他們作出一張張海報大小的紙牌並連貫地展

示出來。這種老套的方式正說明了這家代理商清楚地了解到，他們未來老闆的事業在過去是如何被精確細緻地運用。這樣的方式並未模糊簡報者的性格，而且更讓客戶覺得易於互動。事實上，沒有運用電子儀器的簡報，提供了客戶及代理商最佳的了解彼此的機會。

有一些事項是當你要求代理商為你的公司提案簡報時，應該要考慮的。其中一項，如果代理商認為他們必須在他們的新商機提案中使用電子儀器，那麼注意他們是如何有創意地運用。他們也有可能侷限了那項科技的使用。在一場1小時的提案簡報會中，簡報軟體的使用可以縮短為5到10分鐘，而如果幻燈片字體夠清楚，那麼燈光也不必完全關上。重點是，你需要這個了解這家代理商的機會。

能為客戶創造最好的廣告活動的代理商，幾乎都是那些能提問精確問題的代理商。奇怪的是，很多代理商都不大願意向他們未來的老闆提問題，或許他們害怕會惹惱你。所以另一件你應該考量的事是，你是否應該賞識那些持續與你電話聯絡或提出一些好問題的代理

商。好的代理商的註記之一是，它有一項很好的候選計畫，這包括了它如何盡其所能在提案前與你會面，即使那只是趕在提案前，在機場的一場15分鐘的會面。

最重要的是，最好的代理商，尤其是那些最能夠贏得新客戶（並留住他們）的代理商，是那些能夠將他們的分析說明中的每個層面都與你產生關聯，而不讓簡報的架構模稜比關聯的代理商。他們是那些在越來越相似的眾多競爭對手中，能夠說服你他們會是最適合這分工作的代理商。他們提案內容的始末，都包含了增進你的生意所需要完成的工作評估。如此一來，他們已展現了優勢，而不需大費唇舌地解釋。^{註1}

註1. 世界夥伴公司是一家分布在全球55個國家的行銷傳播公司，由世界夥伴公司和當地的行銷傳播公司平均持股。它的使命是增加當地代理商的力量，使之與全球傳播集團的代理商相抗衡。它依賴用專業消費者的行銷溝通方式來吸引客戶。世界夥伴公司每年創造41億美元的營業額，超過5000名員工，是目前全球排名第10大的行銷傳播公司。

註2. 在美國康乃狄克州自營了Mintz & Hoke代理商達30年之久，並在經濟時期皆獲得生意的成功事業後，喬霍克接受並成為世界夥伴公司代理商事業發展的智囊。喬習慣每日記錄高明的生意想法並持續分析研究它的成功與失敗，以從中了解其成功之道。他雇用一些優秀的企業顧問，並盡其所能地吸收他們的專業知識，提供了超乎於通常且能展現的洞機及創意更為奏效的業務發展模式。