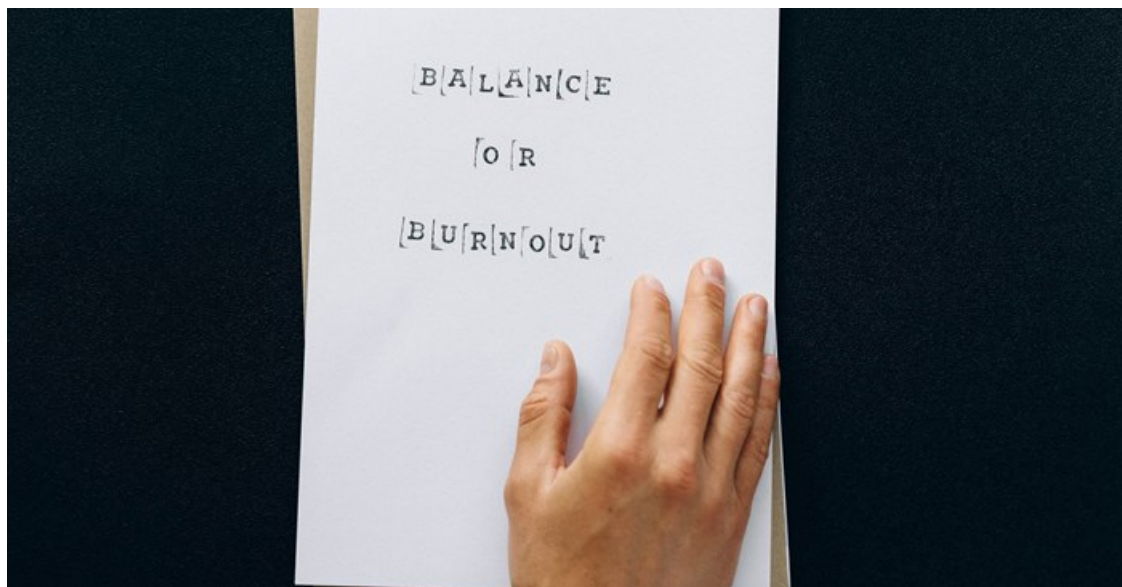


22 ad industry things to ditch in 2022

By [Dono White](#)

10 Dec 2021

While the World Economic Forum talks of the "Great Reset" of capitalism, we also have an opportunity to reset our industry. Now is the time to log the bugs in our industry and fix them - and if some of it sounds too honest - well, you were all thinking it.



Source: ©Nataliya Vaitkevich [pexels](#)

Ad-land has been operating the same OS for decades and we're ready for an upgrade. The time to "try turning it off and on again" has passed. But it means being open about the "bugs" and suggesting ways we can fix them. I'll go first.

22 things for the ad industry to ditch in 2022

- **Extravagant pitches:** When did pitching become so boujee? Even when there are pitch fees involved, they don't cover the investment an agency puts in. We need to take it down a notch. This is just the first date, after all, not lobola negotiations.
- **Judginess:** Yes, it's a competitive industry. Yes, we play to win. But there's more judging going on in our industry than in a season of Idols. We judge other agencies. We judge other departments within our own agencies. We even judge our clients... sometimes. Just a little. It slows us down and gets in the way of creativity.
- **One-upmanship:** Brands often have a cohort of agencies. We need to grow up and learn to work with other agencies. By getting in each other's way, we're getting in the way of the client's success, and everybody loses.
- **Interdepartmental feuds:** By fighting amongst ourselves, we do our industry, the work, the client and ourselves an injustice.
- **Lack of empathy:** Working with the agency is probably 10% of a client's job, which means 90% of the client's work we don't get to see. So let's be a little more forgiving.
- **Toxic client relationships:** That being said, can agencies please have the confidence to walk away from clients whose values do not match their own? Too often agencies keep bad clients for the sake of the bottom line. It needs to stop.

- **The two-month resignation period:** Do agencies really believe they are getting the best of the employee during those two long, painful months? We've all witnessed the "check-out", the resentment, and the overall poor quality of work. Teams would be more enthusiastic about picking up the slack if they didn't have to carry someone who, like that drunk friend at a party, is there only in body.
- **Exorbitant rent:** Since 2020 we have proved we can do without big buildings. Of course, it's good to have a base, but making it substantially smaller would free up budget for training, resources, and better equipment. Just a thought.
- **Awards shows:** I'm not suggesting we ditch them entirely (after all everyone loves a "do") but a light culling could go a long way. The value and prestige of awards have dramatically fallen over the years. Why? There are just too many of them. It seems like every day a new one pops up. The fewer there are, the higher the value we can place on them. And that, folks, is the essence of Bitcoin. Follow me for more crypto advice.
- **Self-congratulations:** On the subject of awards, how about we put those egos back in the box and let the consumer play a bigger role in deciding winners?
- **Hidden risks:** Can once-off 3am flightings of TVCs and billboards in the deepest, driest Karoo please come to an end? We see you. If it was a great idea, do it for a client and really let South Africa see it – don't hide it under the mattress until awards season rolls around.
- **Iffy results:** When it comes to measuring the effectiveness of creativity, either judges need to be more thorough in their scrutiny, or agencies need to be more straightforward and honest.
- **Mad Men mentality:** It's time to drop the substance abuse. It's so old school and it's not cute.
- **Heroics:** As we have seen during the pandemic, a single illness can cripple teams, so it's important to respect ourselves and those around us by taking sick days. The work will always be better when you're healthy.
- **Yes-people:** Simply agreeing to tight deadlines and putting teams under stress is the same as not taking sick leave. It's disrespectful to the humans who need to do the work. Let's be kinder and consult each other before committing to clients.
- **We are a family:** While innocent and often used to describe the great working relationships we have, what such a culture implies is that the agency is more important than your real family, personal time and relationships. Career, finances, health, family, friends, romance, personal growth, recreation and environment are all part of life, and we all deserve a little of each.
- **Briefs that aren't, er, brief** To those clients who do provide formal briefs, thank you. Now let's get behind the "brief in a tweet": Concise, complete, confident.
- **Decision-making by democracy:** I get it – 50 people approving a presentation in a boardroom has its benefits in that everyone gets to have a say. But you can't maintain the integrity of an idea while pleasing everyone – and, ahem, sticking to the budget. One person needs to own the project.
- **Copy-and-paste ideas:** Just because something worked before or for another brand, doesn't mean it's the best idea this time. There's a time to play it safe and a time to push the boundaries a little and make people take notice.
- **Classified information:** While the ideal brief is tweetable, the supporting info should be as detailed as possible. Get the agency lead's right kidney as surety, if necessary but sales data, brand equity data, and research data, shared with trust, can be the difference between a successful, targeted campaign and a dud.
- **Transformation lip service:** It's tiring now. Employees don't want to see creative percentages, hidden partners on organograms and brand updates in solidarity – they need to feel the change across race, gender and sexual orientation. Let's get policies going where they didn't exist before.

- **‘Unvironmental’ Communication:** In 2021 Cannes Lions brought to our attention that 20% of models used in advertising are animals and 90% of the most popular are endangered or heading there. Now consider that 100,000 species a year become extinct because of human activities – like advertising! If we spend money showing those animals, let’s spend a percentage of the budget protecting them. Think of it as “model royalties”. Also, digital doesn’t necessarily mean carbon free – we’re just substituting cutting down trees for carbon-emitting data centres. So how do we make lighter digital platforms and less content (which has benefits for consumers and brands)? We need to develop a greater consciousness that becomes an ethos and is reflected in our choice of communications, channels, platforms and subject matter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dono White is the strategic planning director at VMLY&R.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>