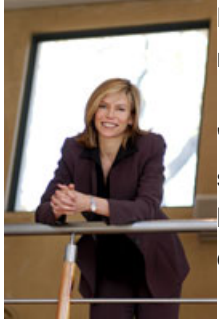


Clients crossing over



Crossing over, or sharing, of clients is a trend that is on the increase, as agencies begin to offer more than one communication service in-house. For both client and agency, the financial and time-saving benefits are numerous.



Dale Hefer, founding director of ChilliBush, says: "Clients who choose to work with an agency that offers more than one service from the marketing mix can reap great benefits.

"There is a direct cost implication from an administration point of view, largely because the client saves significantly on time, with only one company to visit, phone and pay. It also provides peace of mind knowing that there is ultimately one person at the top who is answerable to them on their entire campaign."

Hefer says further financial benefits come in the form of discounts, where, as a combined entity, it is often possible to negotiate discounts, such as for a venue.

In addition, existing relationships with one division can be leveraged to a client's advantage, for example, the PR team might more easily secure a radio interview for a client when the advertising team has placed a lot of advertising on the station.

Furthermore, for the PR division linked to an advertising agency, the time and cost-saving benefits of having access to in-house designers are substantial. The production of deliverables such as invitations is a much quicker process, as the designer already knows the client and the corporate identity.

"A 360 degree agency also ensures that there is consistency of message throughout all of the different disciplines. Because all of the parties involved in the client's campaign sit under the same roof, streamlined messaging is far easier to achieve.

"An internal meeting can be held with all of the teams whenever necessary, so information sharing and brainstorming happens easily. There is never a conflict of interest between the different companies, so you don't have a situation where, for example, the advertising agency holds back strategic information from the PR agency."

Hefer believes that this model will only work successfully if every division is headed up by an expert in that field, with the appropriate expertise to deliver excellent work at all times.

A potential problem with sharing clients is if an account is problematic for one division for some reason.

"On the other hand," says Hefer, "It can also be a positive situation. If the client is delighted with the advertising and PR, but perhaps less happy on the media side, the good relationships should enable you to sort out the problems with the other division pretty easily."

Client cross-overs don't necessarily stop at the agency sharing clients amongst its divisions. Rather, it provides numerous opportunities to mix the clients themselves. In ChilliBush's case, the advertising team could well shoot a Canon advert on The Blue Train, with the actors drinking Bavaria beer.

Likewise, the PR team can recommend that one client uses product from another in a promotion, or at an event, thereby cutting costs of prizes or promotions. Hefer says that clients love this kind of proactive approach, and are usually all too happy to leverage the synergies formed as a result of the agency's client relationships.

"Approximately 60% of ChilliBush's clients are currently using more than one discipline. In our experience, the 360 degree model has proven successful time and again, both in terms of keeping existing clients happy and winning more clients because you are able to offer them so much more."

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