

How many people sit around your boardroom table?

By [Elaine Loeb](#)

28 Nov 2016

As marketing budgets decrease and agencies have to report into procurement officers, fighting harder to justify every Rand spent in media and production, more and more people are gathering around our clients' boardroom tables for status each week.



Elaine Loeb

With agencies aplenty and a new one popping up weekly, I can't help but feel that as media agencies we're bucking the trend of an economic downturn and job losses, but rather booming as an industry. Are we really?

I have worked on a few accounts where our clients' boardrooms can't accommodate the number of people in and outside of their own organisations, working on communicating their brand. No matter how strong your brand's identity and brand strategy is as an advertiser; with so many people playing a role, one campaign voice is near impossible to achieve.

Don't get me wrong; it is great to have a fresh mind or two in the room for workshops and or brainstorms, but this should be consolidated and refined, before it gets fed back to the client team. This requires exceptional discipline from brand teams and agencies alike to channel everything through one point of contact.

With specialist agencies in every possible sector of PR, Digital & Events, I understand why marketing teams feel the need to have an expert in each sector at their boardroom table, but with each of these agencies focussing on their own bottom line, we can't possibly devise the best strategy for clients, no matter how high our level of integrity. Each individual agency is under pressure to maintain and grow billings and we have to put our own agency's interests at the forefront of our plans, as the reality is budgets are not exactly experiencing growth spurts right now.

Even though earlier I mentioned that this gives the illusion that as an industry we're bucking the economic trend, the reality is evident; the marketing pie is the same size, if not smaller than in previous years, the more we slice it up, the more likely we are to be left with crumbs between friends and overworked account teams who can't immerse themselves in the brand as they are resourced over 100%.



Of course I wouldn't be sprouting out gloomy opinions if I didn't think I had a solution. In my mind; the answer to proliferation is always consolidation, yes I might be over simplifying it but keeping it simple was drummed into me in a previous job and has always rung true. The solution; full house agency or agency group – I know it brings us back to where the agency model began but as a fairly new joiner to the agency model, I can't help but feel this is the only solution.

We are in a rather fortunate position at the company I am a part of, as we have a network of agencies that all contribute towards the same bottom line, meaning that we can look at client briefs objectively as opposed to being forced into decisions that help out only one companies' bottom line. The majority of client accounts straddle too many agencies, all trying to maintain their spends to give an unbiased opinion on where they should direct their spend.

Consolidation will lead to less people around your boardroom table but with one consolidated vision and if expertise are needed outside of the skill set around your table, by all means outsource. However, at this stage of the digital media journey we should all be up-skilled sufficiently to understand each and every medium and how it can benefit your brand enough to pop back into the office, bounce ideas off your colleagues/experts and get back to your client team with one consolidated campaign.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Baine Loeb is the Account Director for Vizeum Johannesburg.

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