MIRREN NEW BUSINESS GUIDE SERIES

DOWNLOADABLE TOOL

The Mirren Post Pitch Client Debriefing Guide

This new business guide will help your team get to the truth about why you lost (or won) a competitive review. You will learn how to pre-empt the client's desire to end the painful "break up" call as quickly as possible. Being able to uncover key client feedback will help to improve the effectiveness of your entire new business process.

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Introduction

Whether you've won or lost the pitch, getting practical feedback from the client is critical. Constructive insight about the agency, your team and your approach can help make or break future new business efforts. Your goal is to uncover the truth on how effectively your agency performed.

However with this type of call, the goal of the client is to get off the phone as quickly as possible. If you lost the pitch, it's a painful exercise – a break up call. They want to get you off the phone so they can move on.

And, with more pitches being remote, it's only gotten tougher.

At best, you'll typically get a superficial perspective and rarely anything critical. As with any break up call, it's difficult for the client to tell you the truth. In fact, the most common feedback is, "It was so close. You were a close second place. I wanted you to win, but it was someone else on the team. You guys were great."

Many agency executives go their entire careers either winning or "coming in second." Or so they've been told.

The Post Pitch Client Debriefing Tool provides a simple step-by-step approach to handle each feedback call. When handled methodically, you make it easier for the client to give you honest feedback, then helping you to effectively improve your new business approach.

But then again, you were a very, very close second.

Uncovering the Truth about How Well Your Agency Performed

You've done a tremendous amount of work for the pitch. Sometimes you've even completed months of work, all compressed down into two or three weeks. At the start of the pitch, the client promised they would provide feedback when everything concluded. And when you lose, you're definitely looking for the client to make good on that promise.

Once you have the client on the phone, lead them through a brief post pitch analysis process. Having a well thought out approach (and set of questions) will help to uncover new insight about your team's performance.

There are 7 key topics to focus on. The questions within each topic are meant to act as thought-starters; you will need to customize the questions depending on the parameters of each respective pitch.

1. Team/Talent
   - Who were the strongest team members?
   - Who were not as strong?
   - Any concerns about any team members?
   - Who were most qualified?
   - Who were least qualified?
   - Who should not have been in the room?
2. Chemistry
   - How well was our team gelled?
   - How well was our team rehearsed?
   - Did you find them to be a tight, aligned unit?
   - Did anyone not fit in with the team?
   - How well would we have fit with your team?
3. Strategy
   - How accurate was our strategy?
   - How effectively did it address the brief?
   - What would have improved it?
   - How effectively was it written & presented?
4. Creative Thinking
   - How innovative was our creative thinking?
   - Did you see any new & unexpected thinking?
   - How well did it tie back to our strategy?
5. Solution
   - How accurate was our solution?
   - How effectively did it address the brief?
   - What would have improved it?
   - How effectively was it written & presented?
   - How effectively was it tied to the strategy?

Uncovering the Truth about How Well Your Agency Performed (continued)

6. Effectiveness at Answering the Brief
   - Overall, how effectively did we address the brief?
   - Where did we fall short?
   - Did the brief change at all?

7. Overall Presentation Impact/Persuasiveness
   - Overall, how persuasive was the team?
   - If you were to have given our presentation, what 2 or 3 things would you change?
   - The Team? The Strategy? The Solution? Dive back into previous areas if you did not uncover the insight you were looking for.

Other Areas to Probe Related to the Pitch Process

Written Submissions
- Where could this have been improved?
- Were our submissions clear and easy to understand?

Pricing
- How did our fees compare to the winning agency?
- To the other agencies?

The Winning Agency
- What did it for the agency who won?
- If the winning agency was a 10 out of 10, what would our agency be?

The Pitch Process
- How many agencies participated? At each stage?
- Did the selection criteria change in the end?
- Were there other criteria that came into play during the pitch process?

One Final Question
- Will you invite us again?

Approach

Being authoritative and confident will ensure you get more out of the client. The opposite – sounding apologetic or meek – will confirm their choice not to select your agency and shorten the call. Part of the goal is to command the respect you deserve, but without being arrogant.

Be specific in the questions you ask. Otherwise, you will most likely receive the "oh, so close but no cigar" answer. For example, consider some of our recommended questions that include:

- Who were the strongest team members?
- How effectively did our strategy address the brief?
- Did the selection criteria change in the end?

Lead the client through the process and do not let them off with vague answers. Rarely should you take the first answer at face value. Ask the client to expand on each answer. Get them to open up about why you were not selected.

Remember this is a break up call, so the client may initially be reluctant to open up. The onus is on you to lead the call.

After the Call

Once the call is complete, do not make any immediate and drastic changes to your process. You should not revise your approach based on one call, as the feedback is ultimately from only one person. Instead, look for common threads over time. If you hear the same feedback over several calls about specific areas of your process, then you should make the appropriate changes.

When the post pitch client debriefing call is orchestrated more methodically, it can play an invaluable role in helping to fine tune your new business process – converting more business for the agency.

The Mirren Post Pitch Debriefing Tool Worksheet: Create Your Customized Questions

Client:____________________________

Team/Talent

Objective: Uncover specifically who performed well and who didn't.

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2. Chemistry

Objective: Uncover how well the team was aligned, rehearsed and had chemistry with the client.

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3. Strategy

Objective: Uncover how well your strategy addressed the brief.

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4. Creative Thinking

Objective: Uncover how innovative (and strategically-grounded) your creative thinking was.

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5. Solution

Objective: Uncover how effective the overall solution was and how persuasively it was presented.

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6. Answering the Brief

Objective: Uncover, overall, how well you addressed the brief and whether or not the client brief changed in the end.

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7. Overall Presentation Impact/Persuasiveness

Objective: Uncover, overall, how persuasive the team and presentation were.

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8. Other Areas of the Pitch Process

Objective: Uncover how effectively your agency orchestrated other aspects of the review.

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