

4A's Philly Council
Agency Transformation Roundtable
October 26, 2010, 2:00 PM to 6:30 PM
Comcast Center, Philadelphia

Discussion Guide

Opening introductions for roundtable panelists: At the 4A's national annual conference in March 2010, 4A's President and CEO Nancy Hill outlined a vision for the transformation of agency businesses. What does transformation mean at your agency? Please prepare a five-minute overview of how your agency has undergone (or is undergoing) a transformation of its own. No need for visuals, but remarks should be as detailed and specific as possible. What are your pain points? What are your successes? The discussion will allow for elaboration on specific topics, such as talent management, compensation and client relations.

Additional questions to consider:

- 1) As you've gone through your own agency transformation, has that caused concerns, issues, volatility or added success within your client base? Are clients open to these changes?
- 2) What are clients demanding that's different from your agency and how are you delivering on these new requests?
- 3) It's often said that digital is at the core of all agency businesses these days. For agencies that have transitioned from so-called traditional into the digital space, what are some practical words of advice for agencies that are making the transition? How do you make the decision to make that change?
- 4) What role does social media play in the business and how has your agency effectively worked on SM programs for your agency and clients?
- 5) Education plays a critical role in helping to facilitate change in agencies, and there are effectively two audiences: internal (employees) and external (clients). What approaches have worked in educating these audiences? What hasn't worked?
- 6) Agency compensation: Now that engagement is part of the dialogue, how have talent recruitment, training and retention changed? What are you doing to address these changes?
- 7) Rishad Tobocawala mentioned in his remarks that compensation and incentives are key to retention. What are you doing to attract and retain the best talent?
- 8) As this transformation has happened, with the talent that you're getting, people coming into the industry, while they understand engagement and new channels, are you feeling a loss in some of the traditional principles of advertising and marketing? (e.g., the power of positioning, the notion of a big idea rather than

- an effect.) If so, how do you integrate the positives from traditional principles into the transformed world?
- 9) How do you maintain those competencies and principles while also expanding into new competencies and principles that represent the new realities of our business?
 - 10) Do you perceive a cultural divide resulting from the convergence of new and old paradigms? What have you found to be the most effective way to harness positive culture to help facilitate change? What are the cultural pain points that hinder change?
 - 11) Have you seen requests for agency compensation to take that into consideration or does it drive toward more of a pay for performance model in the future?
 - 12) Digital: How does your agency manage in an environment of constant innovation—where there is a new “new thing” available everyday with the potential to impact audiences, channels, agencies?
 - 13) How do you manage into the solutions that you believe are right and sustainable and recognize the things that are just a fad or a flash in the pan?
 - 14) What are you doing to keep your agency in a thought leadership position with clients?