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Agency Relations Strain Across China

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By: Erica Ng, China – Shanghai

Published: Mar 11, 2010

R3 RESEARCH AGENCIES

Shanghai - The relationship between marketers and their agencies are more challenging in China, with low satisfaction levels leading to shorter partnerships, a study by R3 found.

Some 52% of marketers say they are 'happy with their agency', down from 74% two years ago.

The study also found that about a third of marketers feel indifferent towards either their creative or media agency, or both, and 43% of them engage their agencies on project basis.

"It's a true indication that agencies are continuing to be engaged more as commodity suppliers rather than brand building communication partners, and many marketers are not committing to a long term or even medium term vision," said Sally Warren (pictured), general manager of R3:GC, a joint venture with European consultancy Grupo Consultores.

Warren said the rise of pitching and the increasing number of agencies invited to pitch was making it difficult for client marketers.

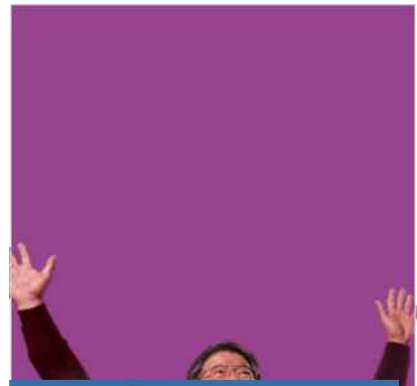
"Now on average there are 3.7 agencies invited to a creative pitch, amongst local Chinese marketers this is even higher at 4.5, and 38% of marketers are pitching their creative business annually or even less."

Other statistics from the study show that China continues to take the lead with the shortest agency-marketer relationships in the world.

For creative agencies, the average tenure is almost three years and for media agencies slightly over three years, compared to an average of over six years in the US.

The study was carried out by face-to-face interviews with 234 senior marketers in China over a five-month period.





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