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### News



## R3 study: China marketers employing more agencies than ever before

by Kenny Lim 11-Mar-10, 12:30

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**BEIJING – A new study by R3 has found that marketers in China are rapidly changing the structure of their agency relationships and moving from a 'one stop shop' structure to a range of specialist solutions to meet their marketing needs.**

The research involved a five-month face-to-face interview process with 234 senior marketers in China and included clients such as Coca-Cola, Nokia, McDonald's and Diageo as well as major local clients including China Mobile, Yili, Lenovo and Bright Dairy.

The statistics reveal that marketers in China now engage a specialist agency (other than their core creative or media agency) in much higher numbers for disciplines including event marketing and road shows (up 11 per cent since 2008), to digital marketing (up 11 per cent) to public relations (up 8 per cent).

The role for traditional creative agencies in particular has gone down for activities such as digital marketing (9 per cent), direct marketing (15 per cent), event marketing (56 per cent) to even field marketing, sponsorship and product placement.

On the study's findings, Sally Warren, GM of R3 GC, a joint-venture with Grupo Consultores, says: "We've already seen the growth of media agencies on the mainland over the last ten years, but this study suggests digital and marketing service agency relationships are becoming more strategic and more common."

"On average, marketers are managing seven per cent more creative and media agency relationships, and 20 per cent more are using marketing services agencies for diversified services," says Warren.

Other statistics from the study reveal that China marketers are favouring creativity over integration from their agencies. "Ninety-eight per cent of marketers ranked creativity as an important factor in agency selection, but only 67 per cent rated integration as important – this has declined from the previous study two years ago," says Warren.

She adds: "And creativity is now coming from anywhere – marketers gave us their insights on over 250 agencies in China – with more local agencies mentioned than ever before," she said. "Local agencies such as Ye Mao Zhong also ranked in the top twenty for the first time."

The role of digital marketing and the best agencies in this field have also continued to evolved significantly as 92 per cent of clients claimed they would welcome new media training from their creative or media agencies and just 22 per cent of clients rate their current creative agency as being strong in digital/interactive media.

"There has been a tendency towards specialist digital agencies; with 52 per cent of marketers stating they would prefer to use a specialist digital agency than either of their current creative or media agencies," says Warren.

She adds: "Digital agencies are now being engaged in the majority of cases for areas of search, mobile marketing, web development and build, and digital strategy and consulting. Media agencies still take the lead for online media planning and buying, just ahead in social media and equal on search."

In terms of clients, the study also looked at both high profile and most admired peer marketers in China. Coca-Cola currently leads in terms of profile and is runner up to P&G in terms of "most admired" company.

However in this years' Agency Scope Study, there has been a significantly higher level of local clients in the mix as Mengniu Wang Lao Ji and Li-Ning closed in on the top ten of most admired firms plus 44 per cent of all companies named were local marketers.

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