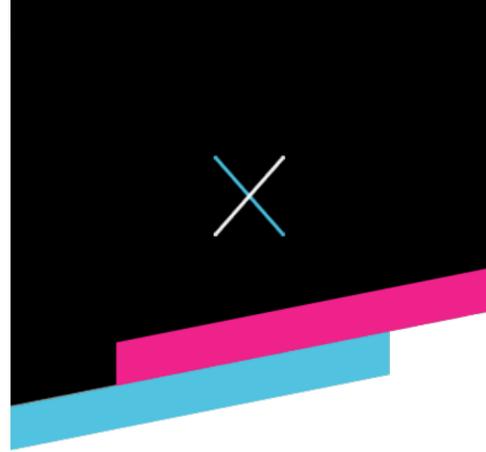




5 KEYS TO BUILDING
CUSTOMIZED CLIENT
PARTNERSHIPS

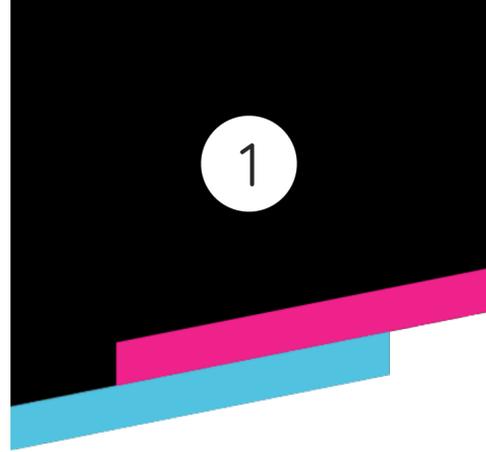
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UNIQUE NEEDS REQUIRE A CUSTOM APPROACH

Trust, transparency and communication have long been at the core of a strong agency-brand partnership. But today, client customization has become a marquee success metric of partnership cultivations. Much in the same way consumer and brand relationships have evolved, so too have client and agency relations. Clients want their agencies to not only understand their business, but to also understand their unique needs. Whether clients are dealing with the pressure of an internal re-org, shifting leadership, lagging sales numbers, or an impending C-suite presentation, they want immediate and tailored solutions from an agency partner that can pivot on a dime to address their needs.

Having been on the client side for many years, I deeply understand these needs. However, standing on the agency side, I am able to genuinely grasp the hurdles that these high expectations can create. With insight from each of these worlds, here are five ways to cultivate customized and trusted partnerships.

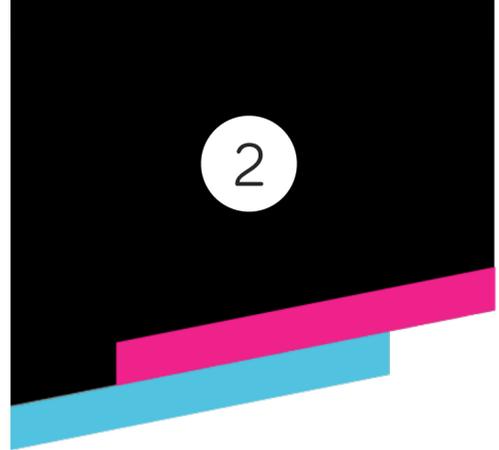


RESPONSIVENESS & ABILITY TO PIVOT

Have you ever received a text from a client in the middle of the night with an urgent request or question? Have you ever reached the final stages of a brand strategy or campaign only to receive word that your clients need to shift direction? If not, you most likely will over the course of your career.

Enter “next-level responsiveness,” the first line of defense and a critical piece to maintaining and creating trust. What’s changed in delivering responsiveness? In this age of instant everything, being responsive means more than just responding quickly. It means anticipating and planning for changes so that once a shift occurs, your response is curated to ensure a seamless pivot. Clients are looking for instant solutions and perhaps most importantly, they need to have 100% confidence in their agency partner to provide the right solutions at the right times.

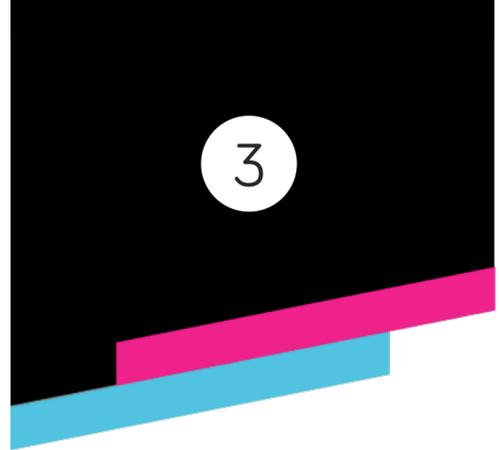
Be ready. Be agile. Be smart. Be aligned with your team and your clients.



TRANSPARENCY

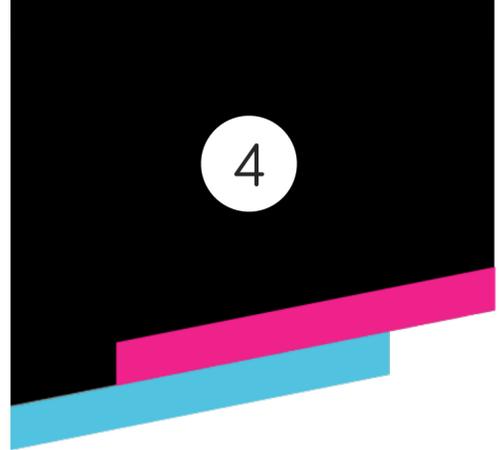
The word “transparency” gets thrown around quite a bit, but what does it really mean to be transparent and how does it help client-agency partnerships succeed? Simply put, transparency is about being as open and honest as possible. But when thinking of how to cultivate a more customized partnership, it goes beyond merely lip service or providing hourly rates. True transparency forces us to think more strategically and to be holistically more detailed. It’s about sharing some of the “secret sauce” and pulling back the curtain to reveal more of ourselves, the agency and the process.

From a client perspective, this type of agency transparency helps solidify trust, instill confidence and foster stronger collaboration.



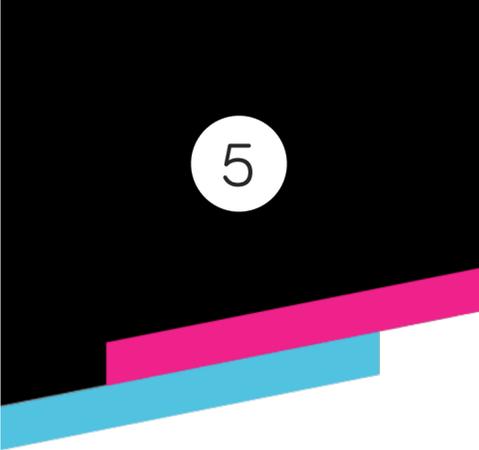
ACCOUNTABILITY

The days of hiding behind the protective umbrella of your agency when things go haywire are gone. Accountability has shifted toward personal accountability - owning what you do and how you do it. Mastering this is pretty straightforward: you and your team should proactively acknowledge and own mistakes. Don't wait for clients to point out errors or hope they won't notice. Clients appreciate personal accountability and they expect it. While it may feel uncomfortable in the moment, it's an incredibly important part of customizing your client relationship and enhancing trust for the long run.



EMPATHY

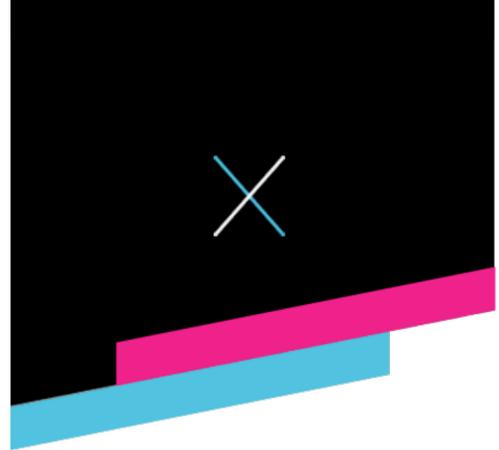
Though highly underrated and under-emphasized, empathy is one of the most powerful skills you can employ to cultivate customized partnerships. We are in the business of creating communications and advertising that is meant to elicit emotion, yet, in our professional relationships, we are often hesitant to show emotion when interfacing with clients. Understanding and being sensitive to the difficult situations that clients face, provides the ever-powerful element of humanity. Empathy creates a conduit for deeper connections to grow. It disarms while deepening respect and trust.



5

ACTIVE LISTENING

Everyone can admit to being part of a conversation or sitting in meetings where they've tuned out. You heard the words, but weren't really listening. There is great value in listening and from a client perspective, it's crucial that your agency partner is truly comprehending what is being communicated. If they aren't, it can mean unnecessary rounds of work or worse – missing the mark completely. The practice of active listening goes beyond the 'hearing' and focuses on fully concentrating and understanding what is being said so we can formulate better solutions and mitigate issues. So, put down your phones, close your laptops and fully engage in the conversation.



CONCLUSION



Just as every personal relationship in life is different and unique, so is every client partnership. Ultimately, being in-tune and cognizant of specific client needs and nuances will help guide a customized approach and create strong, long-lasting professional relationships.



WHO WE ARE

AUTHOR

ANGELA STREBA

Angela Streba is an Account Director at GYK Antler. Her nearly 20-year career has given Angela unique insights into global client and agency perspectives. She has worked on brands including Sweet Baby Ray's, Dartmouth-Hitchcock, Cedar's Mediterranean Foods, New Hampshire Lottery, Bose, Hush Puppies, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Bissell, Naked Juice and more.



OUR AGENCY

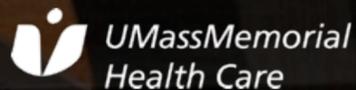
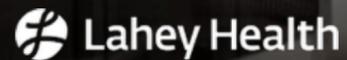
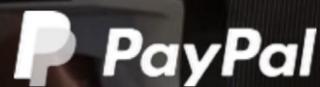
GYK ANTLER

Recognized by Forbes as one of America's top 25 small companies, GYK Antler is a mid-size, independent, full-service marketing agency. We are a hundred technologists, creatives, strategists, data hounds and media planners who understand what it takes to shift a brand into new territory. We never shy away from responsibly disrupting the status quo—even when it comes to our own agency. Whether it's revitalizing a textile mill to create our ideal content studio or bringing Emmy Award-winning video producers in house, we follow our passions to create positive, measurable change for our clients.

At GYK Antler, our hearts and brains are always working together, and that's what makes our work so impactful.



BRANDS WE'VE HELPED



LET US HELP YOU

Could your business benefit from a marketing boost? To get access to our team's expertise, contact us today.

Locations

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175 Canal Street
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THANKS!