

Client leadership: Partnerships and comms



By [Keenan Bouwer](#)

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As long as there has been marketing, there have been boardroom wars! These battles take place due to different ideas coming from different people who all want to be heard. How do we as marketers settle these disputes and take our clients into the realm of success you ask. The answer is one word, **leadership**.



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Often leadership is perceived to be an internal necessity and sore point for many companies, after all with great leadership comes great responsibility. Unfortunately, due to this false perception marketers often find themselves being led by the client, who has in fact hired the marketer to take this role on in the first place.

Garnering trust and creating a partnership

Why does this happen? The answer is simple, the client believes they know their audience better and that their processes for creating content are stronger. The truth is that initially, the client may know the audience better, but that is where their input should start becoming advisory, however, this will only take place if their initial audience is researched and critically observed and a strategy is put into place. The most important part of this initial approach boils down to **communication**.

If this process is continuously communicated to the client, you will position yourself as the leader in the scenario. As the leader in the situation, you garner trust and create a partnership and synergy between yourself and the client which not only leads to a healthy work relationship but starts to create the wanted results.



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Often marketers forget the communication part of the business and this leads to the client taking control. A piece of advice to anyone in the marketing sector is to remember that a client is like a life partner, they want to feel like they are the most cared for and looked after person in your life.

Leading the client provides a sense of ease and rest to them that they know they are in competent hands.

Basic factors to communicate when leading the client:

1. Results
2. Follow-ups
3. Current project/campaign status
4. New trends
5. Ideas

Lack of communication

The main two reasons why client leadership does not often occur sit on either side of the client servicing spectrum. The first reason being that the marketer lacks the confidence to communicate as they have self-doubt.

The second reason being that because many of us live and breathe marketing we forget that our clients are in the dark when it comes to the best tools and processes to use and because of this are unable to plan and execute a decent marketing drive for their brand. Due to our knowledge, we believe that they (the client) already understand why we are doing what we're doing, which results in us not communicating enough with the client.



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Client leadership often determines the agencies client retention as well as project success, because at the end of the day if there is no partnership between the client and the marketer the focus often gets placed on the negatives and arguments, instead of the marketing drive itself.

To conclude one needs to only look at the top reason for divorce on a global scale, the reason being that there is a lack of communication. In my experience, this holds true in the servicing sector and can be avoided through breeding a basic company culture of clients not being the people you work for but rather the people you work with to achieve a common goal.

ABOUT KEENAN BOUWER

I have a strong base in marketing and I believe in focused strategies that bring brands to their relevant audiences. Audiences are not broad and undefined as in the past, we are now in the future. Audiences have become segmented and crave meaningful content, thus I help to establish strategies that talk to sectioned audiences within a larger market.

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