

APA announces pitch reforms for ad agencies

The professional association that represents advertising agencies in Kenya, the Association of Practitioners in Advertising (APA) has announced reforms to the pitch process that are aimed at improving current market practices.

All requests for competitive pitch involving APA Agencies will now be channeled through the association, which will provide the information needed for more successful shortlisting. The association recommends limiting the pitch shortlist to no more than four agencies.

To encourage this, and to ensure adequate recognition for the work that goes into pitches, the APA will levy rejection fees payable to agencies whose pitch is deemed unsuccessful. This is intended to encourage more focused pitches, with least waste of time and intellectual property.

Announcing the latest developments, APA chairman, Monty Dhariwal of Express DDB said, "In a market where there are many more clients than ad agencies, we need to ensure that every pitch counts. Good pitching requires more groundwork, better briefing, and more focus from marketers. We are convinced the benefits will justify that."

Scanad Advertising managing director, Sameer Ambegaonkar commented, "Kenya is recognised as a hub for pan-African creativity due to its well developed ad industry. More clients will soon be doing this as they look for Afro-centric work. These guidelines are intended to help clients to select the best."

In efforts to support and develop both business skills and encourage the creativity of Kenyan advertisers, the APA will retain a proportion of rejection fees payable to unsuccessful agencies to run continuous training and development programs for its members.

Chairman of Young & Rubicam Group, Africa, Chris Harrison said, "The people who will benefit most from this will be the clients themselves; existing clients will suffer less from their ad agencies diverting their best resources in the pursuit of new clients at short notice. Whereas new clients are more likely to value their selected ad agency at the end of a process that has taken some investment, been properly planned and deliberately designed to produce the correct solution."

This year the APA has opened up membership to digital and specialist media agencies, to keep in step with developing trends. Lenny Nganga of Media Agency Saracen welcomes the opportunity to segment the outputs of the pitch process, stating that marketers who simply want better media strategy and a buying capability can focus on that requirement, without the distraction of evaluating other outputs.