



# Are You a Double Agent?

**In the age of transparency and speed, client /agency relationships can thrive by adopting new means of collaboration and partnerships powered by data.**

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The release of “No Time to Die” by MGM/Universal Pictures, featuring the 25th 007 adventure, brings us back to a world where nothing is what it seems to be. In the complicated, intriguing counterintelligence world, the concept of transparency and trust is, well, non-existent. Yet, in the advertising business, it has been central in the past decade to evolving an industry that was previously known to have many confidential hidden practices. The client/agency relationship requires more than lip service, as complexity and expectations increase and work timeframes accelerate. There is no room for uncertainty or confusion. Transparency remains the foundational stone on which the advertising industry is being rebuilt for speed.

Transparency, however, is nothing more than a noble aspiration unless it is enabled by streamlined processes and powered by relevant, actionable data that is easily accessible to enable



## ***A View to A Kill*** (Reconciliation)

The nature of the client/agency relationship is highly dynamic. So is the work, always subject to change, adjustments, and course-correction throughout the year. Having access to reconciliation data (e.g., burn rates, production cost actuals) provides brand advertisers with timely, usable data to steer their business in the right direction or to simply reset, changing that direction as often as needed, including budgets and the nature of the work itself. It provides a view into the future but also a way to manage the present. As soon as a plan is approved, it becomes obsolete. And reconciliation data is the only way to manage the work and resources together.

## ***Diamonds Are Forever*** (Performance Evaluation)

A strong relationship, one that is grounded in a foundation of mutual accountability, is considered a gem these days. Naturally, gathering data about the performance of the relationship and any actionable feedback only reinforces strong partnerships and helps struggling ones. To do so, that performance data (either subjective like survey data or objective like KPIs) must be acquired frequently enough—at a minimum twice a year—and must be shared broadly with relevant stakeholders and used to drive sustainable change. Using performance data is the only way to keep the focus on what matters most in the relationship.

## ***The World Is Not Enough*** (Briefs)

Scopes of work are not enough. The subsequent process of briefing an agency is a natural continuation of the planning process and happens daily. The effective briefing of agencies by clients has historically been a weak spot. Brand advertisers will acknowledge being challenged with briefing agencies concisely, consistently, and effectively. And agencies do expect better, more insightful, inspiring briefs from their clients. Briefs include highly relevant, detailed data that is so essential for the agency to come up with creative concepts and strong work. That data must be made readily available to any agency.

## ***The Spy Who Loved Me*** (Roster)

Another important piece of data is agency profiles. This is what marketers rely on to evaluate an agency within their roster before deciding if this is the right fit for a given assignment. Roster profile data includes performance results, examples of successful campaigns, and filtered data such as capabilities. As the lines between disciplines continue to blur, finding the absolute, most qualified partner for a project is consequential for any advertiser. If you want great work, make sure to find a greatly qualified agency to produce it.

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There is no doubt that a strong client/agency partnership is key to marketing success and business performance. Yet, with so many moving parts, having access to meaningful data can improve transparency, trust, collaboration, and decision-making, and empower both sides to move at a faster pace. There is no room for double agents in our industry. There are few roadblocks and many opportunities today to improve operating processes and deploy technology that contributes to making data more accessible to marketers and agencies alike. The client/agency partnership is increasingly data-reliant. And if it is to flourish, there is, well, no time to rest.



To drive greater value from your client/agency relationships, check out industry reference Agency Mania:

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**Bruno Galpois** is the co-founder of Agency Mania Solutions, a premier service and technology firm specialized in helping companies realize the transformational value of managed partnerships. Bruno is the author of best-seller “Agency Mania” and the former chair of the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) Client/Agency Committee and a faculty member of the ANA School of Marketing.

Our clients’ continued accomplishments result from cutting-edge practices in the area of agency management. See how stronger relationships contribute to better marketing.

