



# A Look Back: Agency Management in 2019.

*And what it means to us in 2020.*

**BY BRUNO GRALPOIS**

Author/Speaker, Thought-provocateur, Client/Agency Guru,  
Entrepreneur, Innovator

I am fortunate to have spent the majority of my career working with and learning from some of the most powerful and innovative brands in the world. 2019 was no exception. Many of my conversations with CMOs and brand advertisers focus on the dynamic of having an agency partner. For many, having an agency partner is critical to the success of the marketing function, but as with any external partnership, challenges arise from time to time. Inspired from my engagements, I have penned multiple articles related to agency management to help alleviate challenges and foster superb engagement. My reflections trend toward offering advice or perspective on how to build strong client/agency partnerships, effective performance evaluations, financial management, agency search best practices, transparency and marketing technology innovation. I thought it would be useful to bring all of these resources together as you look back and plan for 2020.

## Better Client/Agency Relationships

One of the most frequent questions I get is, “how do I create stronger client/agency partnerships.” In response, I’ve explored how brands can [get more value](#) from their agencies, the [role CMOs must play](#) in managing the relationship, common [sources of tension](#), and the importance of proper [scopes of work](#). With the right [practices in place](#), agency/client partnerships may last longer, even back to being

decades-long like those that previously dominated Madison Avenue. I also had the opportunity to share my perspective on this topic with editors at [ANA Marketing Maestros](#), [Adexchanger](#), [CampaignUS](#), and [MarketingDIVE](#).

## Performance Evaluations

Performance evaluations have the power to improve agency efficiencies and better align the use of agency and internal talent. I often challenge brands to evaluate their agency relationships by applying a [rating based on the value of effectiveness, engagement and efficiency](#). As always, performance evaluations can be an extremely useful tool to help [repair several issues within client/agency relationships before it's too late](#). This effort often leads to cost savings, stronger partnerships and improved business performance. You can read more on this topic in [MarTech Advisor](#).

## Financial Management

The threat of corporate restructuring, zero-based budgeting, and other cost-cutting initiatives keep advertising executives up at night. I [warned that with this constant pressure](#) to reduce marketing budgets, cutting agency fees is, without a doubt, very tempting, sometimes justified but also involves hidden costs. I also shared this warning with [ANA Marketing Maestros](#).

## Agency Search

Another common concern I heard from executives was how to eliminate the months-long agency searches that lead to frustration. In April, I [led a group discussion](#) with search consultants from around the world (US, UK, Australia, France, Germany, Spain, Netherlands, South Africa, Denmark, etc.) about current challenges and solutions when embarking on an agency review and what trends are powering the agency search of the future. I also shared with them how [endless RFPs](#) are part of the problem and how advertisers and agencies can be more efficient.

## Transparency

Advertising transparency and trust between advertisers and agencies will only continue to be a concern in the coming year. The advertising industry can learn a lot from [Samsung's agency audit](#) earlier this year. I also shared with readers at [The Drum](#) how technology may be the key to solving transparency issues.

## MarTech

Marketing technology currently accounts for nearly one-third of a CMO's budget. This will only continue to grow in the upcoming

years. Too often, with these solutions, advertisers conform to using [off-the-shelf MarTech software](#). But once those solutions are deployed, brands may experience disappointing results. I worked with the editors at [ClickZ](#) to highlight that custom software may be the key to success.

2019 also marked the anticipated release of *Agency Mania 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Ten years after I wrote the first version, all aspects of the client/agency relationship have drastically evolved and transformed. This required a revisit to several industry best practices and take into consideration new and upcoming trends in the advertising industry. I had the pleasure of highlighting excerpts of my book with several of the industry's leading news publications. You can read some of this best-selling agency management advice in the following articles:

- ANA Marketing Maestros, [“A Playbook for a Better Agency/Client Relationship in 2019”](#) and [“A Marketer’s Strongest Muscle is the Agency: Keys to Ending the Agency Mania”](#)
- CMO.com, [“The Agency Model Of The Future”](#)
- MarTech Advisor, [“ROI: How CMOs Measure the Success of Client-Agency Relationships”](#)
- MarTech Podcast, [“Choosing The Right Marketing Agency”](#) and [“Evaluating & Managing Marketing Agency Partners”](#)
- MediaPost, [“Accountability In Agency-Client Relationships Is A Two-Way Street”](#)
- The CMO Council’s Marketing Magnified, [“Are performance evaluations the key to reducing agency breakups?”](#)

I hope this collection of resources helps inform your client/agency partnership practices. As we enter the new year, I am honored to share my expertise and knowledge in the industry to guide your path.

To a prosperous and successful 2020,

**Bruno Galpois**

**Bonus Perspective:** With *Agency Mania Solutions* headquartered among several of the world's leading technology innovators and brands, I recently had the opportunity to explore how brands and agencies in the Pacific Northwest are transforming Seattle into a digital marketing hub. You can read perspective on this transformation and future of advertising in Seattle in a recent article published in the [Puget Sound Business Journal](#).



If you would like to learn how to drive greater value from your client/agency relationships, consider reading best-seller and industry reference *Agency Mania*:  
<https://agencymania.com/book/>

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<http://agencymania.com/subscribe.html>



**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.

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