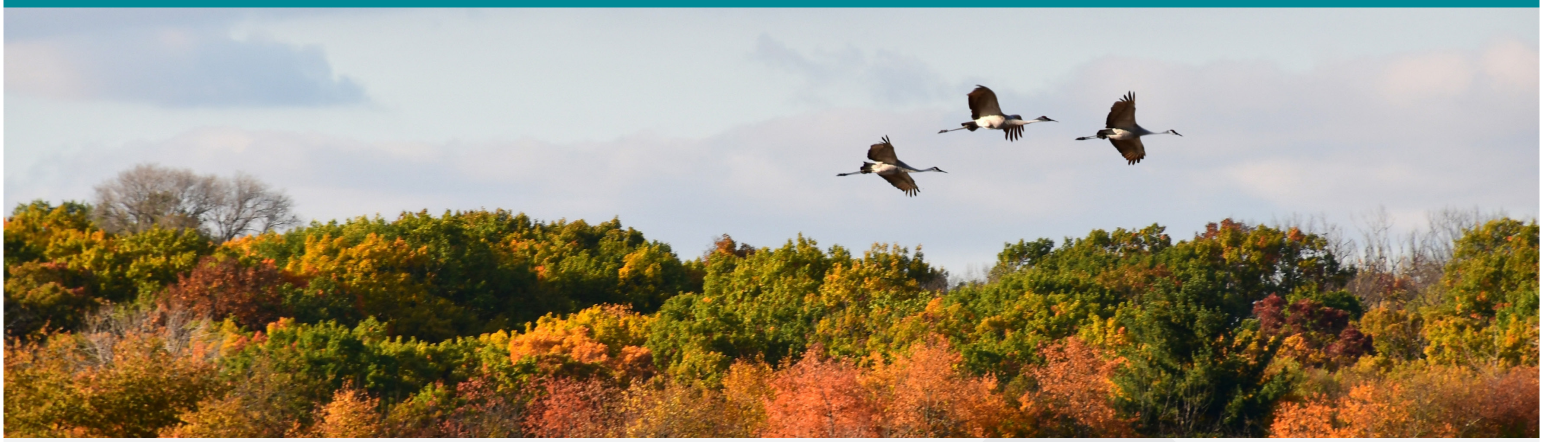
Industry Update

AGENCY MANIA SOLUTIONS

A summary of newsworthy client/agency relationship developments and relevant marketing or agency management trends.

July – August 2026



In this issue:

VOLUME 89 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The past few months have reinforced a structural shift that we identified in prior Industry Updates: AI, consolidation, data ownership, and accountability are converging into a new agency operating model.

AI is becoming an operating layer. Agency ecosystems are consolidating around control and scale. And marketing economics are moving from effort toward outcomes. Current developments increasingly validate this metamorphosis.

Three signals matter most:

1) WPP is stabilizing but not yet growing; its better-than-feared results bought management time for restructuring.
2) Measurement is consolidating, with Nielsen's $2.15 billion DoubleVerify deal potentially combining audience measurement and media-quality verification under one owner.
3) AI capability is becoming a leadership issue rather than merely a technology issue, with new research suggesting that CMOs themselves may be lagging behind their organizations in AI proficiency.

Our takeaway: The competitive battleground is shifting from who has the best agency roster to who has the best-managed marketing ecosystem—data, AI, agencies, technology, scopes, measurement, and commercial accountability working as one system.

Bruno Gralpois
Co-Founder and Principal,
Agency Mania Solutions

A note from the AMS team:

So much is happening in our industry that even reading this type of industry update, even selecting the most relevant news and trends, can be daunting. We now have a new content classification method to help you focus on what matters most. Each piece of news and information is now organized into one of three categories:

» GAME CHANGING

Transforms the landscape. Signals a structural shift, creates new rules, or materially alters strategy, economics, or behavior. Immediate attention required. We highlight "why it matters" for additional clarity.

» HIGH IMPACT

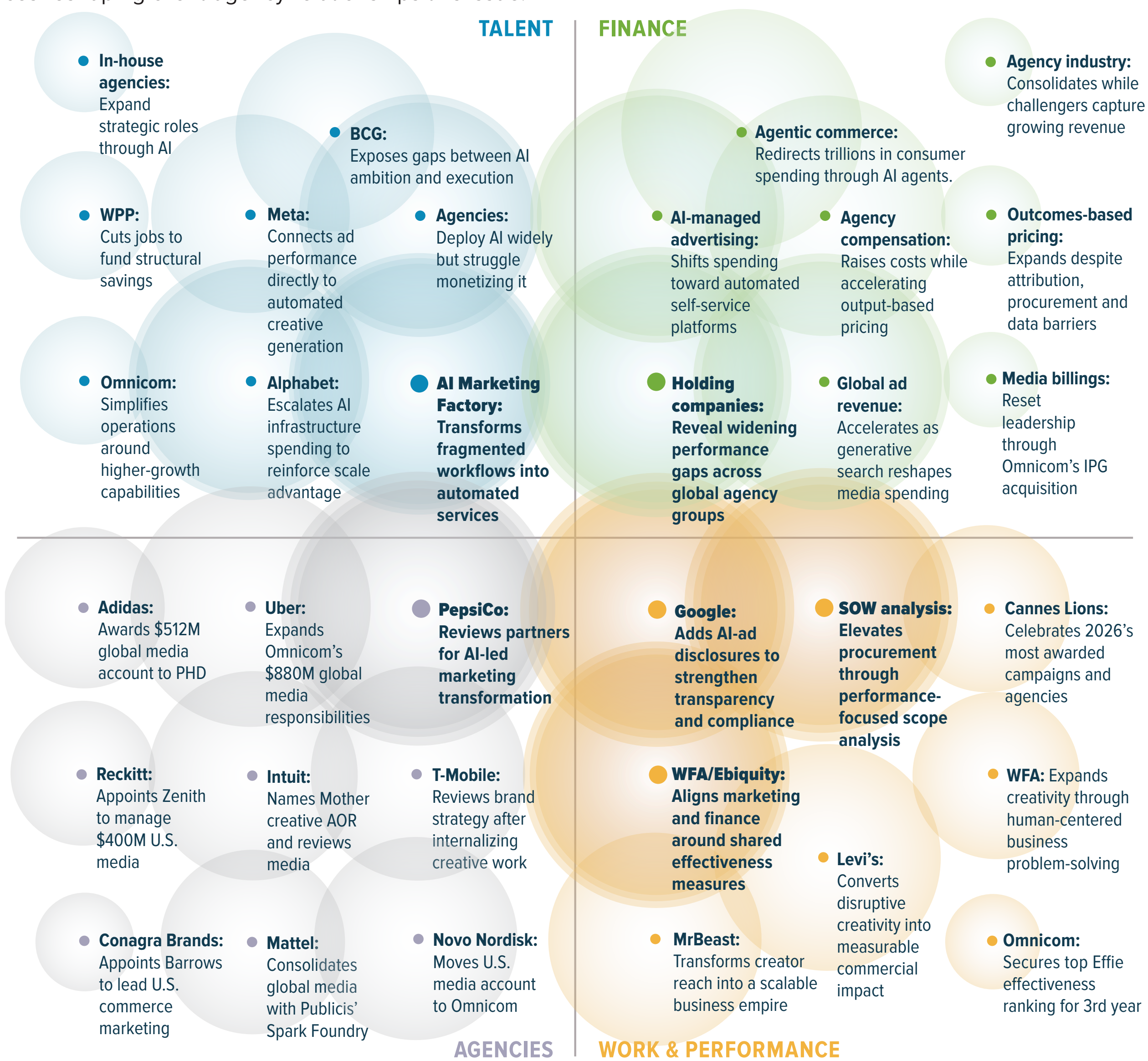
Directly affects decisions, priorities, or performance. Meaningful implications for leaders and teams, even if not revolutionary. Act, adapt, or prepare.

» NOTABLE

Informative and relevant but limited in scope or duration. Worth knowing, monitoring, or referencing. Context, not urgency.

Mapping What Matters Most

Building on our Game Changing, High Impact, and Notable classification system, this new visual plots the volume's standout stories across four quadrants: Talent, Finance, Agencies, and Work & Performance. It gives you a bird's-eye view of the forces reshaping client-agency relationships this issue.



TALENT: Securing the right talent and resources

Agency consolidation is leading to ecosystem orchestration. Clients continue to concentrate spend among fewer partners while holding companies integrate creative, media, commerce, production, data, and technology. The procurement challenge therefore moves beyond selecting suppliers and toward designing and governing ecosystems. In-house agencies are increasingly seen as strategic partners, not cost savers. That's the finding of a new ANA study about the role in-house agencies play in a client ecosystem. Meanwhile, AI efficiencies are also leading to commercial-model pressure. WFA research provides one of the clearest signals: 70% of marketing procurement leaders say AI has changed agency conversations; 34% are already adapting remuneration models, and 57% plan to. Yet 75% lack KPIs to measure the impact of AI.

GAME CHANGING

- Boosted by its IPG acquisition, **Omnicom** reclaimed the #1 global agency-company ranking for the first time in 18 years while cutting roughly 8,200 jobs. Accenture Song is #2, followed by Publicis, WPP, Deloitte Digital, and Dentsu. The industry is consolidating around scale, technology, and AI while aggressively reducing headcount and operating complexity. Twenty-one companies outside the four largest holding groups generated $85.2B in revenue, underscoring growing competition from consultancies, specialists, and tech-enabled models. **Why it matters:** Scale, technology, and AI are becoming decisive competitive advantages, while consolidation and workforce reduction are fundamentally reshaping the agency business model.
- **Procter & Gamble** is shifting from the "one-stop-shop" agency model to a modular ecosystem, mixing holding companies, independents, and in-house capabilities based on each partner's "superpowers." AI accelerates content creation, but P&G keeps brand builders hands-on the keyboard, emphasizing human judgment, flexibility, and faster collaboration on bundled agency solutions. P&G has added more than 80 agency suppliers in six months, focusing on collaboration with in-house teams and smaller agencies. Chief Brand Officer, Marc Pritchard, says the approach preserves human insight while scaling execution. Recent AI-enabled sprints helped Tide generate 10 times more assets in roughly three weeks. **Why it matters:** P&G's modular roster signals a shift from bundled AOR relationships toward flexible ecosystems where specialist agencies, in-house teams, and AI are orchestrated around specific capabilities.
- **CMOs** at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity described a role spanning brand, growth, AI, measurement, and cost control. Leaders are shifting budgets toward demonstrable business impact, demanding accountable agency partnerships and treating AI as transformation—not a creative shortcut. LinkedIn CMO Jessica Jensen called it, "living in a blender." **Why it matters:** The CMO mandate is expanding from brand stewardship to enterprise growth, requiring stronger financial accountability, AI fluency, and measurable business impact from agencies.
- **Levi's** is moving away from a creative AOR model to project-based agency relationships, ending TBWA\Chiat\Day's exclusive role after nearly three years. The brand will tap different agencies based on project needs, despite TBWA recently creating Levi's first Super Bowl campaign in 23 years. **Why it matters:** The move away from a traditional AOR reinforces the rise of project-based agency models that give brands greater flexibility, specialization, and competitive tension.
- **Lego** expanded its in-house programmatic media team, hiring five roles in the US and Denmark while retaining Publicis Media as a strategic partner. The move reflects broader hybridization: Only 13% of advertisers are fully in-house programmatic, while 26% use hybrid models combining internal and agency teams. **Why it matters:** The Lego hybrid programmatic model illustrates how brands are selectively internalizing execution and data capabilities while retaining agencies for strategic expertise and scale.

HIGH IMPACT

- AI is collapsing marketing's fragmented supply chain by **turning software into automated services**. The concept of the emerging "AI Marketing Factory" integrates creation, production, compliance, deployment, and optimization into continuous workflows. Campaign cycles shrink from weeks to hours. Agencies may shift increasingly toward strategy, brand development, and higher-value orchestration.
- Per Ad Age, independence alone is no longer enough for **small agencies**: Success increasingly requires measurable business results, specialization, senior-level access, agility, and sufficient scale. Today, there are an estimated 50,000 independent agencies in the US (compared with roughly 40,000 filing tax returns in 2022). The emerging "Indie 2.0" model positions independence not as the selling point, but as the operating system enabling sharper work, fewer layers, and stronger client outcomes.
- **PepsiCo's Content Studio** demonstrates a hybrid agency model, combining in-house capabilities with external partners BBDO and VaynerMedia. Rather than replacing agencies, PepsiCo aligns internal and external teams around complementary strengths, collaboration, and business outcomes—highlighting how in-house agencies can become orchestrators within a broader agency ecosystem.
- The **ANA's 2026 study of 404 in-house agency practitioners and partners** finds in-housing remains resilient: 58% view it as a viable alternative to external agencies, 35% say marketers are in-housing more than ever, and only 7% see a pullback. 68% report high-volume work either moving or staying in-house, while 53% now view the in-house agency primarily as a strategic partner; just 9% cite cost savings as its primary role, down from 30% in 2023. Key threats are creative stagnation (35%), talent burnout (31%), and tech complexity (28%). AI is expanding capacity: 68% report increased in-house scope from generative AI, and 67% see a positive impact on creative development, while 19% say AI has brought previously outsourced work back inside. The top opportunity to strengthen perceived value is to demonstrate measurable business impact (37%).

- Only 35% of marketers meet basic benchmarks for **foundational marketing knowledge**, according to Ipsos. As AI reshapes marketing tools and workflows, the ANA warns that capability gaps could widen without structured training, prompting CMOs to refocus development efforts on core skills, AI fluency, and stronger decision-making.
- **WPP** plans hundreds more layoffs globally by year-end 2026, including at VML, extending CEO Cindy Rose's restructuring. The cuts support £500 million in annual savings by 2028. WPP's headcount had already fallen 8.7% in 2025 to 98,655 employees amid continued revenue and margin pressure.
- Post-IPG, **Omnicom** is streamlining aggressively: About $3.2B in noncore revenue is slated for divestiture, and roughly 10,000 jobs have been cut. In simplified operations, several legacy agency brands have disappeared, IT is being outsourced, and noncore businesses are being sold. CEO John Wren says mass layoffs have largely ended as Omnicom refocuses on higher-growth capabilities, while future M&A will target AI, data, media, commerce, and content.

» NOTABLE

- Publicly disclosed key client wins during H1 2026 (January–June) by holding company:
  - **WPP**: Major first-half wins included The Estée Lauder Companies, Jaguar Land Rover, Avon, Airbnb, SC Johnson, Henkel, Wendy's. Important retentions are Skechers, Tesco, Huawei, L'Oréal, Uber, and Deutsche Bahn, suggesting improving commercial momentum despite continued revenue pressure.
  - **Omnicom**: The strongest headline wins were concentrated in media: Dyson's global media account (estimated $502 million in annual spend), IBM's global media account across the Americas, EMEA, and APAC, and Adidas' roughly $512 million global media account. Omnicom also cited Subway among its new integrated-media wins, along with expanded relationships with American Express, General Mills, and Uber.
  - **Publicis Groupe**: Publicis reported six major H1 wins, which it expects to contribute roughly 200 basis points of full-year organic growth. Publicly identified wins included Microsoft, which named Publicis its global media AOR, as well as major assignments from American Airlines and Reckitt. Publicis also reported client retention close to 100%.
  - **Havas**: Key H1 wins are Indivior, which appointed Havas its US integrated AOR across creative, media, and digital; the Singapore Tourism Board, which selected BLKJ Havas as its creative agency; and Tourism Madrid, which awarded Havas a two-year integrated creative and media assignment. Havas characterized overall H1 new-business momentum as strong.
  - **Dentsu**: Notable wins are Tapestry, which named Dentsu as its global media AOR outside the US for Coach and Kate Spade across APAC and EMEAI; i-Health (a division of dsm-firmenich), which awarded Dentsu integrated media and creative AOR duties; Tabcorp, which moved its media planning and buying account from Omnicom; and Journey Beyond, which appointed Carat for media in its 22-brand travel portfolio.
  - **Stagwell**: Stagwell specifically highlighted major new-business wins with IBM, Adobe, Mondelēz, and Heineken. These helped drive a record $171 million of net new business in Q2, contributing to $540 million of net new business during the trailing 12 months.
  - **Accenture Song**: Accenture does not publish a comparable H1 client-win roster for Song. Its clearest major publicly disclosed H1 agency win was Australia Post, which appointed Accenture Song its media AOR covering media strategy, planning, activation, and performance.
  - **Overall**: Omnicom arguably had the most conspicuous H1 momentum in large global media pitches, while Publicis combined major wins with exceptional retention. WPP showed encouraging signs of recovery. Stagwell punched above its scale with several blue-chip additions. Havas and Dentsu generated targeted integrated wins. And Accenture Song continued to selectively expand into traditional agency territory.
- Per the ANA and 4As, "**10 Positive Pitch Principles**" designed to make agency reviews more transparent, efficient, respectful, and partnership-focused:
  1) Begin with a mutual commitment to transparent objectives, budgets, KPIs, teams, and conflicts
  2) Carefully select participating agencies and limit the field to credible contenders
  3) Establish and honor a mutually agreed timeline,
  4) Keep RFIs simple and focused on essential screening information
  5) Prioritize chemistry through meaningful interaction with the people who will actually work together
  6) Clearly define the purpose, scope, compensation, and IP ownership of speculative work
  7) Compensate finalist agencies for the labor, ideas, and costs involved in pitching
  8) Stop the process once a decision has effectively been made
  9) Provide timely, constructive feedback to every participating agency
  10) Negotiate a fair, transparent, mutually beneficial agreement covering compensation, exclusivity, financial transparency, IP, scope, and communication

- Per Dylan Amundson, director of marketing at Drake Cooper, **top RFP red flags are**: "Budget is TBD" or "Budget is competitive," "Detailed pricing requests, no budget provided," "We want fresh thinking," or "We need an outside perspective"; two weeks to respond to an RFP that reads like a novel; due date right before or after major holidays; the brief keeps growing; the RFP was pulled from a dusty cabinet; "full integration across all channels" with a fractional budget; "The committee will decide"; "We need to see spec creative"; multiple rounds of "clarifying questions" before the RFP. Compared to **green flags**: realistic timelines; clear decision-making process; they've done their homework on you; the initial conversations feel collaborative; they acknowledge their role in success; a consultant is running the process.
- **Strong agency-client partnerships** require the confidence to say no. Per Ad Age and BBDO Worldwide Chief Client Experience Officer Daale Carter, there are five warning signs: The business isn't ready, objectives keep shifting, resources don't match ambition, internal politics outweigh consumer needs, marketing is being asked to solve a product problem.
- **Dentsu** and **Meta** partnered to integrate Creator Marketplace Partnership Ads into Dentsu.connect, aiming to streamline influencer marketing by enabling users to manage creator selection, social listening paid activation within a dashboard.

New agencies or capabilities, restructurings, & reorganizations:

»GAME CHANGING

- As part of its WPP Elevate28 revitalization plan, **WPP Enterprise Solutions** launched a portfolio of AI-powered solutions with five main services: AI Transformation Consulting; Agentic Commerce, to shape how AI agents discover and recommend brands; Owned Intelligence, to help clients use their own data to create AI-ready assets; Real-time Relationships, to personalize customer interactions and drive loyalty; and Intelligent Content, to plan and develop content. WPP also partners with Amazon Web Services, Adobe, Google, Microsoft, Braze, Shopify, and Salesforce. **Why it matters:** WPP is repositioning itself beyond traditional agency services toward an AI-enabled enterprise transformation model, competing more directly with consultancies and technology platforms while embedding commerce, data, personalization, and content orchestration into client operations.
- Creative agency **Born Social** launched Born Creator Community, its global creator platform. It combines Born Social's curated creator communities with Croud's network, allowing brands to scale authentic, social-first content with real people rather than AI-generated creative. **Why it matters:** Born Social is betting that human authenticity will become more valuable as AI-generated content proliferates. Brands will have scalable access to real creators while differentiating social content through credibility, community, and cultural relevance.

»HIGH IMPACT

- **Stagwell's Code and Theory** launched a new Enterprise Creative division, which is designed to move creativity further upstream into business and technology transformation and connect brand narrative with the systems that drive experience, performance, and decision-making. Enterprise Creative will support and deepen major enterprise relationships, including Adobe and IBM, while exploring joint ventures and new solutions such as the Creative Intelligence System and Content Operating System for Sports, built through Code and Theory's three-year co-development partnership with Adobe.
- A group of independent B2B agencies launched a consortium called **GlobalAgility** to service multinational accounts, bringing together 850+ B2B specialists globally and combining expertise in strategy, creative, digital, content, demand generation, PR, and communication. The group includes agencies like MX Group (US), Aim B2B by Custom Media (Tokyo and Seoul), Bray Leino (UK), Changee (Milan), The Crew AG (Stuttgart), Nowa Empower (Gothenburg and Stockholm), and Xebec Communications (Pune, India). The group creates customized teams based on a client's requirements.

»NOTABLE

- **Dentsu** partnered with CreatorIQ to integrate its proprietary dentsu.Audiences data with CreatorIQ's influencer-marketing platform. Clients can identify and evaluate creators against customized target audiences across social platforms, combining first-party and proprietary data within dentsu.Connect, from planning to activation to measurement.
- **Profound** launched Aim, a ChatGPT-like interface solution that watches a brand's citation and sentiment across AI assistants like Claude and ChatGPT. The AI agent identifies likely causes, writes a memo, and assigns a project with tasks tied to fixing the problem.
- **M+C Saatchi** North America launched a sports and entertainment offering with the introduction of a dedicated entertainment marketing practice. The new arm will focus on end-to-end strategy for clients, with services spanning branded content, brand and product integrations, entertainment partnerships, talent negotiations, and activation.
- **Dazed Studio**, the in-house agency and consultancy arm of London-based, Gen Z-focused media company Dazed Media, launched a brand and cultural strategy division in the US to support clients like Gucci, Chanel, Burberry, Miu Miu, Nike, Moncler, H&M, IKEA, Smirnoff, Airbnb, and Hinge. The new offering spans cultural intelligence, narrative development, audience insight, and growth strategy.
- Creative studio **Hornet** launched Perfect Stranger, a 20-person agency integrating strategy, design, advertising, and production under one roof. The model aims to give brands greater speed, agility, and executional certainty from concept through production. Combined clients include Trimble/SketchUp, eero, Homes.com, and Kodansha.

- Boutique agency **Five Cherries** launched with four former Madwell/Gravity Global leaders, offering creative, brand, and media strategy and production. The remote agency's marquee win is Fernet-Branca, which named Five Cherries its social AOR and creative-strategy lead based on the agency's data-led thinking and cultural understanding.
- **Crossmedia** launched its new dedicated practice, XM Sports and Entertainment, to bring strategic alignment, transparency, and advanced measurement to sports partnerships. The move builds strength in unified strategy (blending sponsorship consulting, media planning, and experiential marketing); data integration (eradicating traditional silos between media buying and sponsorship activation); and accountability (delivering objective guidance to measure performance metrics and full financial impact).
- New Zealand-based **Attivo** launched a new media network, Salar Labs, which will operate as a New York-based distinct entity within Attivo Group and serve as an engine for the entire Attivo ecosystem. Salar Labs will elevate an audience-first strategy and real-time optimization across all brand touchpoints, including creative, PR, and social media, for partner agencies Hill Holliday and DNY (FKA Deutsch New York), which the group acquired a few years back.

AI (Artificial Intelligence):

»GAME CHANGING

- Google parent **Alphabet** raised 2026 capital spending guidance to $195–$205 billion, up from $180–$190 billion, as AI and cloud demand strain capacity. Q2 capex nearly doubled to $44.9 billion, while Google Cloud revenue jumped 82% to $24.8 billion, underscoring the enormous cost of the AI race. **Why it matters:** The extraordinary infrastructure spend shows AI advantage is becoming a capital-intensive scale game, raising the barriers to entry and reinforcing the power of the largest technology platforms.
- **Coca-Cola** launched Project Fizzion, its new real-time AI system created with Adobe. It's designed to manage and enforce brand consistency in more than 200 global markets. By integrating directly into Adobe Creative Cloud tools, it ensures that designers' work automatically adheres to updated Coca-Cola brand guidelines despite the high volume and localization of Coca-Cola marketing efforts. **Why it matters:** Project Fizzion shows how global brands are moving AI directly into creative operations to enforce brand governance, accelerate localization, and manage exponentially greater content volume.
- **Meta** launched a performance-to-creative feedback loop tool that first identifies a brand's top-performing ad and then generates new creative on the fly based on what's working. The tool is being integrated directly into WPP Open, which is WPP's platform for building and running campaigns and developing creative. Meta increased its 2026 capital expenditure forecast to $125–$145 billion. **Why it matters:** Meta is closing the loop between performance data and creative generation, pushing media platforms deeper into creative decision-making while strengthening integration with agency operating systems such as WPP Open.
- **Stagwell** launched The Media Machine, the holding company's AI-powered agentic operating system. As part of the launch, Stagwell Media Platform became the first to integrate Microsoft Copilot, which is powered by the open standard Model Context Protocol (MCP). MCP has been embedded into the paid-search workflow of Assembly Global, the network's multichannel media agency, and can act as a secure connection layer between Microsoft Advertising APIs and AI agents. **Why it matters:** The Media Machine signals a shift from AI-assisted workflows to agentic execution, with open protocols like MCP enabling AI agents to connect directly with media platforms and automate campaign operations.
- Per Forrester and the 4As, **AI is nearly universal at agencies**—87% use generative AI and 50% agentic AI—but adoption is focused on efficiency over growth. Most agencies still view AI as a cost center rather than a revenue driver. 81% use generative AI for productivity, while only 6% monetize AI as a business line. Agencies are heavily using AI for content creation, strategy development, research, competitive analysis, and reporting. Key barriers are accuracy/bias (63%), legal risk (62%), and privacy/security (55%). Why it matters: AI is already mainstream operationally, but agencies have yet to convert widespread adoption into meaningful new revenue. Pressure is building to move from productivity gains to differentiated, monetizable offerings.

»HIGH IMPACT

- **Colgate-Palmolive** is scaling AI from pilots into enterprise operations, layering agents onto its data infrastructure, automating manual processes, and expanding AI across marketing, R&D, and content production. The company is also training leaders and employees to build confidence, improve productivity, and ultimately drive revenue and profit growth.
- **WPP Enterprise Solutions** and **AWS** signed a multiyear strategic collaboration to scale generative and agentic AI for enterprise clients. Offerings include an Amazon Marketing Cloud Center of Excellence, composable content engine, and agentic commerce tools. United Rentals' AI "Equipment Agent" reportedly improved equipment-finding effectiveness by 70%.
- **Stagwell** launched Stagwell Curate, an AI-powered marketplace that brings media curation in-house to reduce intermediaries while improving inventory quality, transparency, and control. Curate's AI buying agents will access preferred publisher deals and exclusive pricing. US ad spending is projected to rise 9.5% to $501 billion in 2026. The platform uses AI agents built in Claude and data from The Trade Desk's OpenSincera to evaluate ad inventory and create bespoke packages for clients, reducing reliance on external marketplaces like The Trade Desk's OpenPath.

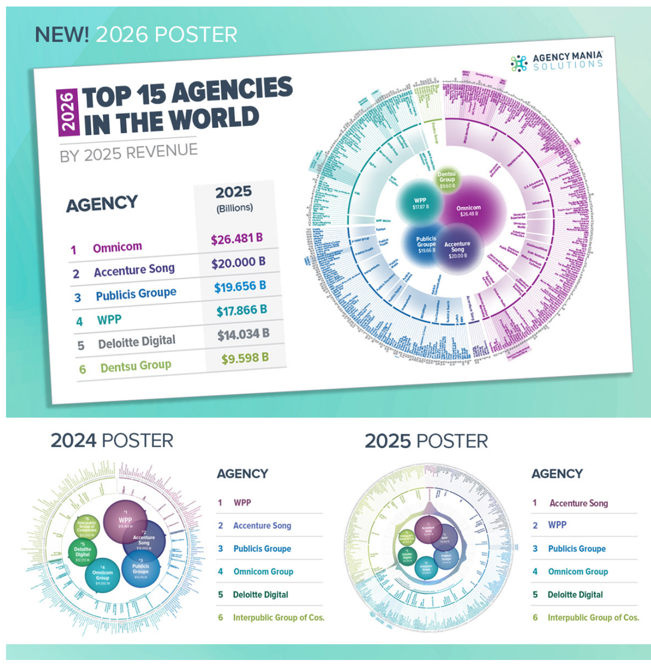
- **Boston Consulting Group** finds a wide gap between AI ambition and execution: **96% of CMOs** claim end-to-end transformation, yet **42%** still use generative AI for isolated tasks only, and just **8%** run autonomous multi-agent campaigns. Meanwhile, **43%** invested more than $15 million in marketing AI. Implementation challenges, privacy, security, copyright and legal issues, and protection of brand voice and reputation are top concerns.
- Pharma giant **Bayer** used AI-powered predictive targeting to enhance campaign effectiveness by leveraging advanced algorithms to anticipate consumer behaviors and deliver more-relevant content to audiences. The approach allows for more efficient media spend and improved engagement, reflecting a broader trend of integrating predictive analytics into media strategies. The brand also connects sales intelligence with audience intelligence in real time.
- **WPP Media** developed a buyer-agent standard for TV/video, working with Comcast/FreeWheel, Disney, Fox, NBCUniversal, Netflix, Paramount, IAB Tech Lab, and Prebid.org. Initial testing began in spring 2026, with large-scale deployment targeted within nine months, and a proposed industry standard expected in early 2027.
- **Horizon Media** added agentic media-buying capabilities to HorizonOS Blu, enabling real-time cross-channel optimization using audience, publisher, and performance data. The system keeps human judgment central, and is being tested with partners including Disney, Fox, NBCUniversal, and TikTok; SharkNinja is among early client adopters.

NOTABLE

- **Japan Airlines** is adapting as AI search reshapes travel planning and reduces direct website traffic. Working with Jellyfish, the airline is measuring brand visibility across ChatGPT, Google, Reddit, and YouTube, while exploring advertising strategies that influence consumers earlier in their increasingly fragmented booking journeys.
- **Publicis Groupe** produced an AI-generated satirical film to attack agency pitch practices, including exaggerated AI claims, free work, free data, and incentives. CEO Arthur Sadoun warned that such promises create a "race to the bottom," arguing that agencies should compete on sustainable value, transparency, and demonstrable AI capabilities.
- **Netflix** paid $587 million in cash for InterPositive, the AI filmmaking startup co-founded by Ben Affleck. InterPositive's AI tools are designed to help filmmakers address postproduction challenges such as missing shots, background replacements, and lighting corrections. The acquisition underscores Netflix's accelerating AI adoption. Roughly 300 Netflix titles have used generative AI.
- The **Association of National Advertisers, the 4As, and the Interactive Advertising Bureau** joined forces to establish a cross-industry body to guide artificial intelligence governance and adoption. The organizations identified three areas for joint action: artificial intelligence; commerce and retail media; and workforce development. The AI initiative will focus on creating an industrywide leadership and governance body. The groups also plan to develop common definitions and standards for commerce and retail media and create a shared system for assessing and developing marketing talent.
- Dallas-based global independent platform company **PMG** hosted a Cannes Lions AI hackathon, in partnership with Luma, offering up to $500,000 in prizes. The event reflects agencies' growing hunt for AI-skilled talent. The competition emphasizes practical ability to use large language models to build advertising tools, solve marketing bottlenecks, and increase productivity, not simply traditional creative credentials.
- **Amazon** introduced Alexa+ Agentic Ads to tap AI to enhance voice-driven advertising. The new format allows users to interact with ads via voice commands, making purchases without leaving the Alexa interface. Early partners include Papa John's and The Orchard, and Amazon plans to expand the new ad format to Fire TV.
- **Ad Age's 12-step AI playbook:**
  1) Start with a business goal, not an AI goal
  2) Put governance and legal guardrails before experimentation
  3) Treat AI adoption as change management, not simply technology deployment
  4) Give everyone secure enterprise AI tools rather than limiting access to pilot groups
  5) Automate administrative and repetitive work before creative work
  6) Launch AI internally like a client campaign to build enthusiasm and adoption
  7) Measure usage without monitoring employees' prompts
  8) Budget AI as a labor/capacity cost rather than just software
  9) Build an integrated AI technology stack instead of relying on one favorite tool
  10) Move away from hourly billing toward deliverable-, outcome- and performance-based pricing once AI changes the economics of work
  11) Use AI to expand employee capacity rather than simply cut headcount
  12) Turn proven internal AI capabilities into client-facing products and services

Noteworthy quotes:

- “AI doesn’t eliminate the accountability gap: It makes it more visible.” —Natalie Bastian, CMO, **InMarket**
- “For agency partners, it’s not a one-stop shop anymore … it’s a modular approach where we leverage each other’s superpowers.” —Marc Pritchard, Chief Brand Officer, **Procter & Gamble**
- “In an environment where AI is rapidly transforming our industry and trust is in scarce supply, I believe that our commitment to client data ownership and control will become increasingly compelling.”—Cindy Rose, CEO, **WPP**
- “As an industry, we need to get better at walking away from misaligned opportunities while still being willing to compete for the right ones. The solution isn’t to stop pitching entirely; it’s to stop pitching when the fit isn’t there.”—Dylan Amundson, Director of Marketing, **Drake Cooper**
- “As the world’s getting more automated, you need a responsible, irresponsible voice in the room. The thing that will separate us, particularly as AI starts to automate and takes over, is going to be free thinking and the ability of taste and context.” —David Droga, Vice Chair, **Accenture Song**
- “If you want the best talent working on your business, you have to inspire them.” —Philipp Schuster, Agency Management and Marketing Partnerships Director, Consumer Health, **Bayer**
- “We’re leveraging external partners as well as internal agents to improve end-to-end marketing workflow integrations and visibility, media and creative optimizations, automating evergreen tasks like campaign reporting.”—Maria Givens, VP and Head of Media & Digital Platforms for Consumer Health, **Bayer**
- “Breaking rules isn’t interesting. It’s making up new ones that keeps things exciting.” —**Christopher Nolan**, Filmmaker and Screenwriter
- “Everyone is talking about AI. Not enough people are talking to customers.”—Kimberly Storin, CMO, **Zoom**
- “AI is transforming how fast we can make things and how much we can create, and I think that’s exciting. But the brands that win will be the ones that use all of that to get closer to people, not further away.”—Zach Kitschke, CMO, **Canva**
- “Most of the hands-on-keyboard work is internal. Our strategy is internal, and we also have proprietary tools and technologies. Even though I’m a firm believer in in-housing, I also believe in maintaining an outside-in perspective.” —Maria Givens, VP, Head of Media & Digital Platforms, **Bayer**
- “The pitch you don’t waste time on leaves room for the one that actually matters.” —Dylan Amundson, Director of Marketing, **Drake Cooper**
- “We find the most valuable creative partners, or MVPs, with the best skills and experiences. These MVPs flow to work and are indispensable in creating big brand ideas … and sprinting with our in-house team to generate the volume and variety of assets needed to win.”—Marc Pritchard, Chief Brand Officer, **Procter & Gamble**
- “We don’t want to be navel-gazing where we’re no longer in touch with what is happening in the industry or with new innovation. We also want outside thought leadership.”—Maria Givens, VP, Head of Media & Digital Platforms, **Bayer**
- “All I care about, to be honest, is protecting the talent and skill sets, the misfits and dreamers and creatives and strategists and designers and people that are understanding people and putting people first.”—David Droga, Vice Chair, **Accenture Song**



Our 2026 Top Agencies in the World Poster is out now!

It captures the 5 largest agency companies based on 2025 revenue and roster breakdowns. The poster also includes a list of the top 15 agencies' revenue, year-over-year change, and key information (HQ, worldwide scope, etc.)

Download a **PDF Copy here**, or request a print copy by reaching out to us at **info@agencymania.com**.

WORK & PERFORMANCE: Driving better work, stronger performance, and value from the partnership

Marketing leaders are entering a period in which operational rigor, measurable effectiveness, and creative excellence must work together. Client–agency management is becoming more disciplined, with stronger SOW analysis, staffing validation, benchmarking, and accountability required to ensure resources translate into value. Yet only 14% of marketers say marketing and finance agree on what effectiveness means, while 75% expect measurement to drive most budget decisions. Creativity remains a powerful growth lever, but evidence increasingly favors human insight amplified by technology—not replaced by it. FIFA World Cup boosted the use of social media. Viral organic moments, like the “Viking Row” celebration of Dutch fans going left, right, exploded to the tune of 172 million views on TikTok alone. Levi’s generated 1+ billion impressions through culturally resonant creative. WFA marketers and Cannes Lions jurors emphasized authenticity, insight, and judgment as enduring differentiators. The message is clear: Technology accelerates execution, but human insight, disciplined operations, and measurable business impact create sustainable advantage.

» GAME CHANGING

- **The Observatory International** states that the keys to effective client–agency relationships include having the right priorities and agency resources, deployed effectively, and combining operating processes that enable collaboration and measurement that strengthen relationships. As a result, effective **SOW analysis** must go well beyond negotiated hourly rates. Teams should validate hours by deliverable, department and seniority mix, scope boundaries, assumptions, pass-through costs, payment milestones, KPIs, and staffing continuity. The strongest reviews combine internal and external benchmarks with marketing context to improve both value and agency relationships. **Why it matters:** Rigorous SOW analysis turns procurement from a rate-negotiation function into a strategic partner that improves resource quality, cost discipline, accountability, and ultimately agency performance.
- **Levi’s** World Cup “redacted logo” stunt generated 1+ billion impressions, becoming its most-viewed social campaign ever. The viral momentum coincided with strong Q2 results: Revenue rose 8% to $1.6B, Americas sales increased 9%, women’s sales 11%, and premium Blue Tab revenue jumped 40%. **Why it matters:** Levi’s demonstrates how culturally disruptive creative can generate massive earned attention while reinforcing commercial momentum, strengthening the case for linking creative effectiveness more directly to business performance.
- **WFA and Ebiquity** found that only 14% of marketers say marketing and finance agree on what “effectiveness” means; less than 3% understand short- versus long-term performance and brand impact. 46% have low data-integration maturity, 54% say insights arrive too late, and 75% expect measurement to drive most budget decisions. **Why it matters:** The disconnect between marketing and finance threatens budget credibility, making shared definitions of effectiveness, faster data integration, and stronger measurement governance increasingly essential.
- **MrBeast** became the first YouTube creator to surpass 500 million subscribers. Beast Industries says its content now delivers audience scale comparable to a “Super Bowl every week” while converting fandom into a diversified business spanning Feastables, jerky, toys, and other consumer ventures—a blueprint for creator-led media empires. **Why it matters:** MrBeast shows that creators can now rival traditional media in reach while building vertically integrated businesses, forcing brands and agencies to rethink creators as scalable media, commerce, and intellectual property platforms—not simply influencers.

» HIGH IMPACT

- **Google** added transparency to AI-generated ads by adding a “How this ad was made” section to the My Ad Center panel to address consumer preferences and emerging legislation. For example, New York state recently enacted a law mandating “conspicuous disclosure” when advertisements include synthetic content generated by AI. Google also embedded signals like SynthID into outputs from its generative AI tools. When advertisers use Google’s generative AI advertising tools to create ads, the disclosure is automatically enabled.
- **WFA** marketers argue that creativity must extend beyond advertising into broader problem-solving and value creation. Creative excellence depends on deep consumer insight, a culture of curiosity, empathy, and experimentation, and stronger measurement through tools such as MMM (marketing mix modeling) and creative scoring. AI can augment execution, but human creativity remains the differentiator.
- **Wpromote x Giant Spoon** launched the Care Index to measure how strongly consumers know, like, and care about brands. Testing across 100+ midmarket B2C brands in 22 categories found that every five-point increase in “brand care” correlated with roughly a 10% increase in incremental annual revenue.

NOTABLE

- **Cannes Lions 2026 jurors** emphasized that human insight—not technology—is the enduring creative advantage. Winning work was rooted in deep cultural understanding, authenticity, and purposeful brand contribution, translating creativity into behavioral change and business results. AI increasingly enables execution but rarely explains why an idea succeeds.
- Per **Mercer Island Group**, before you fire your agency, try this suggested client "to do" list:
  1) Make sure the problem isn't your team
  2) Fix what is wrong
  3) Be clear about the business issues that need attention
  4) Create a clear needs assessment
  5) Build a disciplined and thorough plan
- As classroom cellphone bans take hold in US states, a new study from eMarketer found that a nationwide ban of smartphones in schools would cut **TikTok's 2026 ad revenue** by more than a billion dollars. Per eMarketer, 72% of US youth ages 12–17 will be TikTok users, a substantively higher share than the platform's rivals Snapchat (58.7%) and Instagram (60.1%).
- Per Saatchi & Saatchi London, **production** should be treated as creative stewardship, not just executional cost control. Saatchi & Saatchi's British Heart Foundation campaign filmed 65 heart disease survivors in 65 locations in 14 shoot days, producing more than 160 assets for six channels. The campaign shows how early production involvement can protect authenticity, manage complexity, and multiply creative ambition.

Awards:

- Omnicom was ranked #1 World's Most Effective Holding Group in the **2025 Effie Index** for the third consecutive year and fourth time in five years. Omnicom Media ranked #3 and BBDO #4 among agency networks. AlmapBBDO was the #1 agency office globally for the third straight year.
- Per Ad Age, top **10 Grand Prix winners from Cannes Lions 2026**:
  1) Columbia Sportswear: "Expedition Impossible" (Agency: adam&eve\TWBA London)—Grand Prix: Brand Experience & Activation, Titanium Lion, 2 Gold Lions: Direct, PR, 3 Silver Lions: Direct, PR, Social & Creator, 2 Bronze Lions: Brand Experience & Activation, Social & Creator
  2) Heineken: "Could Have Been a Heineken" (Agency: LePub Milan, LePub São Paulo)—Grand Prix: Social & Creator, 5 Gold Lions: Brand Experience & Activation, Direct, Media (2), Outdoor, 2 Silver Lions: Audio & Radio, Direct, Bronze Lion: Brand Experience & Activation
  3) KitKat: "The KitKat Heist" (Agency: VML London)—Grand Prix: PR, 4 Gold Lions: Media, PR (2), Social & Creator, 3 Silver Lions: Direct, Media, Social & Creator, Bronze Lion, Direct
  4) Adidas x Oasis: "Original Forever" (Agency: Johannes Leonardo New York, Adidas London)
  5) Suncorp Insurance: "Haven" (Agency: Leo Australia)
  6) Wisła Kraków Football Club: "Lucky Fan Index" (Entrant: VML Warsaw)
  7) Coinbase: "Your Way Out" (Entrant: Isle of Any, New York)
  8) BCP: "SOS POS" (Agency: Circus Grey Lima, Peru)
  9) Comando Con Venezuela: "600K Network" (Agency: Rainbow Lobster, Mexico City, Comando Con Venezuela, Caracas)
  10) Adidas: "Supernova Adaptive" (Agency: TBWA\Canada)
- **2026 Cannes Lions Grand Prix winners**:
  - Audio & Radio: Hyundai Puerto Rico—BBDO Puerto Rico
  - Creative Brand: AB InBev—Anheuser-Busch InBev (in-house)
  - Creative B2B: SKF—NORD Stockholm
  - Health & Wellness: The Ordinary—Uncommon Creative Studio/SMUGGLER
  - Lions Health & United Nations Foundation Grand Prix for Good: Caritas—Differ Stockholm
  - Outdoor: Mercado Livre—GUT São Paulo
  - Pharma: Novartis—Fallon Minneapolis
  - Print & Publishing: Heinz Ketchup—Rethink Toronto.
  - Entertainment: adidas—Johannes Leonardo New York/adidas London
  - Entertainment for Gaming: Clash Royale—DAVID New York
  - Entertainment for Music: Rosalía—CANADA Barcelona, and adidas—Johannes Leonardo New York / adidas London (two Grand Prix)
  - Entertainment for Sport: Club Deportivo Municipal—McCann Lima
  - Design: Apple—TBWA\Media Arts Lab/Apple
  - Digital Craft: Google—Google
  - Film Craft: Coinbase—Isle of Any New York
  - Industry Craft: De'Longhi—LOLA Madrid
  - Creative Data: BCP—Circus Grey Lima
  - Media: Uber Eats—Special Los Angeles
  - Direct: UVA App—de la Cruz Ogilvy San Juan
  - PR: KitKat—Burson London/VML London
  - Social & Creator: Heineken—LePub Milan
  - Creative Business Transformation: Wikifarmer—McCann Athens
  - Creative Effectiveness: AXA France—Publicis Conseil Paris
  - Creative Strategy: Heineken—LePub Milan / Publicis Dublin
  - Luxury: Moncler—Wesayhi
  - Brand Experience & Activation: Columbia Sportswear—adam&eve\TBWA London
  - Creative Commerce: Wisła Kraków Football Club—VML Warsaw
  - Innovation: adidas—TBWA\Canada
  - Glass: The Lion for Change: IDOMED & Instituto Yduqs—Artplan São Paulo

- Sustainable Development Goals: Too Good—The Partnership Agency Nairobi
- Film: Claude—Mother London
- Dan Wieden Titanium: Suncorp Insurance—Leo Australia
- Grand Prix for Good: Comando Con Venezuela—Rainbow Lobster Mexico City/Comando Con Venezuela Caracas

- **Adweek, top 2026 Media Plan of the Year** winners:
  - ISDIN (Havas Play Spain): Total Campaign: Under $500,000
  - NASCAR (Two by Four): Total Campaign: $500,000–$1 million
  - Audible (Wavemaker): Total Campaign: $1 million–$5 million
  - Kraft Heinz (Carat): Total Campaign: $5 million–$10 million
  - Nike (PMG): Total Campaign: $10 million+
  - GMF (Havas Play France): Best Cause Marketing: Under $1 million
  - Foundation to Combat Antisemitism (Mindshare): Best Cause Marketing: $1 million+
  - Humana (Spark Foundry): Best Use of AI/Machine Learning
  - LEGO Group (Starcom): Best Use of AR/Spatial
  - Kraft Heinz (Salt XC): Best Use of Alternative Media
  - 3M (Colle McVoy): Best Use of Branded Content/Entertainment: Under $500,000
  - IKEA (Carat): Best Use of Branded Content/Entertainment: $1 million–$2 million
  - Google (EssenceMediacom): Best Use of Branded Content/Entertainment: $2 million+
  - KFC (Accelerate): Best Use of Experiential: Under $500,000
  - Oscar Mayer (Carat): Best Use of Experiential: $500,000+
  - Novartis (Starcom): Best Use of Insights
  - Sapeurs-Pompiers de France (Havas Play France): Best International Campaign: Under $1 million
  - Kleenex (PHD UK): Best International Campaign: $1 million+
  - Aerie (Ovative Group): Best Use of Out of Home: $500,000+
  - Vaseline (Mindshare): Best Use of Social
  - Sapeurs-Pompiers de France (Havas Play France): Best Use of Streaming Media/OTT
  - StreetEasy/Zillow (Canvas Worldwide): Best Use of Voice
  - ADWEEK selected honorees in 22 categories. Sapeurs-Pompiers de France and Havas Play France were the lone team recognized twice, winning for both international campaign and streaming media.

- Vaseline took the lead in **The Drum's World Creative Rankings** midyear advertiser leaderboard, driven by the success of the "Vaseline Verified" campaign. IKEA has climbed to second place with a diverse portfolio of campaigns. Apple holds third, supported by "I'm Not Remarkable" and "A Critter Carol." VML New York led The Drum's World Creative Rankings Mid-Year Leaderboards, driven by campaigns such as "Preserved Promos" for Ziploc and "Name This Oreo." Ogilvy Singapore follows closely, bolstered by "Vaseline Verified," while Rethink Toronto is third, with projects such as "Heinz Dipper." Uncommon Creative Studio London made a significant leap to fourth place, with "The Periodic Fable" and "Reflections" among its notable works.

Noteworthy quotes:

» "Brand builders no longer have the luxury of weeks and months. They need to engage consumers every minute of every day with a continuous flow of creativity and deeper partnership with retailers."—Marc Pritchard, Chief Brand Officer, **Procter & Gamble**

» "Media planners, buyers, agencies and partners should consider themselves growth architects who are hyper-focused on delivering business outcomes for their brands and/or clients." —Maria Givens, VP and Head of Media & Digital Platforms for Consumer Health, **Bayer**

» "In the end, it's all about the output, the show. Everything else is just rehearsal." —Jess Ringshall, Chief Production Officer, **Saatchi & Saatchi London**

» "We want to make sure we all have better practices when we pitch because this is how we create value."—Arthur Sadoun, CEO, **Publicis Groupe**

» "When you think about how capabilities shift to enable that, that's the future of work, and we at Mars would like that future to be human at the center—with algorithms enriching creativity and effectiveness, but also the sheer joy of everyday living and working—so that, yes, it is digitally amplified, but the future is unmistakably human." —Gülen Bengi, Lead Global CMO, Mars Inc., and Global Chief Growth Officer, **Mars Snacking**

» "The industry sometimes overcomplicates the brand versus performance debate. Brand without commercial impact is art. And performance without brand building gets more expensive every year. The goal is creating work that people remember and act on."—Jessica Serrano, CMO, **Bagel Brands**

» "Creator and influencer is both underrated and overrated. We're doing much more of it, but some people think it is the silver bullet saving grace for all brands and I think a lot of people are doing it absolutely incorrectly."—Chris Bellinger, Chief Creative Officer, **PepsiCo Foods**

» "We are moving from transaction to partnership to growth enabler. Those are not just words. They describe a real progression, and we are somewhere in the middle of it."—Marion Villette, Head of Marketing and Commercial Procurement, **Bayer**

» "We're all using the same tools and models, so we are risking sameness. Distinctiveness, authenticity and taste matter more than ever if we truly want to break through."—Kimberly Storin, CMO, **Zoom**

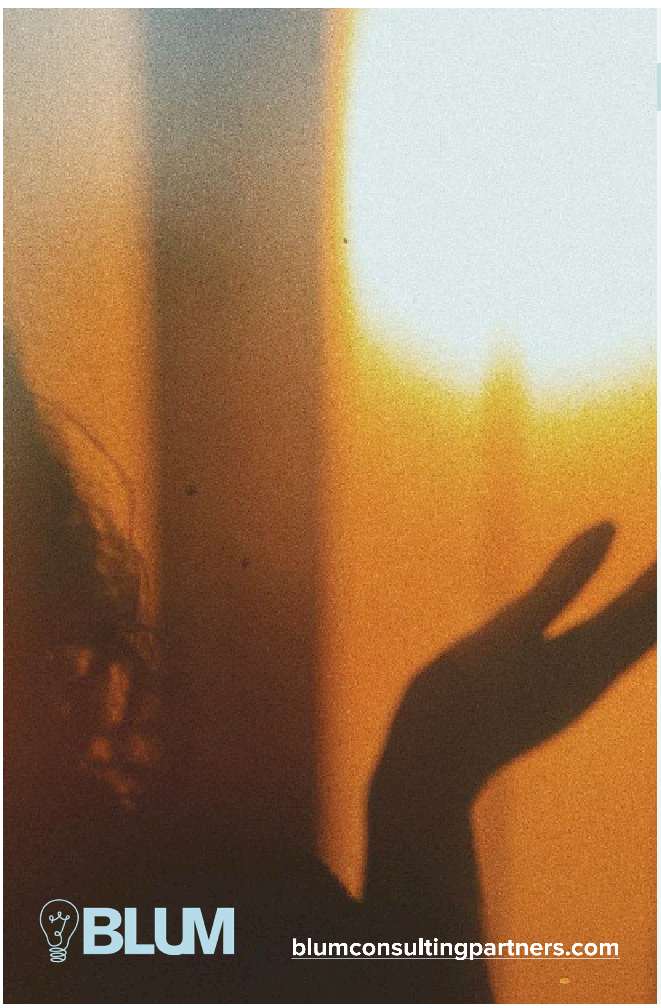
» "If we're all doing AI discovery, which we all need to do, we're all the same. How do you stand out?"—Cheryl Guerin, Executive VP, Global Brand Strategy and Innovation, **Mastercard**

» "There's an art to simplicity in storytelling that will drive everything else that you do downstream more effectively. If you know what you're going to do and you know how to tell that story in the simplest form, it will help improve your media strategy, your creative strategy and, ultimately, when you go to talk about how that thing performs—measurement strategy." —Daniel Reynolds, Senior VP of Global Marketing, **Hilton**

» "What we see now is that the buyer journey isn't a funnel anymore. It's a gumball machine. It's three compounding bets: Be Found; Be Believed; Be Preferred. Everything is rooted in brand trust. We have to be in the conversation, even when it's happening without us."—Kimberly Storin, CMO, **Zoom**

» "Attention has never been cheaper to buy on social, but it has never been harder to hold." —Daryl Nuncio, Head of Strategy US, **SAMY Alliance**

» "We have to stay nimble, experimental and comfortable with ambiguity. I see agentic buying as a significant opportunity for organizations interested in becoming more hands-on-keyboard."—Maria Givens, VP, Head of Media & Digital Platforms, **Bayer**



REPORT

Redesigning the Agency Value Model

Contributed by: Blum Consulting Partners

VoxComm, the global voice of agencies, has issued new guidance designed to help agencies ensure they are properly rewarded for helping brands grow in an AI-driven market.

Redesigning the Agency Value Model outlines why pricing changes alone are no longer sufficient and recommends that agencies adopt solution-led productised offerings as AI challenges traditional ways of working and cuts revenue by reducing hours and fees.

Aimed at CEOs, CFOs, and leadership teams, the report seeks to encourage agencies to decouple revenue and profit from staffing numbers and is designed as a guide for change across the agency community.

Read the **full paper here**.

FINANCIALS: Driving efficient use of resources

FIFA World Cup drove global media inflation to 4.4% in 2026. Major sporting events have historically created a strong inflationary impact on media markets, and the 2026 FIFA World Cup was a catalyst of growth as well and a major boost for marketing spend. Fox and its platforms averaged 42.5 million viewers for the English-language edition of the World Cup final, and Telemundo/Peacock had 23.9 million viewers for the Spanish-language version. Hydration breaks were a delight to advertisers. In some cases, audience loss was less than 1% during a hydration break compared to halftime, when audiences typically plunge by 18% to 20%. World Cup sponsors saw record engagement. Advertisers such as Jeep, Wayfair, and FanDuel reported double-digit performance increases. Adidas, another sponsor, reported record net sales of $7.7 billion for the second quarter, driven by a significant marketing push during FIFA World Cup. Industry experts estimate that US-based companies could pay $1.5 billion to $2 billion for the 2030 World Cup, hosted by Morocco, Portugal, and Spain.

GAME CHANGING

- **Holding companies** reported their second-half revenue and financial performance (see below for details for each agency). At a glance, Q2 creates a sharp performance hierarchy: Omnicom led organic growth at 6.1% on its new comparable Core Operations basis, followed by Stagwell at 5% net-revenue organic growth, Publicis at 4.8%, Havas at 2.5%, Dentsu at -0.2%, and WPP at -2.8% like-for-like on revenue less pass-through costs. **Why it matters:** The widening growth gap shows that scale alone is not enough—agency groups translating AI, data, and integration into client value are materially outperforming those still restructuring legacy operations.
- WPP Media forecasts **global ad revenue** to grow 8.9% to $1.3 trillion in 2026, exceeding its earlier 7.1% estimate. Generative-search advertising is projected to surge from $5.1 billion in 2026 to $100+ billion by 2030, becoming the fastest-scaling ad channel on record as AI reshapes consumer discovery and media allocation while streaming, social, and gaming grow and linear TV and audio plateau. **Why it matters:** Strong overall growth masks a major reallocation of spend, with generative search emerging as a potentially $100+ billion channel that could rapidly reshape media planning, budgets, and agency capabilities.
- **Ad Age's 2026 Agency Report** shows an industry shifting toward consolidation and challengers. Omnicom and IPG cut 8,200 jobs, while 21 companies outside the major holding groups generated $85.2B in revenue, up 5%. Accenture Song alone added roughly $1B in revenue. **Why it matters:** Consolidation is strengthening the largest players, but $85.2B in challenger revenue shows that consultancies, specialists, and technology-enabled firms are increasingly competing for work once dominated by traditional agencies.
- **WPP Media** led 2025 global media billings at $63.9B, despite its share falling to 13%. Publicis Media reached $62.4B, growing 12.8%, the largest gain. Omnicom posted $48.5B, but if IPG had been included for the full year, Omnicom would have led with $75.6B and 15.8% share. **Why it matters:** Omnicom's acquisition of IPG effectively resets the global media leadership table, creating unprecedented buying scale and intensifying competitive pressure on WPP and Publicis.
- Per Brand Finance, the **world's biggest brands** account for a disproportionate share of global brand value, with just 25 brands representing more than a third (37%) of total brand value in the Brand Finance Global 500 2026. Apple remains the world's most valuable brand, followed by Microsoft, Google, and Amazon. NVIDIA is one of 2026's standout performers, its brand value more than doubling (+110%) to $184.3 billion and entering the top 5 most valuable brands globally for the first time. **Why it matters:** Brand value is becoming increasingly concentrated among technology and AI leaders, demonstrating how technological relevance and innovation are translating directly into extraordinary enterprise brand equity.
- Samba data shows the **2026 FIFA World Cup** reached more than 75% of US households, with 62% watching three or more matches. Of 6,000+ brands advertising, only 267 reached 1M+ unique households. Google generated the most TV ad impressions despite not being an official FIFA sponsor. Food and beverage led all categories, with Michelob Ultra and Modelo among the top five advertisers. **Why it matters:** Massive reach did not guarantee advertiser visibility, reinforcing that brands need distinctive creative, smart media allocation, and cultural relevance—not simply sponsorship status—to break through major global events.
- **Gartner** projected AI-influenced self-service platforms will manage more than 80% of US ad spend and over 70% globally by 2028. As platforms gain greater control over targeting, pricing, and delivery, Gartner urges CMOs to prioritize independent measurement, transparency, and external validation rather than relying solely on platform-reported performance. Why it matters: As AI platforms automate most media spending, advertisers risk surrendering significant decision-making power, making independent measurement, governance, and transparency increasingly critical.
- Research published by Omnicom's PHD and WARC projects **consumer spending facilitated by AI agents** will reach $3.35 trillion by 2030, or 3.8% of global consumer spending. Ten markets (top 3 are the US, China, and the UK) will account for nearly 68% of the consumer-agentic spending in 2030. US spending is estimated to reach $1.1 trillion in four years, or 31.9% of the global total. **Why it matters:** If AI agents influence $3.35 trillion in purchases by 2030, brands will need to optimize not only for human consumers but also for the algorithms increasingly discovering, evaluating, and recommending products on their behalf.

HIGH IMPACT

- **Stagwell** reported a strong Q2 in 2026. The holding company reported $171M in net new business, up 45% from Q2 2025. Revenue was up 11% YOY to $786M. Net revenue went up 6% to $632M. Digital transformation (essentially Code and Theory and Instrument) organic net revenue was up 18% YOY. Communications (PR and political consulting) was up 12%. By region, the US was up 7% and the UK, 13%. Net new business was $171M in the second quarter, or 12-month net new business of $540M with recent wins such as IBM, Adobe, Mondelēz, and Heineken. Q2 Adjusted EBITDA margin was 17% of net revenue and YTD adjusted EBITDA margin was 16%.
- AI is impacting **compensation and agency costs**. AI adoption is outpacing proof of ROI as agencies confront rising token and computing costs. PMG caps AI use at $50/user/day, while Publicis reported 7% higher operating costs, partly attributable to AI. Cheil has shifted all new business and 50% of existing clients to output-based pricing.
- Per Evros Group, **agency M&A** appetite is surging: 51% of independent owners are open to selling, 78% of strategic buyers are seeking acquisitions, and 93% of financial investors are shopping. Yet deal quality remains uneven, with buyers scrutinizing growth, margins, differentiation, and whether claimed AI capabilities survive due diligence.
- Chairman and CEO Michael Farmer of Farmer & Company posited at the ANA AFM conference **that agency economics are structurally broken** (a “doom loop” of rising workload and shrinking fees). Creative pricing has fallen 75% since 1992 and media pricing by 61% since 2007, while workloads rose 2.3% annually and fees fell by 2%. Farmer advocates output-based compensation (shifting agency pay from hours to outcomes), shared AI efficiency gains, and refocusing agency-client relationships on measurable brand growth.
- Per Mediasense, 85% of agency leaders expect to increase their usage of **outcomes-based pricing** over the next two years and roughly three-quarters believe AI will accelerate the shift. Despite the growing interest, pure outcomes-based agency pricing remains “exceedingly rare.” Key barriers are agreeing on attribution methodology (69% of agencies), procurement (69%), and insufficient client data (68%). Retail and e-commerce are better suited to outcome models, while healthcare and automotive face greater challenges from regulation and long purchase cycles. Most current models are hybrids, while AI increasingly challenges traditional labor-based FTE compensation.
- **Outcome-based compensation** remains limited—about 20% of agency fees on average—leaving traditional input/output models dominant. JLR/WPP shows why: Performance risk is offset by principal media revenues, floors/ceilings, and WPP’s balance sheet. Even successful outcome bonuses can later trigger procurement pressure if agencies are perceived as earning “too much.” Per WPP CEO Cindy Rose: “It’s going to take time for this evolution [adoption of outcome-based compensation] to take place. … I suspect it will take a few years.”

NOTABLE

- **Amazon** achieved a $3 trillion market value in August 2026, becoming the fifth company ever to reach this milestone, highlighting its central role in both consumer markets and the expanding AI economy.
- Dinan & Company’s **Q2 2026 Technology Industry Report** shows a broad tech rebound but a widening divide between AI beneficiaries and traditional software. Technology M&A remained steady at 390 deals compared with 399 in Q1 and 395 a year earlier, but deal values were substantial, including SpaceX’s $60B Anysphere/Cursor acquisition, Clearwater Analytics’ $8.4B take-private, and ServiceNow’s $7.75B Armis deal.
- Per MediaPost, **media now accounts for nearly half** of WPP’s revenue, according to the firm’s financial records. Creative accounted for 49% of holding company revenue and production, 5%.
- Per Comvergence and its **2025 Global Billings and Market Share Report**, WPP Media maintained its position as the top agency group worldwide in global media billings with 13% market share and $63.9 billion in 2025 global media billings, followed by Publicis Media, which posted the highest growth rate among the holding companies, with a 12.8% rise to $62.4 billion in global billings. Omnicom Media Group ranked third with $48.5 billion in global media billings, a 5.5% increase from 2024. A combined Omnicom Media Group would have had $75.6 billion in global billings, ahead of WPP Media. Among agency networks, Omnicom’s OMD led with $26.9 billion in total media billings in 2025, up 1.7% from 2024, followed by WPP’s EssenceMediacom with $23.3 billion, and Mindshare with $20.5 billion. Horizon Media US remains the largest independent agency worldwide with $7.4 billion in 2025 billings.
- Austin-based ad agency **Greatest Common Factory** changed its service model from AOR relationships to serve primarily as a creative and strategy resource for in-house agencies and brand managers through its products and “sprints,” developing insight, positioning, content, and AI postproduction.
- **S4 Capital** posted its 12th consecutive quarter of revenue decline, with H1 2026 net revenue down 4.7%, yet shares jumped 26% after results. Sorrell’s turnaround hinges on cost discipline, stronger margins, and building a differentiated AI position; operational EBITDA rose 82.7% to £38 million.
- Former **WPP GroupM** executive Richard Foster amended his $100M wrongful-termination lawsuit, alleging a Sony probe found WPP improperly retained media rebates—including $350M in China compared with $110M passed to clients—through principal-media mechanisms. WPP calls the claims “baseless and without merit” and is seeking dismissal.
- WPP Deputy CFO Diane Holland argued at the ANA AFM conference that the **traditional agency model** must evolve as AI and data reshape client expectations. Future relationships will increasingly combine blended compensation, outcome-based models, and business-growth accountability, with agencies investing in AI, commerce, and data capabilities while operating with greater speed and scale.

Holding company financial performance

- **Omnicom** reported Q2 revenue of $6.56 billion, compared with $4.02 billion a year earlier, with the increase primarily reflecting its November 2025 acquisition of IPG. On the more comparable Core Operations basis, which combines the prior-year Omnicom and IPG businesses and excludes dispositions and assets held for sale, revenue was $6 billion, up 7.2% YOY and 6.1% organically. Core adjusted EBITA increased to $1.07 billion, with margin expanding to 17.8% from 15.9%, primarily from merger cost synergies. Adjusted earnings per share (EPS) rose 29.3% to $2.65. Integrated Media represented 52.5% of Core Operations revenue, followed by Advertising at 15.7%, PR at 11.3%, Experiential & Other at 11.2%, and Health at 9.3%. The US generated 59% of Core Operations revenue. H1 reported revenue reached $12.81 billion and adjusted EPS was $4.53. Omnicom said clients are consolidating more assignments with the combined company and identified agentic marketing transformation, connected commerce, sports, and entertainment, social/creator, and AI-driven discovery as growth priorities. The Q2 release did not provide a formal full-year organic-growth guidance range.
- **WPP** reported revenue of £3.34 billion in Q2, down 2.3% YOY and LFL, while revenue less pass-through costs of £2.485 billion declined 2.8% like-for-like, improving sequentially from Q1. H1 reported revenue was £6.37 billion, down 4.4% YOY, while revenue less pass-through costs declined 4.7% LFL to £4.75 billion. Global Integrated Agencies Q2 revenue less pass-through costs declined 2.8%, with WPP Media down 2.8%, WPP Creative down 3.5%, and WPP Production up 1.3%. By geography, North America declined 4.3% and EMEA 3%, while APAC grew 0.3% and LATAM 0.9%; China rebounded 15.6%. WPP's top 25 clients were down 3.2% in Q2. H1 headline operating margin improved 20 basis points to 8.4%. Under its Elevate28 turnaround, WPP expects £100 million of savings in 2026 toward £500 million annualized by 2028. Full-year guidance calls for H2 LFL revenue less pass-through costs to decline by a low- to mid-single-digit percentage and a headline operating margin of 12% to 13%.
- **Publicis Groupe** reported Q2 net revenue of €3.77 billion, up 4.2% reported and 4.8% organically, accelerating from 4.5% organic growth in Q1. H1 net revenue reached €7.23 billion, up 4.7% organically, while reported revenue totaled €8.73 billion. Q2 organic growth was 5.5% in the US, 5% in Europe, 2.6% in APAC, and 11% in Latin America, while Middle East & Africa declined 8.3%. Publicis AI-powered marketing services—data, media, creative, commerce, CRM, and production—represented 87% of net revenue and grew 6.5% organically in Q2, while Technology, representing 13%, declined by a mid-single-digit percentage as clients delayed large transformation projects. Publicis media and creative operations grew 6.5% this quarter and now represent roughly 87% of revenue. AI really powers those businesses today, according to Publicis. By contrast, Sapient represents 13% of Publicis revenue and has declined by single-digit percentages, but its performance is in line with Accenture and Capgemini. H1 headline operating margin reached a record 17.5%, while headline free cash flow rose 20.8% at constant currency to €957 million. Publicis reported six major H1 new-business wins, a retention rate close to 100%, and no impactful losses over the past 12 months. The company raised FY26 organic-growth guidance to 4.5% to 5%, expects operating margin slightly above 2025's 18.2%, and approximately €2.2 billion in free cash flow. Publicis Groupe has achieved 21 consecutive quarters of growth, with revenue rising 4.8% in the second quarter.
- **Havas** reported Q2 net revenue of €724 million, up 3.8% reported and 2.5% organically. H1 revenue reached €1.42 billion, up 0.6%, while net revenue totaled €1.36 billion, up 2.5% organically. North America, representing 35% of net revenue, led performance with 6.4% Q2 organic growth, while Europe grew 0.3%; APAC & Africa declined 3.5%, pressured by China and the Middle East; Latin America returned to growth with net revenue up 7.7% YOY. Havas Creative accounted for 42% of net revenue, Havas Media 38%, and Havas Health 20%. H1-adjusted EBIT increased 4.2% to €150 million, lifting adjusted EBIT margin 30 basis points to 11%, while net income increased 13.5% to €84 million. Havas continued its acquisition strategy with Format, Archrival, and MUT during Q2 and invested €19 million in Vurvey Labs; its Horizon Global joint venture with Horizon Media also reported a strengthening pipeline. Havas confirmed FY26 guidance of 2% to 3% organic net revenue growth and an adjusted EBIT margin of 13.2% to 13.5%.
- **Dentsu** reported Q2 revenue of ¥360.2 billion and net revenue of ¥288 billion, with organic growth declining 0.2%, compared with a 0.7% decline in Q2 2025. Performance remained highly uneven geographically: Japan grew 5.4% organically, while the Americas declined 6.9%, EMEA 1.2%, and APAC 0.2%. Q2 underlying operating profit increased modestly to ¥34.2 billion, although underlying operating margin declined to 11.9% from 12.2%; statutory operating profit improved to ¥18.9 billion from a ¥62 billion loss a year earlier. H1 net revenue reached ¥583.1 billion, up 3.7% YOY and 0.3% organically, while underlying operating profit increased 6.6% to ¥72 billion, producing a 12.3% margin. Dentsu's updated management plan prioritizes structural simplification, media, AI, and data and technology, with more than ¥50 billion in operating-cost reductions expected by FY27, and a 30% reduction in Global HQ costs by FY28. Dentsu maintained FY26 guidance for 0% to 1% organic growth, net revenue of ¥1.23 trillion, underlying operating profit of ¥166.3 billion, and a 13% operating margin.
- **Stagwell** reported Q2 revenue of $786 million, up 11% YOY, and 10% organically, while net revenue increased 6% to $632 million and 5% organically. H1 revenue reached $1.49 billion, up 10%, while net revenue increased 5% to $1.22 billion, including 3% organic growth. Digital Transformation was the standout, with Q2 net revenue of $107 million and 18% organic growth; management also cited 12% organic growth in Communications as the US political cycle began accelerating. Adjusted EBITDA increased 15% to $109 million, producing a 17% margin on net revenue, and adjusted earnings per share jumped 39% to $0.25. Stagwell generated a record $171 million of net new business in Q2 and $540 million over the trailing 12 months, highlighted by IBM, Adobe, Mondelēz, and Heineken wins. Management expects double-digit growth in H2, predominantly organic, and raised FY26 adjusted EPS guidance to range from $1.03 to $1.17, while reiterating total net revenue growth of 8% to 12% and adjusted EBITDA of $475 million to $525 million.

- **Accenture** does not separately disclose Accenture Song revenue or profitability, so companywide results provide the best comparable view. For its fiscal Q3 2026 ended May 31—roughly corresponding to calendar Q2—Accenture reported revenue of $18.72 billion, up 6% YOY in US dollars and 3% in local currency. Consulting revenue rose 1% in local currency to $9.33 billion, while Managed Services grew 5% to $9.39 billion. By geography, the Americas grew 1%, EMEA 4%, and Asia Pacific 8% in local currency. Communications, Media & Technology was the strongest industry group, growing 9%, followed by Financial Services at 3%, Products at 3%, Resources at 1%, while Health & Public Service was flat. Operating margin expanded 20 basis points to 17%, operating income increased 6% to $3.18 billion, and diluted earnings per share rose 9% to $3.80. New bookings totaled $19.3 billion, down 3% in local currency, including $10.26 billion in Consulting, and $9.06 billion in Managed Services. Accenture reported 104 quarterly client bookings worth $100 million or more YTD, up 13%, and cited increasing demand for large-scale AI transformation programs. The company narrowed FY26 guidance to 3% to 4% local-currency revenue growth, while targeting a 15.8% adjusted operating margin and $10.8 billion to $11.5 billion in free cash flow. Accenture Song continues to operate as a core part of Accenture's broader Reinvention Services portfolio, but its Q2 calendar-quarter growth rate was not separately reported.

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) activity:

GAME CHANGING

- Private equity-owned **Nielsen** acquired publicly traded digital media measurement and verification researcher DoubleVerify for $2.15 billion in cash in a move to extend "capabilities deeper into the digital media industry, ensuring that the spend flowing between buyers and sellers is reaching real people in brand-suitable environments, through verified channels."
- **Stagwell** acquired Colombia-based Adobe implementation and consulting firm QStrauss Consulting. QStrauss will join Stagwell's lead digital transformation agency Code and Theory to build industry-specific solutions that combine Adobe platforms with Code and Theory's creative and technology expertise, as well as some Stagwell network assets.
- **Fox** acquired Roku for $22 billion ($160/share), combining Fox's sports, news, and Tubi assets with Roku's platform, reaching 100M+ global streaming households. The deal, expected to close in 2027, significantly expands Fox's streaming distribution, first-party data, and advertising scale.

HIGH IMPACT

- Pittsburgh-based ad agency **Brunner** acquired AdSkate, an AI-powered creative analytics and predictive platform. Using synthetic audience modeling and AI analysis of engagement drivers, AdSkate predicts how advertising creative (advertising performance for images, video, messaging, and audience segments) will perform before it launches.
- San Francisco-based strategy and creative consultancy **Prophet** acquired London-based digital transformation agency JBi Digital, expanding its capabilities in website development and large-scale digital platform design for enterprise and public-sector clients. JBi will continue serving its existing clients while gaining access to Prophet's broader creative, media planning, and growth strategy services, with the combined offering marketed across EMEA and the US. The move reflects the industry's continued shift toward integrated models that connect strategic consulting with digital transformation and execution.
- **Walmart** acquired Vibe.co for $1.4 billion, adding a self-serve CTV platform to Walmart Connect. The deal targets small and medium-size advertisers, enables campaigns from $50/day, and combines Walmart audiences, Vizio inventory, and closed-loop measurement to compete more directly with Amazon.

NOTABLE

- Austin-based global creative agency **Brand Revolution** acquired Brussels-based DDMC Event Design and Alice Events in a move to add media and large-scale event muscle for Brand Revolution in the EMEA region. The firm provides strategic ideation, creative design, video production, and event execution services.
- New York-based ad group **Meet The People** (MTP) acquired The Loomis Agency, a Dallas-based shop serving challenger brands and its digital marketing arm, Iluminere, in a move to broaden its offering. MTP's collection of agencies provides services including creative, media, experience, and data.
- Boise, Idaho-based independent agency **Drake Cooper** acquired Gigasavvy, an Orange County-based ad agency with a focus on consumer and lifestyle brands in a move to augment current services ranging from creative, analytics, martech, interactive, media strategy, planning, and buying.
- Following the breakup of the Vox Media portfolio, **Penske Media** acquired the Vox Media brands left behind, including The Verge, Eater, SB Nation, Popsugar, The Dodo, Thrillist, and Punch, along with Vox ad marketplace Concert and its first-party data platform Forte. Penske Media formed a newly created subsidiary that will house the combined publishing portfolio of more than 25 brands.
- Independent OOH agency **Talon** acquired PJX Media in a move to become the largest independent OOH specialist in the US. PJX, which will continue to operate as a separate agency, will gain access to Talon's broader programmatic, technology, data, and effectiveness capabilities.

- London-based marketing firm **Miroma Group** acquired a majority stake in Houston-based Ad Results Media, a creator, audio, and performance media agency. Combined, the group employs more than 900 people and includes agencies such as Mx Location Experts, Fold7, SpotCo, Maker Lab, Dewynters, Sold Out, and Miroma Founders Network. Clients include Adidas, Carlsberg, Amazon Audible, McDonald's, Live Nation, and Google.
- Healthcare agency network **Klick Health** acquired health science communication consultancy Oxford PharmaGenesis, which helps pharmaceutical and biotech companies market and promote new products. The combined organization has 500 staff in North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific.
- Washington, DC-based independent agency **Yes&** acquired Atlanta-based B2B agency Modo Modo in a move to expand the Yes& footprint in the Southeast region. Modo Modo will boost Yes& expertise in B2B branding, sales enablement, strategic marketing, and omnichannel media, and enhance B2B marketing capabilities in sectors like healthcare, fintech, technology, and manufacturing. It also adds prominent accounts to the Yes& roster, including Equifax and Cox Enterprises.
- Atlanta-based **The Arketi Group** acquired Sperling, a Boston-based digital marketing agency with expertise in paid digital campaigns, social media strategy, site design, and UX/UI branding, in a move to expand Arketi's AI capabilities. As part of the deal, Sperling can leverage broader capabilities, including crisis and internal communication, alongside branding, digital marketing, and interactive services.
- New York-based media agency **Mile Marker** acquired Lift, a performance-content agency focused on end-to-end direct mail services, in a move to create a unified growth engine that connects media, content, technology, and data. The combined entity will operate as Mile Marker.
- Los Angeles-based **Residence**, a global network of creative companies (including Buck, It's Nice That, and Giant Ant), acquired Miami-based influencer marketing agency GateMaker (referred as a "new school performance-driven earned and owned media agency"), following the earlier acquisition of creative social agency OK Cool.

Noteworthy quotes:

» "We have brought media, creative and content together under one integrated partnership, a large part of our total working and non-working marketing investment. The remuneration model has shifted significantly towards performance. Our results become [the agency's] results."—Marion Villette, Head of Marketing and Commercial Procurement, **Bayer**

» "Media management is the advertiser's responsibility. Not the media agencies. Media agencies recommend it. Media agencies execute. Media agencies optimize. But advertisers must govern."—Philippe Dominois, CEO, **Abintus**

» "I keep on saying they have to smash it. Clients will benefit from making sure that the industries and the holding companies do survive. But they're not going to survive as they are." —David Droga, Vice Chair, **Accenture Song**

» "I would say, in large part, any savings clients are deriving, they are in fact reinvesting immediately into the marketplace. We're also focused on measurement and constantly going back to our clients and letting them know what we achieved."—John Wren, CEO, **Omnicom**

» "Can agencies still be trusted? The answer is yes. But only when trust comes from clear governance, transparent commercial design, and independent verification."—Tom Denford, CEO, **ID Comms**

» "Lines are blurred between what is paid, earned, shared, owned and commerce; what is media and what is creative; and there is a shift in how clients partner with agencies." —Maria Givens, VP and Head of Media & Digital Platforms for Consumer Health, **Bayer**

» "Agencies have got to be more aggressive about demanding to be in the room for the annual plan and not just get the debrief on it." —Justin Thomas-Copeland, CEO, **4As**

» "Our linear budget is the tip of the iceberg. What we're looking for is variety across channels. Stop thinking of that one asset and start thinking about variety and how you can reach customers where they are."—Natalie Wills, Senior VP of Integrated Marketing and Creative, **Expedia Group**

» "The marketplace hasn't seen what the cost of this AI is. That's going to weigh into the equation as well."—John Wren, CEO, **Omnicom**

» "[Agencies] should be looking at media planning and media buying. That's the gut source of profit for the holding companies."—Sir Martin Sorrell, Founder, **S4 Capital**

» "Procurement people need to sell. As much as they are buyers, they need to be sellers, selling themselves, selling the discipline, selling the value they create. Procurement can default into its traditional role, and in today's world that is not enough."—Philipp Schuster, Agency Management and Marketing Partnerships Director, Consumer Health, **Bayer**

AGENCY: Agency reviews and roster changes

Disclaimer: The reviews listed often capture larger review activity reported in the industry trade press, which we understand to be only a subset of total review activity. Specialist reviews (digital, social, PR, etc.) are rarely reported in the trade press. Also, due to the increasing number of project reviews (versus AOR/retainer reviews), many of those are not receiving media attention and therefore are not included here.

- **Alaska Air Group** kicked off a review of its creative business for its portfolio of brands including Alaska Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines. Incumbent Mekanism declined to participate.
- **Adidas** selected Omnicom Media Group as its global media AOR following a review, replacing incumbent WPP's EssenceMediacom. OMG media agency PHD will lead the account.
- **Altafiber** (FKA Cincinnati Bell) and sibling telecom company Hawaiian Telecom selected HLK as their integrated AOR following a review, replacing incumbent Curiosity. HLK will handle strategy, creative, media, and analytics.
- **Allwyn** selected Stagwell-owned Forsman & Bodenfors as its global creative AOR following a review. The agency will handle global brand development and creative work, while VCCP retains Allwyn's UK creative account, preserving a multi-agency model for global and local responsibilities.
- **Bemis Manufacturing**, a global manufacturer of toilet seats and other household products, selected Milwaukee-based ad agency Hanson Dodge to be its first-ever integrated AOR following a review. The agency will handle strategy, creative, media, and production.
- **Conagra Brands** selected WPP-owned and New York-based retail and commerce agency Barrows as its commerce marketing AOR in the US following a review. The agency will handle shopper and customer marketing, including digital shelf, for Conagra's US brand portfolio, which includes Birds Eye, Duncan Hines, Healthy Choice, Marie Callender's, Reddi-wip, Slim Jim, and more.
- **California Lottery** selected Butler, Shine, Stern & Partners and Canvas Worldwide (as a subcontractor) to handle its $550 million, five-year contract following a review, and replacing incumbents David&Goliath and holding company agencies.
- Retailer **Dollar Tree** selected Knoxville, Tennessee-based independent shop Tombras as its first creative AOR following a review. The agency will handle all creative duties for the brand.
- Online delivery platform **DoorDash** selected WME as its entertainment AOR. WME's Entertainment Marketing & Advisory (EM&A) will represent DoorDash and lead the development process across entertainment initiatives with a focus on building the brand's cultural relevance.
- Global footwear and apparel brand **Dr. Martens** expanded its four-year relationship with Havas agency Arena Media to lead performance media in its largest European markets and the US. The agency will handle search and affiliate activity, adding to its existing assignment for integrated media strategy, planning, and activation in the UK, France, Germany, and Italy.
- **Dave's Hot Chicken** kicked off a review of its creative business. The brand previously handled the majority of its creative work internally, along with some project-based agency partners.
- **Farmers Insurance** selected Havas Media as its new media AOR following a review, replacing incumbents RPA and Zenith. The agency will handle media strategy, planning, buying, activation, and measurement across Farmers Insurance's national marketing initiatives. The agency will partner with the brand's newly assigned creative AOR, Dentsu Creative.
- E. & J. Gallo Winery-owned **Four Roses Distillery** selected Austin-based Proof Advertising as its creative AOR following a review, replacing incumbent Publicis-owned Twin Oaks. The agency will handle creative strategy, campaign development, and direct media strategies but also partner with Horizon, the media AOR.
- Fast casual restaurant chain **Five Guys** selected independent media agency Canvas Worldwide as its media AOR in the US. The agency will handle integrated media strategy, planning, buying, analytics, and measurement.
- Indoor water park and hotel brand **Great Wolf Resorts** selected LA-based Tux Creative House as its creative and production AOR following a review, and replacing incumbent FCB. The agency will handle brand strategy, creative development, and content production for the resort.
- Energy tech company **Generac** selected marketing agency Quigley-Simpson as its digital AOR following a review. The agency will handle integrated media strategy, planning, and analytics across Generac Home Standby Generators and ecobee, the brand's smart thermostat and home-security division. The agency previously led direct response TV, direct response over the top, and CTV media planning, buying, and optimization for the brand.
- **Home Run Inn Pizza** selected Pavone Group-owned full marketing agency Quench as its integrated AOR following a review. The agency will handle brand strategy, creative development, communication planning, and retail activation.
- Chinese appliance maker **Haier** selected Stagwell as its lead creative agency in Europe following a review. The agency will handle all creative duties including strategy and campaign development. Stagwell digital agency Assembly Digital Commerce will support with content for online and e-commerce channels. A client team in Italy will handle the account.

- Laptop, printer, and computer accessories manufacturer **Hewlett-Packard** selected Publicis Media as its global media AOR following a review, replacing 17-year incumbent Omnicom Media Group. The agency will partner with the brand's several creative shops, including Wieden+Kennedy Portland and Accenture Song.
- Technology giant **IBM** selected Stagwell as its new lead creative AOR following a review, replacing 32-year incumbent WPP's Ogilvy, which declined to participate. Stagwell's Anomaly and Code and Theory will jointly lead the account. IBM removed $4.5 billion in costs over three years, largely through AI and automation. IBM recently named Omnicom its global media AOR, replacing incumbent WPP Media.
- **Intuit** selected Mother New York its creative and strategic AOR following a competitive pitch, covering Intuit and QuickBooks. The remit supports Intuit's AI-driven growth positioning, including its Intuit Intelligence agentic platform, with first work due this fall and activity extending to the LA28 Summer Olympics.
- **Intuit** kicked off a review of its media business (estimated at $933 million) in the US, which spans Intuit's entire US business, including QuickBooks, TurboTax, Mailchimp, and Credit Karma. Several incumbents are expected to participate, including Omnicom's Initiative, Wieden+Kennedy, PMG, and Dept.
- The Organic Snack Company-owned snack brand **Kate's Real Food** selected Pinnacle Advertising as its new integrated AOR without a review. The agency will handle strategy, idea, and activation, social media, creative campaigns, and media planning and buying.
- **La-Z-Boy** selected Colle McVoy as its creative and social AOR. The agency will handle all related duties, including creative, cultural activation, brand strategy, creative and campaign development, social strategy and creative, content planning, and integrated brand storytelling.
- White Claw parent **Mark Anthony Brands International** selected Omnicom Media agency UM as its global media AOR following a review, replacing incumbent agency Haworth. UM will handle global media strategy, planning and buying, analytics and measurement, and global-to-local coordination for the company's international business, and more across the US, Canada, the UK, and Australia. The scope cover the portfolio of category-leading ready-to-drink brands, including White Claw, Mike's Hard Lemonade, Cayman Jack, MXD, and The Finnish Long Drink.
- Toy and family entertainment company **Mattel** consolidated its global media account with Publicis Groupe's Spark Foundry. The work was previously split between Spark Foundry (North America) and IPG's UM (the rest of the world).
- Danish pharmaceutical company **Novo Nordisk** selected Omnicom as its AOR for media planning and buying in the US following a review, replacing six-year incumbent WPP Media.
- Member-owned nonprofit **Navy Federal Credit Union** selected Doner (part of DonerColle Partners) as its creative AOR following a review. The agency will handle creative strategy while strengthening member loyalty worldwide.
- Restaurant chain **Popeyes** selected Anomaly as its creative AOR in the US, LaForce as its US communication AOR, Angry Butterfly as its creative AOR in Canada, and Massive Rocket as its CRM and customer lifecycle marketing AOR following a review, replacing incumbent McKinney in the US and Canada. The new agencies are expected to partner with the brand's media agency PHD and shopper marketing partner 500 Degrees.
- Food and beverage giant **PepsiCo** kicked off a review focused on AI marketing transformation with a mix of high-profile agency groups and consultancies. The review centers on PepsiCo's AI capabilities and using technology to make its internal and external marketing operations more effective and efficient.
- CPG giant **Reckitt** selected Publicis Media agency Zenith as it media AOR in the US following a review. WPP still handles media planning and buying globally. Zenith will handle the estimated $400 million budget in the brand's largest market and its portfolio of consumer products focused on health and hygiene.
- Global household-appliance company **SharkNinja** selected WPP Media to manage its media account in India. Wavemaker will lead the brand's end-to-end media strategy, planning, and investment in digital and offline channels as the brand expands its presence in a market it considers strategically important to its APAC growth.
- Tumblers, mugs, bottles and lunch boxes company **Stanley 1913** selected Born Social as its first global social and social production AOR following a review. The agency will handle global social and creative strategy and content production.
- Footwear company **Skechers** selected Horizon Global, the Horizon Media-Havas joint venture as its media AOR for parts of Europe, APAC, and Latin America, and WPP Media for new markets (China, India, France, and Italy) in addition to its existing UK responsibilities. The brand's in-house team handles US duties.
- Dongwon Industries-owned **StarKist** selected Knoxville, Tennessee-based agency Tombras replacing several incumbent agencies as part of a consolidation. The agency will handle brand strategy, integrated creative development, media planning and buying, organic social and community management, measurement and analytics.
- **Subway** named Martin its creative and social AOR following a review, replacing Leo New York. Martin won after presenting one campaign idea in the final pitch. The appointment further consolidates Subway's business within Omnicom, which also handles its US media and CRM.

- Mattress manufacturer **Serta Simmons Bedding** selected Tinuiti as its media AOR following a review. The agency will handle integrated media strategy and execution across paid search, paid social, programmatic TV and streaming/linear video, affiliate marketing, and analytics for direct-to-consumer and broader digital channels.
- Telecommunications giant **T-Mobile** kicked off a review of its brand strategy account in a move to broaden the firm's agency portfolio, which includes Panay Films, Monks for social, and BarkleyOKRP for its Metro by T-Mobile business, among others. The brand recently moved a bulk of its creative business in-house (previously handled by Dentsu).
- **Uber** retained and expanded Omnicom Media its media AOR responsibilities (estimated at $880 million), covering North America, EMEA, Latin America, and newly added Brazil, while WPP Media retained APAC. Omnicom also added Uber sports marketing duties.
- Alphabet-owned robotaxi service **Waymo** selected WPP as its media AOR for North America, Europe, and Middle East & Africa. The agency will handle strategy and buying duties for the brand.
- UK digital pet-insurance company **Waggel** selected London-based agency Unbound as its new creative AOR without a review. There was no incumbent agency.
- Fitness franchise **Xponential Fitness** selected Brainlabs as media AOR, replacing incumbent iProspect. The agency will handle brand strategy, media planning and buying for SEM, paid social, YouTube, CTV, programmatic, and OOH for its brand portfolio of Club Pilates, Pure Barre, YogaSix, StretchLab, and BFT, which covers 3,000+ studios and 800,000 members worldwide.
- London-based kids' audio company **Yoto** selected brand-experience agency Akcelo as its global integrated AOR following a review. The agency will handle global brand strategy, creative platform development, and integrated campaign execution.

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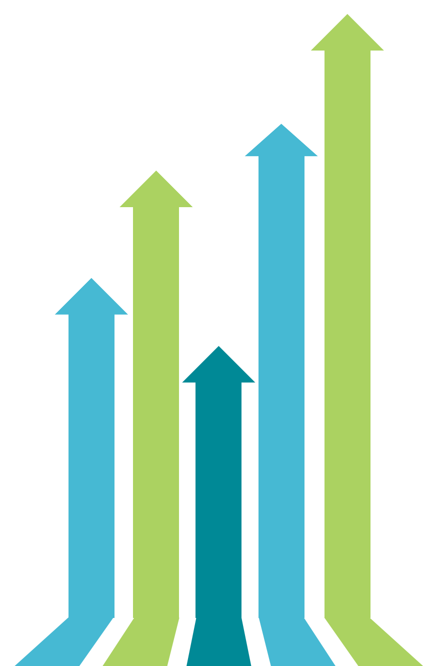

PRESS RELEASE

Agency Mania Solutions and WFA Renew Global Strategic Partnership

Expanding Commitment to Stronger Brand–Agency Relationships

Building on a landmark first year of joint research, thought leadership, and member education, the two organizations deepen their alliance to help global advertisers unlock greater value from their agency partnerships.

Click here to read the full press release.

Agency roster summary:

IP= Review in progress, Unk= Unknown

COMPANY LOGO	CLIENT	INCUMBENT	CHANGE/SCOPE	FOCUS AREA	NEW AGENCY	REVIEW?
adidas	Adidas	EssenceMediacom	Media AOR	Global	Omnicom	Y
Alaska Air Group	Alaska Air Group	Mekanism *(declined to defend)*	Creative AOR	Global	*Unk*	IP
allwyn	Allwyn	*Unk*	Creative AOR	Global	Forsman & Bodenfors	Y
altafiber	Altafiber & Hawaiian Telecom	Curiosity	Integraded AOR	US	HLK	Y
BEMIS	Bemis Manufacturing	*None*	Integrated AOR	Global	Hanson Dodge	Y
calottery	Califorina Lottery	David&Goliath	Lead Agency *(5-year contract)*	US	Butler, Shine, Stern & Partners	Y
CONAGRA BRANDS	Congara Brands	*Unk*	Commerce Marketing AOR	US	Barrows	Y
DAVE'S HOT CHICKEN	Dave's Hot Chicken	In-house agency	Creative AOR	US	*Unk*	IP
DOLLAR TREE	Dollar Tree	*None*	Creative AOR	US	Tombras	Y
DOORDASH	DoorDash	*Unk*	Entertainment AOR	Global	WME	*Unk*
Dr.Martens	Dr. Martens	Arena Media	Performance Media	Europe & US	Arena Media *(expanding duties)*	N
FARMERS INSURANCE	Farmers Insurance	RPA & Zenith	Media AOR	US	Havas Media	Y
FIVE GUYS	Five Guys	Chemistry	Media AOR	US	Canvas Worldwide	Y
FourRoses	Four Roses Distillery	Twin Oaks	Creative AOR	North America	Proof Advertising	Y
GENERAC	Generac	Quigley-Simpson	Digital AOR	Global	Quigley-Simpson *(expands duties)*	Y
GREAT WOLF LODGE	Great Wolf Resorts	FCB	Creative & Production AOR	US	Tux Creative	Y
Haier	Haier	*Unk*	Creative AOR	Europe	Stagwell	Y
hp	Hewlett-Packard *(HP)*	Omnicom Media	Media AOR	Global	Publicis Media	Y
Chicago's Home Run Inn – EST. 1947 – Premium Pizzeria	Home Run Inn Pizza	*Unk*	Integraed AOR	US	Quench	Y
IBM	IBM	Ogilvy	Creative AOR	Global	Stagwell	Y
INTUIT	Intuit	*Unk*	Creative & Strategic AOR	Global	Mother New York	Y
	Intuit	Initiative, Wieden+Kennedy, PMG, and Dept *(expected to defend)*	Media AOR	US	*Unk*	IP
Kate's Real Food	Kate's Real Food	*Unk*	Integrated AOR	US	Pinnacle Advertising	N
La-Z-Boy	La-Z-Boy	Colle McVoy	Creative & Social AOR	Global	Colle McVoy *(expands duties)*	*Unk*
MARK ANTHONY BRANDS INTERNATIONAL	Mark Anthony Brands International	Haworth	Media AOR	Global	Omnicom Media's UM	Y

Agency roster summary:

IP= Review in progress, Unk= Unknown

COMPANY LOGO	CLIENT	INCUMBENT	CHANGE/SCOPE	FOCUS AREA	NEW AGENCY	REVIEW?
MATTEL	Mattel	IPG's UM & Spark Foundry	Media AOR	Global	Spark Foundry *(consolidation)*	*Unk*
NAVY FEDERAL	Navy Federal Credit Union	*Unk*	Creative AOR	US	Doner	Y
novo nordisk	Novo Nordisk	WPP Media	Media Planning & Buying AOR	US	Omnicom	Y
pepsico	PepsiCo	*None*	AI Marketing	Global	*Unk*	IP
POPEYES	Popeyes	Mckinney	Creative AOR	US	Anomaly	Y
	Popeyes	Mckinney	Communications AOR	US	LaForce	Y
	Popeyes	Mckinney	Creative AOR	Canada	Angry Butterfly	Y
	Popeyes	Mckinney	CRM & Customer Lifecycle Marketing AOR	US & Canada	Massive Rocket	Y
reckitt	Reckitt	Zenith	Media AOR	US	Zenith *(retains duties)*	Y
Serta Simmons Bedding	Serta Simmons Bedding	*Unk*	Media AOR	North America	Tinuiti	Y
Shark NINJA	SharkNinja	*Unk*	Media	India	WPP Media *(Wavemaker)*	Y
SKECHERS	Sketchers	*Unk*	Media AOR	Europe, APAC, Latin America	Horizon Global	Y
	Sketchers	WPP Media	Media AOR	UK & New Markets *(China, India, France, Italy)*	WPP Media *(expanding duties)*	Y
STANLEY SINCE 1913	Stanley 1913	*None*	Social & Social Production AOR	Global	Born Social	Y
StarKist	StarKist	*Various agencies*	Integrated AOR	US	Tombras *(consolidation)*	
SUBWAY	Subway	Leo New York	Creative & Social AOR	Global	Martin	Y
T Mobile	T-Mobile	*Various agencies*	Brand Strategy	US	*Unk*	IP
Uber	Uber	Omnicom Media	Media AOR	North America, EMEA, Latin America, Brazil	Omnicom Media *(expanding duties)*	Y
waggel Pet Insurance	Waggel	*None*	Creative AOR	UK	Unbound	N
WAYMO	Waymo	*Unk*	Media AOR	North America, Europe, Middle East & Africa	WPP	*Unk*
XPONENTIAL	Xponential Fitness	iProspect	Media AOR	Global	Brainlabs	*Unk*
yoto	Yoto	*Unk*	Integrated AOR	Global	Akcelo	Y

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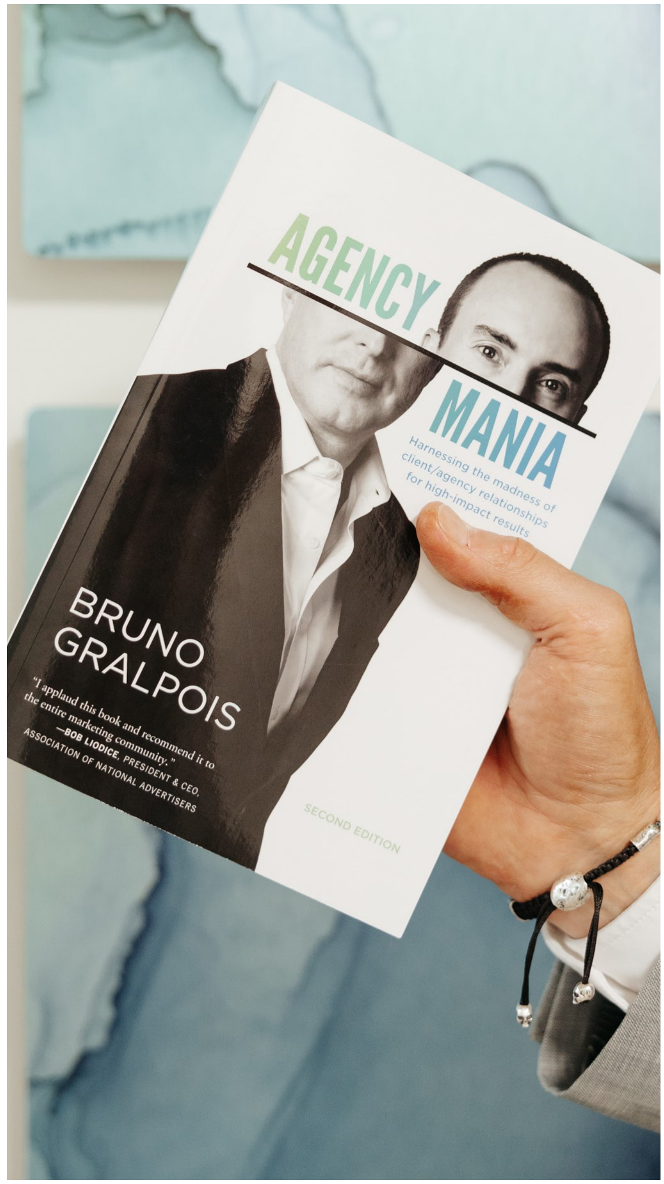

A word about the author: Bruno Gralpois is a globally recognized thought leader in business partnerships, renowned for his pioneering work in establishing agency management as a critical discipline among the world's largest advertisers and Fortune 500 companies.

As the author of the industry-defining book *Agency Mania* and the co-founder of Agency Mania Solutions, a leading cloud-based software company, Bruno has dedicated his career to fostering successful client-agency relationships. His expertise, honed through leadership roles at Microsoft, Visa, and several pre-IPO software companies, has made him an authority on building and nurturing high-impact business partnerships.

In addition to his corporate achievements, Bruno is a key Faculty member at the Association of National Advertisers School of Marketing, where he continues to shape the future of client-agency collaboration, driving growth and sustained business performance.