

Research from Havas Reveals Urgent Need to Transform Client-Agency Relationships

Report shares seven strategies for agencies to deliver more meaningful relationships and meet the shifting expectations of procurement leaders

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At the ProcureCon Marketing EU Conference on June 15th in London, Havas unveiled its “Meaningful Brands Special Report: The Client-Agency Relationship Barometer,” a first-of-its-kind research report examining how agencies can become more meaningful, long-term partners amid ongoing disruption brought on by the global pandemic, supply chain issues and shifts in technology and data.

“The Client-Agency Relationship Barometer” is a special report within Havas Group’s Meaningful Brands study—a landmark bi-annual survey of brand value that has been running since 2009. Conducted in partnership with YouGov and Prescient, it is the first of its size, comprising in-depth interviews and a wide-ranging quantitative study among more than 100 procurement decision makers in the US and UK. It assesses their current organizational priorities and how agencies are measuring up against these new expectations.

Havas’ research suggests that procurement professionals increasingly see their role as future-focused, beyond the immediate imperative of driving business and sales performance, with one in four respondents seeing transformation as their top priority. Agencies have room for improvement in aiding their clients in driving transformation, with 46% of respondents indicating their agencies were only providing traditional solutions to their problems, and one in five believing their agencies present innovation that is ‘new and shiny’ rather than what is integral to their business needs.

“A dynamic new agenda is emerging across businesses as organizations pivot to adapt to shifting consumer behavior, and the client-agency value exchange has never received more attention,” said Tracey Barber, Global CMO, Havas Creative Group. “The findings of our ‘Client Agency Relationship Barometer’ are a wake-up call for agencies: it’s time to build strategies that close the client expectation gap and forge meaningful relationships that can stand the inevitable challenges and tests ahead.”

Agencies are coming under new-found scrutiny amidst systematic disruption, with 50% of procurement leaders seeing a disconnect between their needs and what agencies are providing. Borne out of this groundbreaking study, Havas has crafted seven guiding pillars for agile agencies to build more meaningful and lasting relationships, including:

1. Everything must be driven by its relevance to the business, so build a way to understand the impact of your actions.
2. Create forums for new experts and talent to come to the table (ESG / Sustainability / Purpose).
3. Tie everything back to the delivery of tangible value and actual return on investment. If your clients feel they are getting great value, they probably are.

“In our increasingly complex world, a successful client-agency relationship must take the form of a valued partnership. Agencies should become trusted counsellors, aiding their clients in navigating uncertainty and creating meaningful connections with consumers,” said Erin Flaxman, Global Chief Growth Officer, Havas Media Group. “These pillars are a guide to understanding the core issues facing

clients and strengthening the forward-looking skills and expertise today's procurement professionals are looking for."

About Havas Group

Havas is one of the world's largest global communications groups. Founded in 1835 in Paris, the Group employs 20,000 people in more than 100 countries and operates through its three business units covering all communication activities. Havas Group's mission is to make a meaningful difference to brands, businesses and people. To better anticipate client needs, Havas has adopted a fully integrated model through its 69 Havas Villages around the world. In these Villages, creative, media and healthcare & wellness teams work together, ensuring agility and a seamless experience for clients. We are committed to building a diverse culture where everybody feels they belong, can be themselves, thrive and grow. Havas Group integrated into Vivendi in December 2017. Further information about Havas Group is available on the company's website: havasgroup.com

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