



The Marketing Diet

Adopting healthy client/agency practices and relations to stay budget fit.

By: Bruno Galpois

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

Dieting is not foreign to most of us. Per a food & health survey released by the International Food Information Council Foundation, the number of people on diets to lose weight or to be healthier is up 22 percent from last year, at 36%. That's right: one out of three individuals is on a diet. Most individuals will start a new diet in the spring, hoping to reach their ideal state by summer. By summer's end, we get busy and distracted, and bad habits rush back. Yet, if we are honest with ourselves, we should practice self-control and live a healthy lifestyle composed of nutritious meals and regular exercise all year long.

Similarly, marketing budgets often go on a diet during the planning season. Everyone is full of good intentions. Then pressure mounts quarter to quarter and we lose sight of sound budget practices. We are no longer as fiscally responsible under tight deadlines and aggressive targets. Look at the infamous ZBB – zero-based budgeting. Studies show that within a few short years after going through a transformative ZBB process, suboptimal practices resurface and disillusioned CMOs are back to square one.

How do we go about adopting healthy client/agency practices and relations to get budget fit? Once you get there, how do

you stay budget fit? Let's explore best practices to make this a successful, sustainable process.

Getting fit: In my article "[Wasted](#)," I highlighted the common symptoms of inefficiencies in the client/agency relationship and their root causes. To get marketing budget fit requires ending bad behaviors and adopting new, healthy ones. Bad behaviors may include poor guidance, inadequate feedback, suboptimal processes, and missed expectations. To rectify those, we need to recognize where those bad practices are occurring to fix them. Some advertisers create "efficiency dashboards" to monitor where waste might materialize, and to what degree: by waste type, by business unit or brand, or by region/country.

Staying fit: There are many diets out there, from low-calorie, low-carbohydrate, low-fat, detox diets, and more. Those vary based on a variety of factors and personal preferences. There are conflicting opinions as to whether they work. Detractors will claim that they do not work if these commitments are not part of a repeatable process that someone is willing to rigorously follow over time. If you subscribe to that point of view – I personally do – then we can also conclude that marketing diets only work if you can sustain healthy cost management practices.

