

Agency clients should know what they want

 By [Walter Wafula](#)

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"Men don't know what they want," is a common phrase among many women. Often, they tell their friends. Men who dare 'hit' on those who have been "through it all," often hear statements akin to the above, but normally, in different skins and tones.

Often, women who harbour this view, take some time to get involved in relationships again. Why? They are afraid of meeting or dating more men who don't know what they want.

What happens in women's love and hate lives, is not so different from what happens in the agency-client lives sometimes. Yes, many clients know what they want but a good number are also clueless about what they really want. So, where do they eventually find themselves when it comes to getting what they want? Nowhere, simply because they fail to breakdown their agenda and know what they want to achieve for their departments but most importantly, the businesses or organisations they work for.

Secondly, they end up frustrated clients and managers because the agency is not delivering the business results and they are the reason you are performing below target.

What that means is that if you are a client and you are dealing with an agency which doesn't have a lot of time to take you through the basics of your job, you are going to be a big cost to the business or organisation you work for. So, it won't be long before you fail to justify your budget expenditures and why you should be holding that job.

Know what you want!

It's therefore important that as the face of the business and key contact person for the agency, you know what you want as head of department and how that fits into the general business goals and mission.

Normally, if you are looking at the short term, take one year as an example, the starting point should be the annual business objectives. Secondly, know the departmental objectives and then your career goals - I'm not talking about your next pay rise!

If you understand and know what must be achieved at those three different levels, it's going to be a piece of cake to get your agency to deliver the results you are looking for. Not by executing everything at the click of the mouse after you have dispatched the brief but with constant engagement and monitoring of the agency to keep it on track is equally important.

Food for thought

Often times, many PR clients think that just because they fork out a good sum of money to take care of the agency retainer, everything is sorted. They are even in the habit of reminding the agency personnel how much they pay in retainer fees per month and therefore they should work off the hook to please them. Do you ever stop to think that you are not the first client at the agency or that there's someone who is even paying a lot more than you and is even engaging the agency better than you when it comes to getting things right? Food for thought.

Now, here is the deal. To get what you want, don't go shouting about how much you pay the agency to fix your problems. If they didn't have other clients, probably, you wouldn't feature on their client's list because they would be nowhere to be found. So, instead of acting like a drama queen, concentrate on achieving your goals by getting them to meet specific targets that you want within certain timelines.

Lastly, always remember to align your objectives with those of the business at all times. Know when they change and why and ensure that your agency is brought up to speed with the latest developments in the company.

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