

Noah Was an Ad Man

Millions of people around the world use the Bible as a blueprint for living. But, whoever thought it could also contain the original blueprint for successful marketing campaigns and client/agency relationships?

Consider the story of Noah- you know, the guy who built the ark. He may have been the first ad executive. His client? God. (We know some present-day clients who like this metaphor.) Noah's assignment: to create something never before seen (the ark) and, oh, by the way, this is a global campaign.

Imagine Noah's response: "It can't be done. Sir." However, the client insisted (who's going to argue with God?) and Noah took the assignment back to his shop.

So what did Noah do: He and his team focused on the work? They knew that a lot was riding on this project and if it wasn't done right and on time it could be a bigger disaster than Eve buying that apple from the snake. So they started by asking a series of questions. How big, wide, long should the ark be? What should it look like? How is it supposed to work? How long is it supposed to last? What's the deadline?

Realizing that he and his team needed more information, Noah probably wrote the first creative plan in history - a plan dependent on knowing the key questions to ask the client. Based on this vital client input, Noah's team now knew the benefit of the Ark, target audience, specifications and budget.

As the Ark was in production, Noah referred back to the plan, making sure that everyone was working toward the same goals. While he coordinated and maintained control of the overall project as the "brand" manager, Noah let his team do their work. Animal procurement was assigned to the production manager. His design team was given the freedom to do their work, but always with the client-approved plan serving as a reality check.

When Noah's team completed their work and agreed the product was ready for client review and approval, Noah called a meeting with God and presented the concept. Note that he did not fax, e-mail or overnight it. Noah knew there was no substitute for a face-to-face presentation and not just a package and note saying, 'Get back to us ASAP!'

At the presentation the client was the one asking the questions. Why two of each animal? Are all the animals necessary? Noah was ready because his team had done the research and he explained his work with hard data. The animals were to be gathered two by two because research mandated this to ensure perpetuation of the species. The research also indicated some animals, such as the unicorn, could be excluded because of the minimal consumer demand.

The client gave the plan his blessing (literally) and increased the budget for the spectacular campaign launch with incredible special effects that included a worldwide water show, thunder and lightning.