

Clients want to interview you. You should interview them.

While most agencies respond to inbound phone calls in an over excited, "can't believe you thought of us, we would absolutely love to work with you." Contrast that against the agencies with higher win rates. They act like they expected the call. They are strong, confident and they lead the client.

These agencies will answer the inbound call with a response much closer to, "Thank you for thinking of us. This looks very interesting. The way we work is that we begin each review process with a Discovery Call. Should we decide to participate in this review, we are going to invest a tremendous amount of resources. It's important to us to first be sure there's the potential for a good, long-term partnership. How's Thursday for you?"

Begin pitches with a 30-minute telephone discovery interview. Lead them in a smart discussion about their business. While not everyone will ultimately agree, when you do request this with confidence and with authority, expect 50 – 75% of prospects to book in time with you.

Why It'll Dramatically Increase Your Odds of Winning

- Understand what it will really take to win, beyond what is in the poorly-written brief.
- Based on the above, confirm whether or not you can win.
- Establish a personal relationship, out ahead of all the other agencies.
- Lead the client by walking them through a series of smart questions that will clarify the project objectives for you – and often clarify the objectives for them.
- Demonstrate that you are taking the review seriously by sending in small senior team to completely understand their objectives: planning director, president, new biz director, and/or creative director

Have to work through procurement or a search consultant? Consider them as a second target audience in the review and first conduct the interview with them.

Questions (consider those that are best given the realities each situation)

1. Business/Marketing Objectives

Objective: Clients want to work with smart, strategic firms that completely understand their business. Lead them in a smart discussion about their critical business issues.

- What are your top three business objectives right now? Why?
- What are your biggest revenue/sales opportunities?
- What will most hold you back from achieving those objectives?
- What role will marketing/advertising/PR/interactive/direct play in achieving those objectives/opportunities?
- From a business model perspective, what is trending up/down in your category? Here is what we see... are you experiencing the same?

2. Why?

Objective: Beyond what is written in the (overly-diplomatic) brief, why are they really looking for in a new agency?

- Why are you looking for a new agency?
- In the past, what have you most found missing in your agencies?
- What have you most appreciated in your agencies?
- How would you describe your current marketing/advertising/PR/interactive/direct (ie, creative, strategy, media, etc.)? Where is it strong? Where is it weak?
- Understand how they think, how they evaluate good work: What campaign (ie, advertising, PR, interactive, direct, etc) out in the market do you most admire? Why?
- Who are the other agencies? (ask with authority). If they don't provide them all: How many agencies?
- Why did you select this particular list of agencies?

3. Assignment

Objective: Confirm exactly what you will be accountable to deliver against.

- What is the project objectives, budget, timing, budget, etc.

4. What?

Objective: Confirm more detail behind what they're looking for in selecting an agency for this assignment.

- Specifically, what are you looking for in an agency?
- Define what you mean (don't be afraid to ask for clarification, with authority)
- Discuss their specific decision criteria
Note: As items/answers conflict, challenge the client. If they mention "breakthrough creative," challenge them. How do they define "breakthrough creative?"
- What disciplines are you looking for?
- Reinforce that you normally bring many of your disciplines to the table.
- What would your agency say is the best thing about working with you? The worst?

5. How?

Objective: Understand what will be expected of you from a day-to-day process perspective.

- Walk us through the steps/timing of the review process
- Who are the decision makers at each point in the process?
- How much access will we have to the decision makers?

6. Why Us?

The Mirren Pitch Discovery Call Tool



Mirren is a small team of new business training and recruiting specialists.

www.mirren.com

Mirren Training works on-site to teach our agency clients how to apply The Mirren Method™ – a set of five innovative drivers that creates new leads within 90 days and accelerates conversion. By using this rule-breaking approach to differentiate, pitch and prospect, our clients consistently double and triple their growth rate.

Mirren Talent specializes exclusively in placing new business executives. Our expertise allows us to locate the best talent - and help you get the most out of that talent.

To fuel industry dialog, Mirren also produces: The New Business Conference with Adweek and The Workspace/Marketing Chief Roundtable Series with Harvard Business Review.