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MOSAIC
Building Better Partnerships

MOSAIC INSIGHTS / CHECKLIST

Cost Clarity Checklist

Seven questions every brand should ask their pitch consultant

Before you appoint a pitch consultant. Ask these seven questions. The answers reveal the cost model, market coverage and incentives shaping the process. A good consultant will answer them openly.

1 Who is paying for the process?

Direct fees from you, indirect costs from agencies, or both. All income sources disclosed in writing.

Why this matters: "Free" is rarely free. If agencies fund the process, those costs come back through inflated retainers or hidden mark-ups. Without clarity you may think you have saved on consultant fees, but pay more over the life of the contract and never see it, because it is buried inside agency pricing.

2 How are agencies charged, and are terms equal?

Entry fees, win fees or roster subscriptions. Whether these are capped, proportionate and applied equally to all.

Why this matters: Heavy or inconsistent fees create barriers to entry. The agencies you most want may decline to take part, leaving you with those willing to pay rather than those best equipped to deliver. If terms differ between participants, you no longer have a fair comparison of capability and value, and the process risks being skewed from the start.

3 What happens to agencies that opt out?

Are you told when credible agencies decline on cost or commercial grounds?

Why this matters: A shortlist can look broad on paper but still be missing critical contenders. If agencies refuse to participate on cost grounds and you are not told, you are making decisions on incomplete information. The best-fit partner may never make it to the table.

4 Will pitch costs appear in agency fees later?

Whether agencies are asked to declare if pitch costs will be recovered in future pricing.

Why this matters: Agencies are commercial businesses. If they spend heavily on a pitch, those costs usually find their way back through higher fees, tighter scopes or extra charges. Asking early lets you compare the true cost of each option.

5 Is the consultant incentivised by win fees or volume?

How the consultant's business model is tied to outcomes.

Why this matters: Incentives shape behaviour. A consultant rewarded for running more pitches may have less reason to suggest fixing the current relationship, even when that would be better value. A win-fee model risks favouring certain agencies over others. Unless incentives align with your objectives, you may not get impartial advice.

6 What market do you really cover?

The breadth of the consultant's network. Whether independents and challengers are included, not just familiar names.

Why this matters: True transparency means seeing the full market, not a curated slice. If a consultant only recommends from a limited roster, you are not seeing your real options. That reduces competitive tension, stifles innovation and can shut out the very agencies best suited to your brand.

7 How is success tracked post-pitch?

Whether the chosen agency's performance is measured over time.

Why this matters: A pitch is a moment in time, not an end in itself. Without post-pitch tracking you risk picking a partner who performs well in the pitch but not in delivery. Consultants who measure long-term outcomes hold themselves accountable, and that protects your investment far more than judging the pitch alone.

> **If any answer is vague or missing, treat the gap as the finding.** Clear answers protect your budget, your access to the best-fit agencies, and the integrity of the process.

At Mosaic, agency selection works best when it is transparent, fit-first and built for long-term value. If you are planning a review, or simply want to test your current process, get in touch. We can walk you through the checklist or talk through how it applies to your process.

ABOUT MOSAIC ADVISORY

Mosaic Advisory helps brands find, appoint and retain better-fit agency partners.