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Procurement experts have much to offer

I'm not as amazed as the ad community seems to be that Procter & Gamble Co. enlisted its purchasing department to procure advertising. I'm amazed it took them so long. ("P&G gives ad power to purchasers," *AA*, Nov. 4; "New client voice: purchasing exec," *AA*, Nov. 11)

I've spent the past six years as a management consultant working with Fortune 500 marketing and procurement executives to shave an average 8% off their external advertising expenditures (i.e., agency fees, production cost and media). [And] all with no loss of agency services, impressions [and no] modifications to the media mix. Do the math on 8% at your company.

One does not need an agency background or need to be coded to the marketing function to provide input to the cost-benefit trade-offs between two production, placement or creative alternatives presented by the agency, or to force agencies and ad vendors to compete for a company's business. One just needs good business skills.

Procurement professionals lend quantitative, analytical, negotiation and request-for-proposal administration skills that complement the advertising expertise of marketing (and agency) personnel to create value for the corporation (i.e., buy the same items for less or get more items at the same cost). With all the talk about "marketing return on investment," one would expect to see more marketing executives seek out procurement personnel to help their usually understaffed departments optimize the "investment" part of the equation. ([Marketing executives'] expertise is often better suited for, and usually focused on, the "return" part).

Enlightened marketing executives recognize that procurement department and marketing personnel share the same stock options and retirement plans. They, like P&G, have said goodbye to functional snobbery. They have stopped hugging the trees.

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