



For Immediate Release

## MARKETING AGENCY LEADERS SPEAK OUT ON CLIENT STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

*-- Client Quality Survey: A Global Voice for Marketing Agency Leaders --*

**Amsterdam and New York, March 25, 2009** – Many client marketers need to improve their integration efforts, provide clearer agency briefs, and financially recognize the value agencies create for client organizations. So say the leaders of 620 marketing and communications agencies in seven countries that participated in a comprehensive global client quality survey in February 2009. The survey is the second bi-annual survey conducted by SCAN International, a global consultancy that specializes in agency search and client-agency relationships.

Agency leaders from a variety of marketing and communications disciplines in Canada, France, The Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, United Kingdom, and United States participated in the study, *A Global Voice for Marketing Agency Leaders*. The survey was designed to give a voice to senior agency leaders to shed light on the role of clients in client-agency relationships. Historically, client-agency surveys have focused on the client's perspective, but today more clients recognize that they are equally accountable to the partnership and are keen to be better clients to maximize their ROI.

"We believe that the key learnings from this survey will help to stimulate client-agency dialogue and lead to improved business relationships," said **Joanne Davis, President of Joanne Davis Consulting, based in New York and Vice-President of SCAN International**. "Many clients admit to us that they are often the cause of the problem in the client-agency relationship and that all problems cannot and should not be blamed on the agency."

Commenting on the survey results, **Michael Lee, Executive Director of the International Advertising Association**, whose global members represent all areas of the industry stated, "This is a very extensive study and the perspective of marketing agency leaders, representing tens of thousands of brands, make it a very substantial report. As marketers continue to draw upon on their agency partners for wide-ranging strategic support as well as creative execution, it is vital more than ever that relationships work well, are optimized, fair and deliver true effectiveness. The SCAN research illustrates key insights in its findings and everyone would be well served to study them and consider their implications. The study would suggest there is work to be done."

"Universally, agency leaders call for improved client communications in all facets of the relationship," said **Hein Becht, President and CEO of SCAN International**, based in Amsterdam. "They say in this survey that clients would get more for their money with better briefings, decision-making, workload planning, and a bigger commitment to market research. In comparison to North America, European agency leaders say their clients need to further improve agency compensation packages."

Highlights of the 2009 global survey averages, with notable comparisons to 2007 results include:

- agency leaders say 75% of clients would get more value for their money if they would pay more attention to the quality of relationship management with their agency
- they say 30% of their clients are weak at integration and only 11% of their clients are excellent at integration (2007 survey: 36% weak; 25% excellent)
- agency respondents say 60% of their clients need to improve the quality of strategic direction and agency briefings (2007 survey: 45%)
- respondents say 44% of their clients are weak at compensating agencies for the value they create for clients, while only 7% of their clients are excellent at compensating agencies for value (2007 survey: 50% weak)
- they say 45% of clients are excellent in their commitment to building lasting agency relationships, and only 9% of clients are weak in this area

- however 61% of their clients do not openly discuss their concerns about agency performance and make an effort to find solutions before the client ends the agency relationship
- agency respondents say 19% of clients are excellent in their attitude and willingness to invest in market and communications research, while 32% of clients were found weak in market research
- agency leaders say 35% of their clients are weak in their ability to plan workloads so that agencies can deliver quality outcomes, while only 8% of agency leaders say their clients are excellent in agency workload planning

In North America, 249 agency leaders responded to the survey, while in Europe 370 participated. There are some geographic differences in the way agency leaders view their relationships with clients. European agency leaders rate their clients somewhat harsher than their counterparts in North America in matters of compensation. U.S. agency leaders say their clients are better at judging agency recommendations than European respondents, but are poorer at integration.

Regional highlights include:

- in North America, agency respondents say 24% of their clients need to improve their agency relationship management skills, while the European agency leaders say only 14% of clients need to improve their relationship management skills
- in Canada, agency leaders say only 9% of their clients are weak in their ability to inspire and motivate agencies. In the U.S. this percentage is 29%, while in France it reaches 34.5%
- in Europe, agency leaders rate 37% of their clients as weak for realistic and fair compensation in respect to the scope of work and service level provided by agencies, while in North America only 22% of clients are scored as weak in fair compensation
- in the U.S. agency leaders rate 38% of their clients' integrated marketing abilities as weak, while in Europe only 27% of clients are rated weak on integration
- in North America, agency leaders rate 25% of their clients as excellent in judging agency recommendations, while in Europe, agency respondents rate only 12% of their clients as excellent in judging agency recommendations

The survey of almost 40 questions was conducted online by SCAN International country partners between February 5 and 26, 2009. The largest number of responses came from agencies that offer integrated services (58%); followed by digital; (49%); advertising (45%); brand and retail design (27%); PR and corporate communications (26%); direct (24%); and media (23%). Individual country responses were given equal weighting in the global tabulation of data.

Complete details of the survey with global comparison highlights and SCAN International's assessment of the results will be available on April 6, 2009 at [www.scaninternational.com/publications/clientqualitysurvey](http://www.scaninternational.com/publications/clientqualitysurvey).

SCAN International, formed in 2005, operates globally and has partner offices in nine countries. SCAN International specializes in optimizing client-agency relations, agency searches and compensation ([www.scaninternational.com](http://www.scaninternational.com)). Clients include and have included Ford, IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, and Unilever.

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