SURVEY RESULTS

Marketing Relationship Survey

What brands and agencies saw differently

Setup fielded thisedition in late2019.ltfoundgaps in why partnerships ended and an agency selection process that clients found complex.

2019

Research by Setup®

The first signs of a perception gap

Client and agency respondents agreed that relationships mattered. Their explanations for breakups diverged sharply.

90%

Client respondentsfound agency selectioncomplex

69%

Client respondentsfavored several specialists

75%

Agencies attributed breakups toclientbudget cuts

The budget explanation differed by side

Twenty-four percent ofclientrespondents citedbudget cuts as a reason agency relationships ended. Seventy-five percent of agency respondents attributed breakups to client budget cuts.

Understanding the business came first

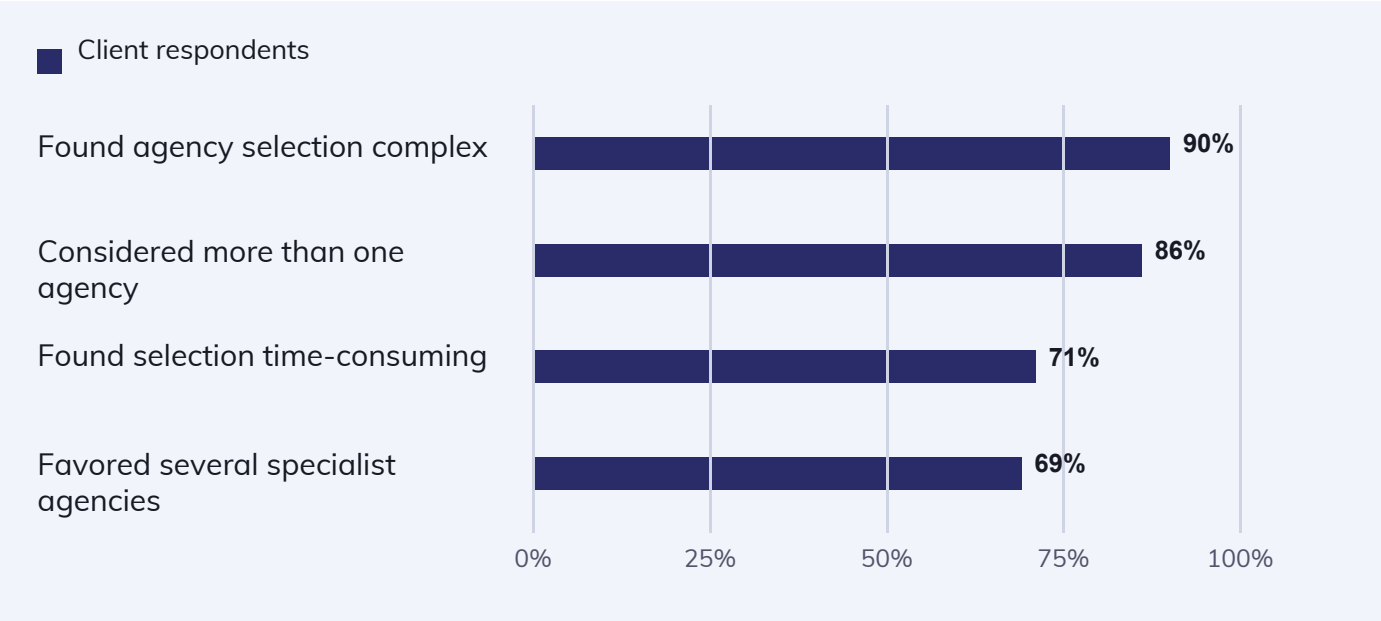
Clientsrankedtheagency'sunderstandingoftheirbusiness or industry first in selection. Creativity, specialized capabilities and chemistry followed.

Agencies faced capacity questions

Talentacquisitionand scalingfor projectsled the agency operational challenges. Business development bandwidth was also a leading concern.

Clients considered several agencies

Clientresponsesabouttheselectionprocessandthekindsofpartnersthey wanted.

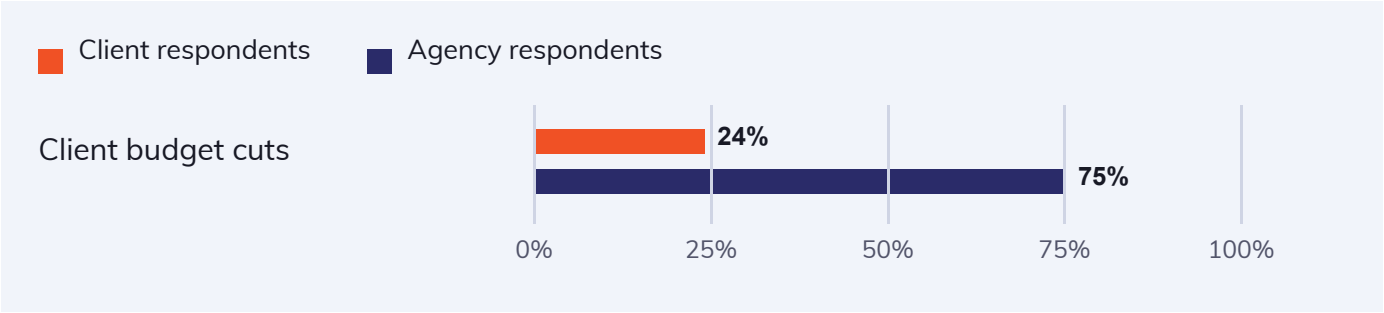


Source: Setup's 2019 results, collected in late 2019 and summarized in a February 2020 article. The bars represent separate questions.

Clients ranked business understanding, creativity, specialism and chemistry as the top selection factors. Agency awards, size, marketing and location were among the lowest-ranked factors.

Budget cuts looked different to each side

Share of respondents who cited budget cuts in explaining the end of an agency-client partnership.



Source: Setup's late-2019 survey. Clients reported their reasons. Agencies reported the reasons they believed clients had.

The two groups' results were 51 percentage points apart. Help both sides prepare for the next review by putting the main business and delivery concerns on the agenda.

Clients were open to working together again

About three infour clientrespondentssaidtheywouldworkwiththeirprimaryagency again if they moved toanothercompany.

Signals in the relationship

About onein three said they planned to review agency partners in the following three months. Nearly one in five said they felt stuck with an agency partner.

The original analysis classified 28% as loyal to their primary agency.

Plans for 2020

Video, content, websites, branding and creative, SEO, digital media, and mobile led the published ranking of planned investment areas.

These plans were reported in late 2019 and reflect expectations at that time.

Feedback to ask for

What wouldleadtheclientto work with this team again? What would need to change before the next scope?

Talent and scaling led agency challenges

Agencyrespondents describedthestaffingandbusinessdevelopmentdemands of maintainingahealthy clientbase.

Operational challenges

Talentacquisition and scaling for projects ranked first and second. Adapting to technology and scoping projects were also high in the published findings.

Business development

Capacity for business development, outbound efforts and process were among the leading challenges.

Respondents reported that on average, their largest client accounted for 27% of agency revenue. They attributed about one-third of leads to outbound business development.

About the 2019 survey

Thereportreflectsthesurvey Setupfieldedinlate2019andpublished under its 2019 edition.

230+
Marketing leaders responded

62%
Client-side share of known respondents

38%
Agency-side share of known respondents

Recruitment	Setup reached senior marketers by email, LinkedIn and other social channels in late 2019.
Client profile	Seventy-six percent of client respondents held Director-level roles or above.
Agency profile	Ninety-one percent of agency respondents worked at agencies with 100 or fewer employees.
Publication	The February 2020 article presents the same late-2019 findings in the context of the coming year.

Open the original 2019 results ›

Read the February 2020 article ›