

IT'S NOT YOU IT'S YOUR AD AGENCY



A Marketer's Guide to Finding Happiness



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Best-selling author of *It's Not You, It's the Printer*

IT'S NOT YOU IT'S YOUR AD AGENCY

by

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A Note from Dr. Gary

Let me start by saying that this book will not analyze the many reasons clients find themselves in bad ad agency relationships. I am not a patient enough soul to waste time on such malarkey. Just as one cannot cure a common cold by dwelling on its infinite number of possible causes, we will not waste another word on the subject. With that said, let's begin the healing.

Introduction

Complacency is the marketer's noose. Perhaps you think that your ad agency relationship is going to get better. And perhaps Batman and Robin really were *just* good friends. The point is, if your agency relationship isn't completely fulfilling right now, at this very moment, as you sit here reading this, something is seriously wrong. I will teach you that that "something" is indeed not you, it's your ad agency.

PART ONE: IT'S NOT YOU

STEP 1

Admit There's a Problem

THE FIRST STEP TO SELF-HEALING is by far the hardest. After all, the marketer is at heart an optimist. I tell my patients, “It’s good that you see the glass as being half full. But wouldn’t you rather have a *completely* full glass?” Use the exercise below to gauge the health of your agency relationship.

Exercise 1:

Peabody’s Standardized Client-Agency Assessment Test (SCAAT)

Fill in the circle best representing your ad agency’s performance: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always	
1. Doesn’t wait until you leave before making fun of you.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
2. Puts you on hold, only to “accidentally” disconnect you.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
3. Recycles old creative, thinking you’ve forgotten about it.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
4. Blames a guy named “Reggie” for every agency problem, even though they’ve never hired anyone named Reggie.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
5. Socks you in the gut when you say you “don’t get” an ad.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Add up your circled numbers. If your score is five or more, brace yourself—you may be experiencing Ad Agency Relationship Dysfunction. Unfortunately, the SCAAT can’t tell us exactly how dysfunctional your agency relationship is (that would take a series of painful lab exams), but keep in mind that five-question, self-administered tests found in self-help books tend to be highly accurate.



CASE STUDY I: EAST BANK COMMUNICATIONS

“Bad relationships start with bad communication,” says Rich Petralia, Vice President and GM for East Bank. “One day in the middle of a frustrating agency meeting, I looked out the window and saw a squirrel approaching a busy street. I thought, *Man, that squirrel’s going to get hit*. But you wouldn’t believe it—the little guy looked left and right a couple times, and then ran across the street, untouched! I stood up and immediately fired all of my account executives. I said, ‘If a squirrel can understand the complexity of automotive traffic, why can’t my AEs understand their client’s business?’”

Since then, East Bank has not hired a single account executive. Instead, they employ marketing communications managers—marketing experts with years of client-side experience.

“That squirrel saved our hides. Every time I look up on the wall and see his smart, little eyes looking back at me, I’m truly inspired.”

Figure 1:



Rich’s inspiration

Rich learned that in order to communicate with clients, an ad agency needs people who can speak the client’s language. Take a deep breath and continue to step two.

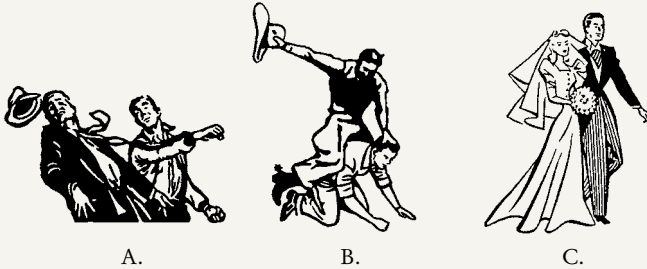
STEP 2

Understand That You're Not Alone

IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY, EXHALE and continue to breathe normally. You may be experiencing a solemn feeling. Don't. Remember, it's not you, it's your ad agency. Besides, you're in good company—five out of five clients eventually experience Ad Agency Relationship Dysfunction. Complete the following exercise.

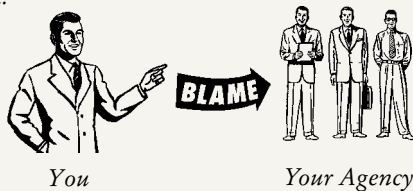
Exercise 2:

Which best represents a healthy client-agency relationship?



If you chose C, congratulations, you've begun to recognize the signs of dysfunction. You've not only accepted that there's a problem, but you're taking the first step toward placing all responsibility for that problem squarely on the shoulders of your advertising agency. You are beginning to shift the blame (figure 2).

Figure 2:





CASE STUDY II: EAST BANK COMMUNICATIONS

East Bank works less like an ad agency and more like a wildlife refuge. To them a client who appreciates an intelligent, brand approach to marketing is as endangered as the black-footed ferret (figure 3). East Bank takes these clients in, nurses them back to health and then breeds them into strange and wonderful amalgams for pleasure and, of course, profit.

Pour yourself a drink and move on to the next step.

Figure 3:



Black-footed ferret

PART TWO: IT'S YOUR AD AGENCY

STEP 3

Believe That You Deserve Better

IF SELF-ESTEEM WERE A TEST MONKEY with a special helmet, courage would be the rocket that propels that monkey into space. Step three asks that you strap on a special helmet* and demand more from your agency relationship.

Practicing this next exercise regularly, along with getting a snappy haircut, can improve your ad agency relationship self-esteem.

Exercise 3:

Hold the following up to a mirror and read out loud.

**"I DESERVE BETTER BECAUSE 'DAMMIT,
IT'S NOT ME, IT'S MY AGENCY."**

These words brought to you by Jack Dick, the family pricer with a gentle hand.

As you begin to assert yourself, you'll start to see a great deal of fault in others. It's important to focus this newfound power solely on your ad agency. As we'll see later, unfocused blame is like a stick without a point—it might be good for whacking people, but you're not going to hurt anyone. Now, stop looking at yourself in the mirror and continue.

*Sold separately.



CASE STUDY III: EAST BANK COMMUNICATIONS

At the East Bank laboratories, they've developed a daily regimen that helps restore client self-esteem while firming the thighs and buttocks. Part of this routine incorporates something they call Sharing-the-Risk™. Unlike all other contemporary business jargon, Sharing-the-Risk™ actually means something—that every project, big or small, benefits from stringent estimates and objectives, and a guarantee to meet both.

Figure 3:



East Bank employees are trained to commit the ancient and noble practice of Seppuku if a client feels dishonored.


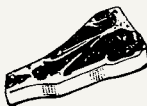



STEP 4

Set New Standards for Yourself

THERE'S A SAYING that, "One million lemmings can't be wrong." As a client, it's time to rise up and expect more from your ad agency. Step four demands that you define this "more," and then start expecting it in greater quantity. Complete the following exercise.

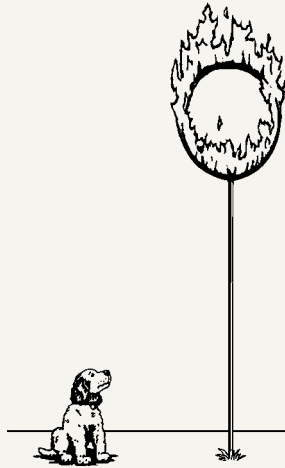
Exercise 4:

The Drake Method for Expectation Assessment

	TRUST	
PAIN		REGRET
	LOVE	

If you were unable to complete the matrix and became utterly frustrated, take it easy. There is no answer to the matrix. That's because only you can set your relationship expectations. But I encourage you to set them high, and then demand that your ad agency exceed them like a small, frightened dog jumping through an impossibly high, flaming hoop (figure 4).

Figure 4:



*Most agencies are scared of jumping through
impossibly high, flaming hoops—much like this dog.*



CASE STUDY IV: EAST BANK COMMUNICATIONS

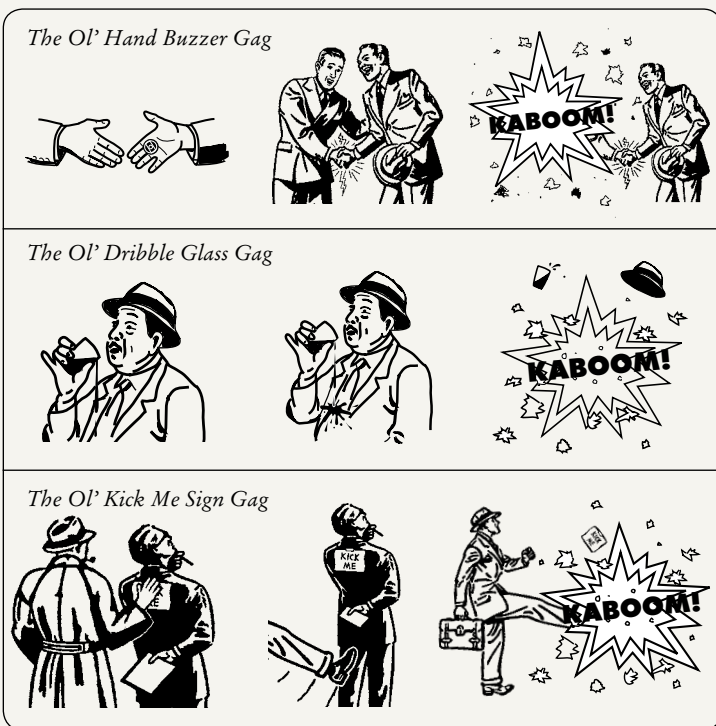
“Unfortunately, we work in an industry that defines ‘effective advertising’ on a sliding scale,” says Jason Maurer, agency writer. “But at East Bank we believe that every ad—whether it’s a TV spot or just a shameless self-promotion—must be relevant, unique and engaging. Sure, this probably sets the bar a little high for some agencies, but for us, it’s really not that big of a deal.”

It’s easy to create ads that are relevant, unique *or* engaging; but as we’ve just learned, unless you’re East Bank Communications, it’s impossible to create ads that are all three at once.

STEP 5

Exact Punishment on the Guilty Party

REVENGE IS THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL STEP to self-healing, yet perhaps the most gratifying. Many of my patients are unable to move on without first delivering a self-appointed, often cruel, sense of justice. Use the following examples to guide you in your quest for complete agency humiliation.



There's nothing as cathartic as a bit of tomfoolery. Now clean up any messes, establish a solid alibi and continue on to the case study.



CASE STUDY V: EAST BANK COMMUNICATIONS

According to agency president John Kosydar (figure 5), “As far as I know, no East Bank client has ever performed a gag on us that resulted in death.”

This demonstrates precisely what the agency has claimed for years: not one of East Bank’s clients has ever been dissatisfied. Not KinderCare Learning Centers, Portland State University, Northwest Hardwoods, Bonneville Power Administration, the US Fish and Wildlife Service or the US Forest Service. Definitely not World Cup Coffee & Tea, O’Loughlin Trade Shows or Mulberry Child Care & Preschool. Maybe Advantage Management Software, but they’re so needy.

Figure 5:



John Kosydar, East Bank mogul for 30 years

Without satisfied clients—and more importantly, signed checks from satisfied clients—East Bank would have little to brag about.

STEP 6

Develop a New, Healthier Relationship

NOW THAT YOU'VE FREED YOURSELF from the shackles of your old ad agency relationship, you're ready to move on. But unfortunately being ready to move on and actually moving on are two different matters. Therefore, I've included with the purchase price of this book, a Big Eddy™ (figure 6). You can rest assured, knowing that if you ever feel the urge to call your old ad agency, Big Eddy™ will find you and quickly change your mind.

Figure 6:



If motivation won't come from within, it will come from this man.

Once the weight of blame has been lifted, you'll notice an "easy like Sunday morning" feeling. Co-workers might even swear that you've lost weight or shaved your mustache. That's one of the perks of being blame-free, so you may as well get used to it.

Exercise 6:

Tell the world you're blame-free by affixing this sign to the collar of your dickey.

**IT'S NOT ME,
IT'S YOU.**

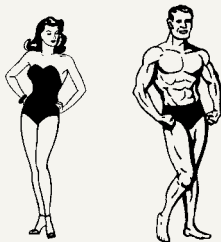
ShiftTheBlame.com



CASE STUDY VI: EAST BANK COMMUNICATIONS

Research shows that clients prefer to work with people. That's why, at East Bank, they employ a number of people (figure 6), each an expert in his or her own field—marketing, advertising, design, PR, digital development and video production. But as Rich Petralia explains, they didn't stop there. “We also established a ‘location’ to house those people. Inside you'll find everything you'd expect to find in a modern ad agency—pens, pen holders and plenty of yellow legal pads. But it's not the technology that makes this place rock. It's the Bettys and the Robins, the Jons and the Neenas, the... Well, I guess it's just those four, really.”

Figure 6:



At East Bank, it's the people that make the difference.

With all the great-looking people at East Bank, you might be tempted to immediately choose them for your next project. But I encourage you to ease into the relationship. You'll be surprised by how many free drinks and meals you can milk from their agency schmoozers.

Afterword

If you've made it this far—or even if you just accidentally turned to this page—you've come to the final paragraph of the book. Normally this would be the place where I'd congratulate you and point out the limitless potential of your future. However, due to a legal department that works more like a cheap circus act (figure 7), I can do neither. What I can do is bid you good luck and ask that you keep in touch.*

Figure 7:



*Libby Murdock,
Head of legal and sideshow freak*

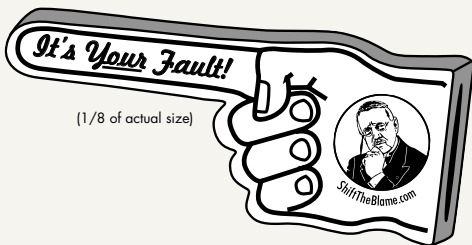
*Under no circumstances are we guaranteeing the reader better than average fortune, or suggesting that the reader actually contact Dr. Gary. These are merely gestures of courtesy and are not intended to be taken literally. Further, Dr. Gary cannot be held responsible for any reader's experience—good or bad—as a result of reading this book. Finally, the disclaimer writer claims no responsibility for these words and/or their interpretation.

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*No self-confident marketing executive
should be without one!*

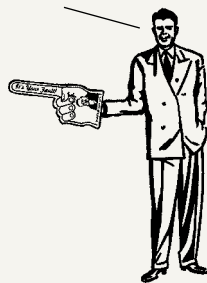
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About the Author

Sir Douglas “Gary” Peabody III, Ph.D. founded the study of “blame shifting”—the process of removing blame from one person or organization and placing it on another—in the late 90s. Since then the straight-talking, self-proclaimed “psycho-guru-ologist” has gained worldwide recognition, holding more big-ticket, stadium therapy sessions than any other health professional.

In the fall of 2002 Dr. Gary went undercover, embedding himself in the Portland advertising agency, East Bank Communications, as a switchboard operator. There, he tested his blame shifting studies in the field of marketing, answered phones and ran small errands. This book is the culmination of Dr. Gary’s research.

Earlier works by Dr. Gary include *It’s Not You, It’s That Guy in Accounting*; *It’s Not You, It’s the Printer*; and the popular *It’s Not You, It’s Either the Greens Keeper or Your Mother-in-Law*. Dr. Gary lives and works on his southern Oregon ranch, where he holds his annual Shift the Blame Workshop, drawing celebrities and politicians from around the world.



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