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## Post-pitch staff churn still an agency issue, survey finds

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Four in ten agencies may change teams between pitching for a brief and working on it, a new study has found.

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Pitches: Agency team members are not always the same ones who work on an account

A survey of client management and billing practices in PR found that while 59 per cent of respondents stated they always kept the same team, 34 per cent said they did "if we can".

The survey was conducted by Dr Lee Edwards at the University of Leeds on behalf of Clare Public Relations, with 101 responses from agency figures across the spectrum of PR.

A further five per cent of those polled said they usually kept some of the team, while two per cent stated that they decided after the account was won.

Stuart Pocock, managing partner of matchmaker Roth Observatory, said the results were indicative of agencies' "tendency to put an A team into a pitch".

Qualifying that the practice was not just limited to the PR industry, he added: "I think clients have wised up to this. They will try to see the team they will be working with day to day on the business."

Clare Public Relations founder Clare Ward condemned the practice of pitching with senior agency figures and bringing in junior executives to work on an account afterwards, adding:

"What I can't understand is why clients can't see this. There is not as much transparency as I would hope in the PR industry."

The research also found that 41 per cent of respondents said they always provided clients with a service level agreement, while 39 per cent said they sometimes did and one fifth said they had never provided an agreement.

The majority of respondents (68 per cent), meanwhile, based their fees wholly on time spent on the account and only two per cent said they charged based on results only, with the rest basing fees on a mixture of results and time spent.

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