

Understanding the client-agency relationship in Healthcare

2021



Introduction

At Aprais we believe that stronger relationships build stronger business. Here are some of the reasons why;

- Companies with stronger business relationships trust each other more.
- Together they produce work of a higher quality.
- There is more candid communication, so issues are identified and resolved quicker.
- They have opportunity to expand their scope of work.
- Staff go the extra mile for each other.
- Valuable shared experience builds up over time.
- Business becomes frictionless.
- Maintenance is cheaper and less disruptive, than the cost of repair.

Other reports in this series:

- Automotive
- Banking & Insurance
- Beauty & Personal Care
- Confectionery
- IT & Durables
- Non-alcoholic Drinks
- Retail (in-store and online)
- Telecoms
- Wine, Beer & Spirits

About this report

This report is based on our experience advising some of the world's leading companies and agencies in the Healthcare category. It is part of a series focusing on business relationships in specific product and service categories we have evaluated. The analysis is extracted from our database of more than 23,000 evaluations Aprais have conducted globally over the past two decades.

Our quantitative evaluations use a 100-point scale to help identify shifts in performance before they grow into major issues. Using our online platform, participants respond to questionnaires built around the agency-client scopes of work. We also analyse the qualitative comments entered with each evaluation.

Our carefully curated questions cover traditional disciplines such as Account Leadership, Financial Management and Collaboration. We also assign Behavioural traits to the individual questions so we can look at how these Behaviours, beyond the Functional disciplines, impact team relationships. The Behaviours shown in this report are consistent across scopes and the teams being evaluated.

This report will examine both the Functional and Behavioural characteristics that set the best teams apart from the rest. It will cover both marketers and agencies in the Healthcare category.



What sets the best apart from the rest?

Historically, there has been a focus on the Functional characteristics to evaluate teams. While these Functional elements continue to be critical determinants of performance, recent analysis of our database, show that Behavioural qualities like Trust, Communication and Resilience are increasingly important in helping build strong, productive relationships.

Key findings in the Healthcare category

1. Healthcare marketers and agencies score each other lower compared with the 'all-category' total. Meaning that both are harder to please.
2. Based on our 100-point scale, agencies can improve overall scores by 24-points to become part of the top-ranking teams (top 10%). Marketer clients in this category can improve by 20-points.
3. The Functional disciplines of Media Buying and Strategy/Planning & Analysis are core areas where agencies have most opportunities to improve. The most important area for improvement by marketers is Briefing.
4. In terms of team Behaviours, both agencies and clients have the greatest opportunity to improve their Challenging behaviour.

Why benchmarking is important

Benchmarking reveals your company's standards of team performance compared with others in the category and companies working with similar teams across different categories. Benchmarking motivates better Behaviours and helps organizations to improve their performance standards to stay relevant in the market and to maintain a competitive edge.



When viewed together with qualitative inputs, our benchmarks deliver insights that are actionable and impartial, enabling teams and their leaders to:

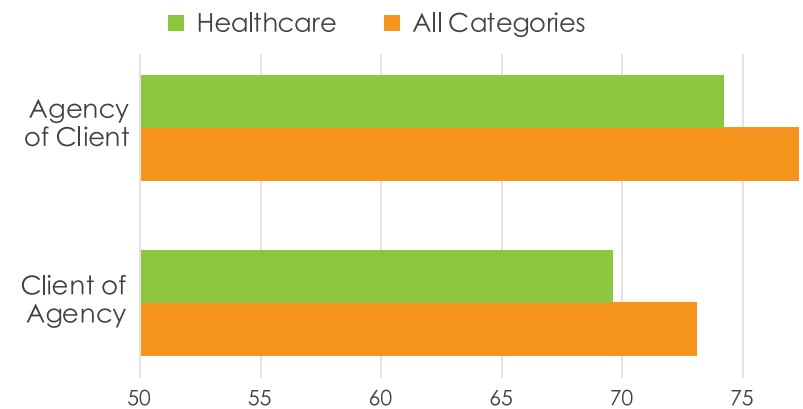
- Improve team quality and working relationships
- Drive better performance
- Improve cost efficiency
- Identify and prioritise areas of improvement
- Leverage strengths

Healthcare category vs. all categories

Generally, agencies score their marketer clients higher than marketers score their agencies. However, the relative scoring is influenced by culture and differs by region and country.

With this in mind, comparing client-agency relationships in the Healthcare category to 23,000 evaluations in the Aprais database reveals:

- Clients in the Healthcare category rate their agencies 3-points below the Aprais 'all-categories' benchmark.
- Agencies also rate their Healthcare clients around 3-points below the same benchmark.

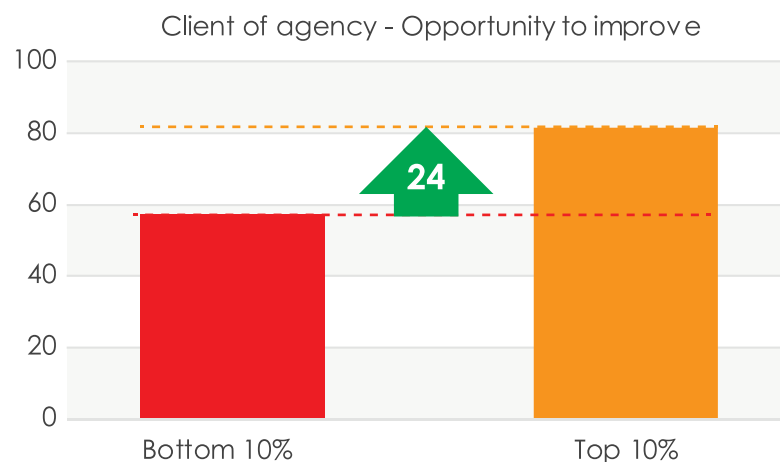
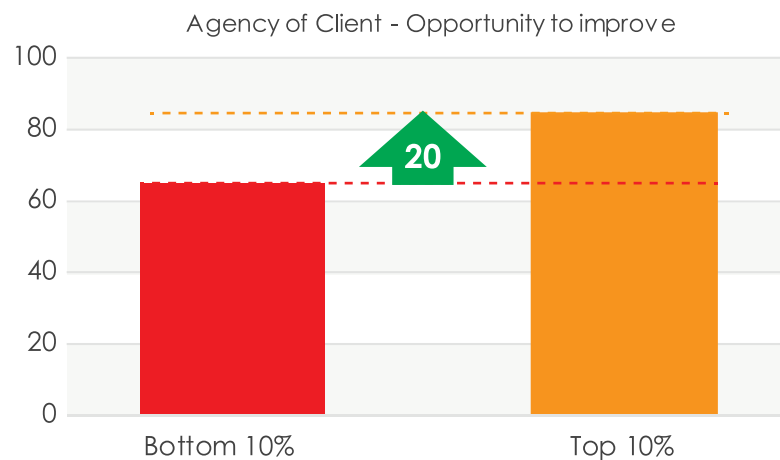




Areas of opportunity

Comparison of the average scores of the bottom 10% of our database with those of the top 10% reveals the potential for clients and agencies to improve their performance.

In the Healthcare category there is a 24-point opportunity for agencies and a 20-point opportunity for their clients. What is important to remember, is that these improvements can be achieved without cost. The big question, is 'how'?





Functions versus Behaviours

Functional characteristics measure how knowledge is effectively and readily applied. They often differ depending on the team Function.

Historically, they have been the focus when evaluating team performance.

While these characteristics of client and agency performance remain critical, it has become increasingly important to factor in the Behaviours that help build strong relationships and produce good work.

Behaviours are about how people act and are common to all job functions.

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of client and agency relationships it is necessary to measure both factors.

FUNCTIONS

To use one's own knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance

BEHAVIOURS

The way in which someone conducts oneself or behaves

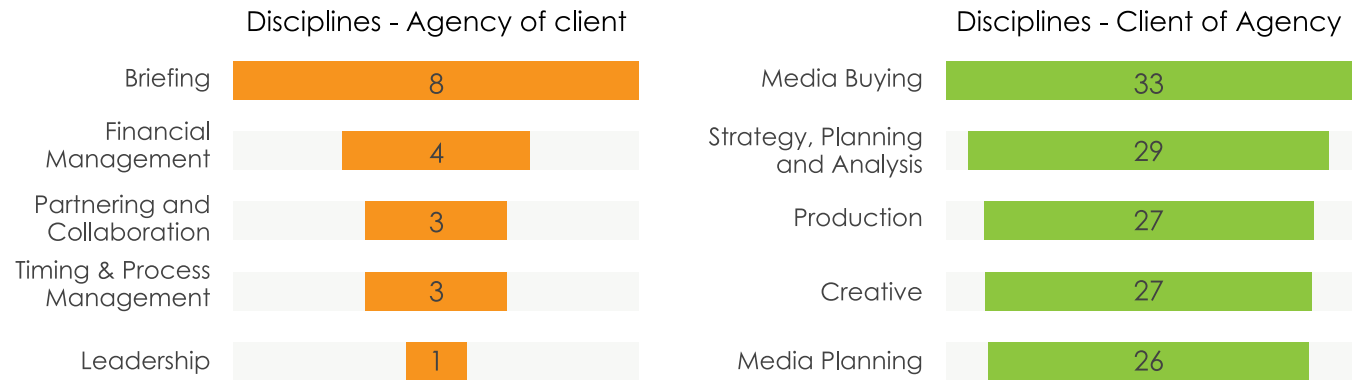
Functional opportunities to improve in Healthcare

Every question in the Aprais system is attributed to a Functional discipline. This enables companies to track and compare performance at a practical level.

Just as we have compared the top and bottom scorers of 'all categories' versus Healthcare on page 5, we can do the same comparison by Functions and Behaviours. This reveals the opportunities for marketers and agencies to improve aspects of their performance.

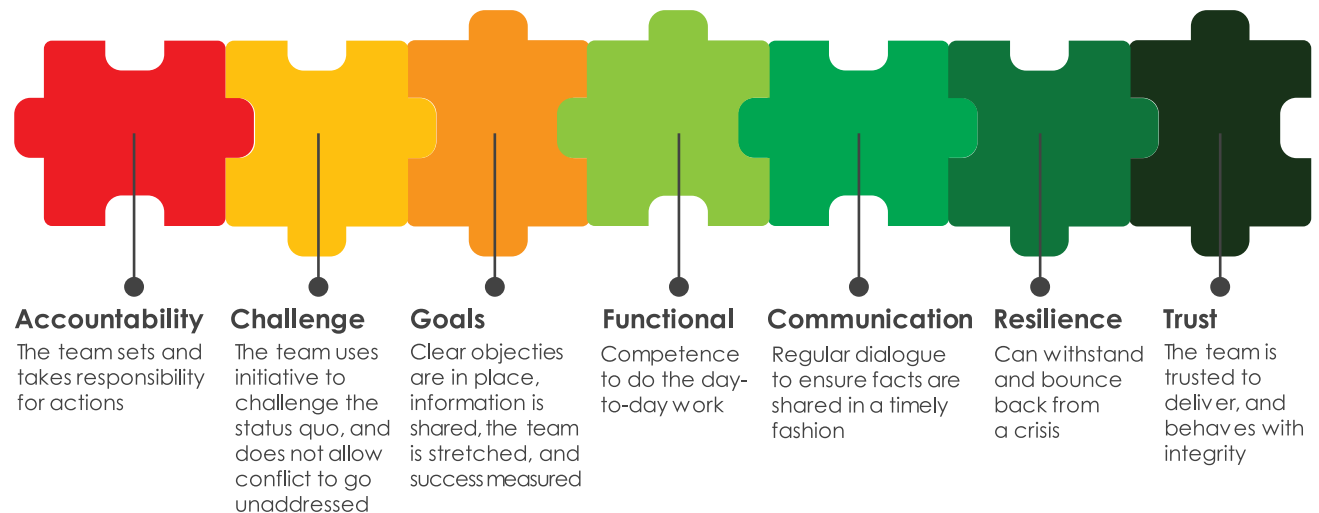
The charts below show the potential to improve in each Function. The areas where agencies have the greatest opportunities to improve are the Functional disciplines of Media Buying (33) and Strategy/ Planning & Analysis (29).

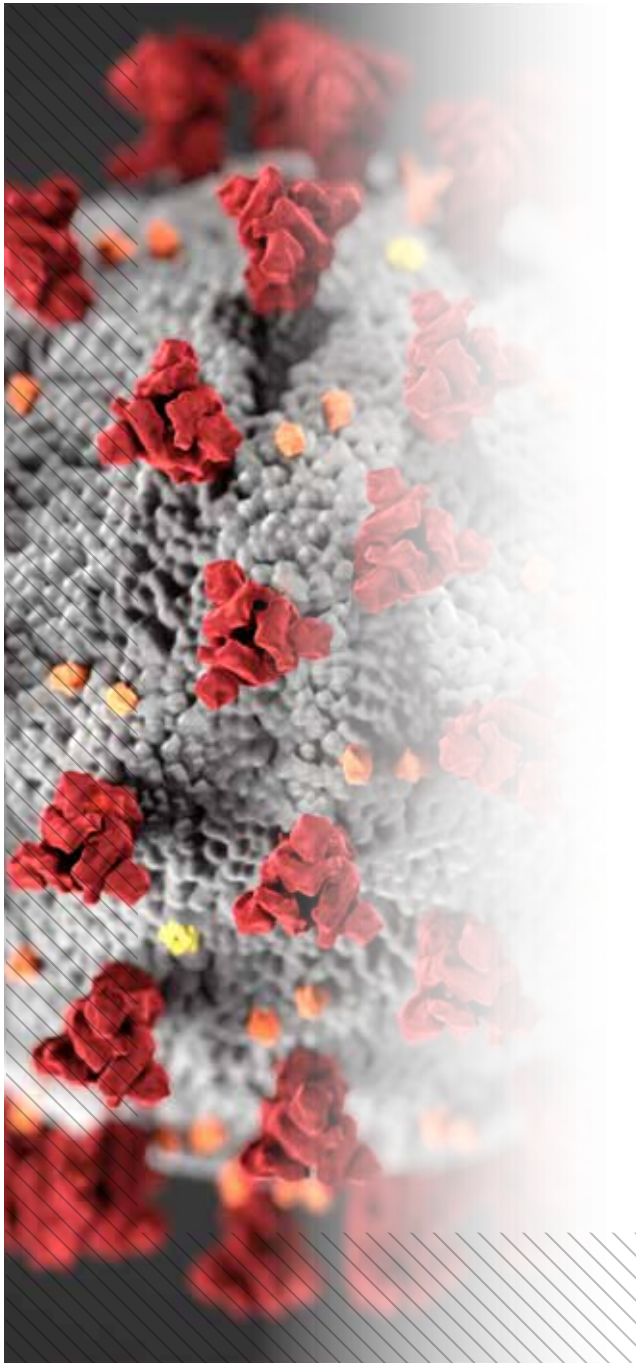
For clients, the most important area for improvement is Briefing (8).



Seven Behaviours that set the best teams apart from the rest

We assigned Behavioural traits to each core question in our extensive database of evaluations. We then analysed the database to determine the Behavioural traits that impact the effectiveness of the client-agency relationship. From this exercise we identified seven core Behaviours:





Behavioural opportunities to improve in Healthcare

Comparing the seven Behavioural traits of the top and bottom performing teams reveals the potential for improvement for clients and agencies. The larger the gap, the greater the opportunity for each to contribute toward a better relationship.

In the Healthcare category, there appears to be an opportunity for agencies to improve their Challenging Behaviour (38) and their Goal orientation (36) while clients should work on Challenge (33) and Resilience (31).



The impact of Covid-19 on client-agency relationships

Grappling with the implications of the pandemic is all consuming for client and agency teams alike. According to McKinsey, “businesses reacting to the COVID-19 pandemic have produced previously unimagined gains in speed and productivity, even as the very nature of their workplace was transformed through new ways of working, removal of boundaries and silos, rapid adoption of new technology and faster decision making that has been pushed further down in the organization¹.”

¹ How COVID-19 is redefining the next normal operating model - December 2020



Aprais clients have been advised to monitor challenges arising from the unusual working circumstances around the Covid pandemic.

Where the new challenges have been specifically evaluated, clients have captured the learnings and aligned on the key elements to carry forward whilst recognising those that did not work so well. Scores for the Covid specific results from our database indicate that relationships have grown stronger since the pandemic with appreciation from both clients and agencies of each other's agility & responsiveness.

When we return to more normal ways of working, these relationships will be well placed to continue to grow.

Here are some insights our recent studies have revealed about impact of Covid-19 on team Behaviour;

1. Human Behaviours underpin all team performance

Emotional Behaviours are becoming increasingly important in helping build strong relationships and produce good work. [Click here to read more about the 7 Behaviours identified in strong teams](#)

2. Resilience is an opportunity

Covid-19 has accentuated the importance of Resilience as a new team performance standard. [Click here to read more about Resilience](#)

3. Quality of interactions are more important than the quantity

While online tools have made us all more accessible and available, an 'always-on' culture doesn't translate into improved client-agency relationship scores. [Click here to read more about the impact of being always-on.](#)



Stronger relationships build stronger business – more evidence

The introduction to this report lists some of the reasons why we believe Stronger relationships build stronger business. While there are numerous landmark studies to support this claim, analysis of the Aprais database has also demonstrated benefits of stronger business relationships.

1. Clients get the agencies they deserve.

Our 23,000 evaluation cases show a clear correlation between the rating of clients and agencies – both good and bad. Clients that are rated better by their agencies achieve better performance from them. [Click to see the evidence](#)

2. Better client-agency relationships deliver better work.

Analysis of Effie Award winners found that winners had higher than average Aprais evaluation scores than the benchmark. [Click to see the case study](#)

3. Objective and systematic evaluation improves client-agency relationships.

Over the multiple evaluation cycles, the client evaluation of agency performance improves as does the agency score of their client. [Click to see the research](#)

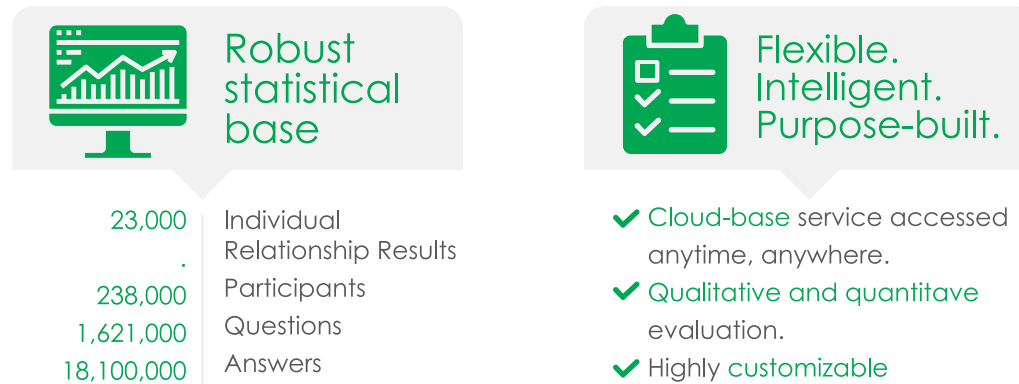
4. Clients who show financial empathy for their agency get better performance.

Clients receive a 16% higher Creative performance and get better quality teams on their account when they are sensitive to their agency's financial situation. [Click to see the case study](#)

About Aprais

At Aprais we help companies doing business with each other, improve their business relationships. We are the world leader in team performance evaluations.

Over the past 20 years, we have measured, monitored and improved client-agency and client-supplier relationships for many of the worlds' leading companies. By benchmarking results from more than 23,000 evaluations, we identify problems that limit client-agency value. Once identified, we help change team Behaviour through training and workshops to unlock business potential.



Our experience with Healthcare brands

Many Healthcare companies have used Aprais as part of their marketing & agency performance management programme enabling us to create a specific and robust benchmark for the Healthcare category.

Contact and Follow us

Request a demo: carolina.motta@aprais.com

Request a free consultation for your organisation:
aprais@aprais.com

Learn more on www.aprais.com

