



Helping your business grow

Working with AAR 2021



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An introduction to AAR



What we believe in

The pandemic notwithstanding, every brand in the world is under attack and the competition is getting faster and fiercer by the year. Budgets are being pressured by shrinking margins yet must be stretched across more and more touchpoints.

The on-going blizzard of technology promises to save the day, but often brings as many problems as answers. People are questioning how they're being marketed to. More fundamentally, they're asking if the 'Consumer Age' is even sustainable.

As a result, brands everywhere are seeking fresh perspectives from their external partners and advisors to help confront these challenges. It's those business partnerships that can explore both the challenges and innovative solutions with a creative mindset that will be better equipped to grow successfully.

It's why we at AAR believe that fresh perspectives are the 'Creative Capital' a business needs to solve the challenges it faces. And it's those businesses that focus on investing in Creative Capital across internal and external partners that will convert it into profitable growth.

How we can help

You don't need us to tell you what a competitive place the agency world can be. But by helping brands to unlock Creative Capital in their marketing ecosystems, we can advise agencies not only on how to maximise conversion of new business opportunities but also give you the insight to structure and upskill internally to meet these demands, and ultimately help you retain and grow business.

The support we offer is based on an annual subscription and covers 4 main areas:

- 1. Context:** Every year our expert team of consultants have a huge number of conversations with senior marketers, agency leaders, consultants, innovators and technology specialists. This gives us a distinct edge of knowledge and insight of the marketing landscape to bring a fresh perspective and vital context to the challenges of growing your business.
- 2. Winning new business:** In an oversupplied market, it's especially tough as clients have the luxury of choice and the comfort that capabilities are readily available. We are uniquely placed to help you create and maintain your competitive edge as you grow, and ensure you are differentiated enough to stand out from your competitors.
- 3. Retaining client business:** Clients are asking some fundamental questions on how they create the right blend of internal and external capabilities to deliver more effective marketing as efficiently as possible. In the face of this level of change, retaining business and adapting to the needs of clients has never been more important.
- 4. Community:** We are privileged to sit at one of the major intersections of the marketing ecosystem where we can facilitate discussion, debate and networking in our regular Town Halls, social events and connections with all the trade bodies; supporting a collective voice for the community around the key issues of the day.

All delivered through a mixture of consultancy, training, events and research that works best for you.

Your benefits at a glance

Your subscription gives you access to a rich mix of knowledge and experience which can be accessed through consultancy, training, events and research in a way that suits you and your business best.

Context

- What is on the minds of CMO's
- Creating a strong positioning to compete
- Developing a strong retention strategy that meets client needs

Winning new business

- Business Development Apprenticeship course
- Telling your most powerful story
- Building chemistry in your first meeting
- Secrets of successful pitching
- Access to a unique tool created and managed by AAR that summarises information on account moves from 1997 onwards

Retaining client business

- Developing a culture of curiosity
- Getting your retention MI right: three products to measure the strength of your relationship
- Agency hourly rates benchmark data

Community

- Our programme of seminars runs throughout the year, is aimed at developing the core skills required and tackling issues of the day
- We provide the space for you to share and discuss experiences that affect the whole industry

How we can help

Each agency is assigned a lead consultant, who acts as your primary contact and will work with you to devise a plan of support across the year. They can then pull in colleagues based on your needs to ensure you're benefitting from all of our combined expertise and knowledge. Some of our training is open to all agencies and charged on a delegate rate, but as a subscriber you will always receive a discount.

1. Context is everything

Our consultants help agencies in two main ways:

- They understand the sector you operate in as well as your competitors, both existing and newly emerging. They can provide valuable insight, aimed at helping you compete for new business and develop existing relationships more effectively.
- They also understand the lifecycle of agencies and how to navigate the challenges you face as you grow as a business.

By tapping into AAR's unique knowledge of the market, you'll be able to access a valuable resource for your agency to be more competitive and stronger as a business going forward.

Here's some of our most popular sessions.

What is on the minds of CMO's?

An overview of the latest insights from clients and the current market dynamics of relevance to your agency, supported by our latest research projects among senior clients. What they would like to see more or less of, as well as what might be missing.

In addition to providing one-on-one sessions, we regularly share our findings with agencies throughout the year through our **podcasts, seminars, research papers**, Town Halls and in our newsletters.

Positioning your agency to win business

For any agency to compete in a very crowded marketplace, it's important to have a strong point of view that positions your approach not only against your peers but also particular client problems. This is your brand story and we are the perfect audience to test it with and seek a fresh perspective from.

Our goal is to help sharpen the positioning for your agency and find the most distinctive way you can tell that story while avoiding the word bingo that prevails in most

agency credentials we see. By creating your own strong narrative, we will help you stand out from the crowd and be more memorable to the clients you meet.

Once your positioning is in place, the key to successfully converting your opportunities lies in the ability to articulate your core story for different situations and channels to market. Again, our insight will help you refine your message against typical scenarios so you can identify the tactics you could deploy to beat the competition.

A growth strategy is not the same as a retention strategy

Because growth should be part of a wider retention strategy.

Research tells us that the average tenure of a UK relationship sits around the four year mark, so if your tenure rates are above average or falling short, what does this mean for your retention strategy?

We believe there needs to be a significant shift in culture within agencies to focus on retention as much as new business. We also believe there needs to be a significant change within our industry when, in an oversupplied market, pitching the business is too often seen as the first rather than the last port of call.

Our focus for this session is not only to share our insights into what makes and destroys relationships, but also provide a framework and approach to creating a more sustainable culture of retention, and ultimately growth.

"If your primary interest is your growth, then that's what's evident in what you do, what you ask and what you suggest. It's blindingly obvious that your focus is not my business growth. And you've already lost my trust."

AAR Account Management Research

2. Winning new business

To complement our consultancy services, we have created a range of training modules that 'package up' our knowledge for the wider 'pitch squad' within your agency.

So, whether participants are new to new business or experienced, these training sessions offer a blend of theory and practice that will make your agency stand out from its competitors.

Below gives you a sense of the range of support we provide but we are, of course, happy to tailor something for you. Just give your lead consultant a call to discuss further.

Business Development Apprenticeship

Responding to many discussions with agency leaders, we created an intense five-session course singularly designed to get people who are coming into business development for the first time up to speed as quickly as possible.

Accredited by the IPA and IDM as contributing towards the Continuous Professional Development award scheme, the course provides both practical and theoretical advice, including recommendations on new business strategy, business development from existing clients, targeting and pitching techniques. In addition, participants gain practical experience of completing RFI's, participating in Chemistry Meetings and receiving feedback.

We are now in our ninth year of running the highly successful Business Development Apprenticeship and have seen well over 350 new business people 'graduate' over that time.

AAR subscribers are entitled to a discount on course fees, so if you have any delegates who are new to new business and could benefit from a basic introduction to the world of business development, then please **email** or visit the **website** for full details of the course.

How to tailor credentials that stand out

This session is aimed at those within the agency who complete 'Requests for Information' or produce tailored credentials on a regular basis. For the client, this is an incredibly comparative exercise. While they may have an idea of what the key criteria is for their brief, it is useful to remember that it may have been some time since they scanned the market to see what's out there and this is your opportunity to show them the art of the possible.

So, we find the initial criteria is, more often than not, challenged by what agencies are currently doing. This creates 'context' for how your submission may be viewed and this session is designed to help you understand how the client reads and digests what you send them and how to avoid the common pitfalls while being true to your positioning as an agency. There is the option to take this a stage further and get your team to complete an RFI for real and submit it to us for a critique.

Building Chemistry in your first meeting

First impressions count and now we have shifted meetings to Teams or Zoom they have become harder to achieve, with the client unable to visit your offices.

We have probably sat in more Chemistry meetings than anyone else, so this session is aimed at sharing our experience with your wider 'pitch squad'. We will take you through the key areas that matter and provide insights into how clients approach these meetings as well as the advice we give them along the way. As a follow-up, we can extend this session to include role play by allowing a week's prep and rehearsal before presenting to AAR and agency Senior Management as a dummy client.

Secrets of successful pitching

New business has probably never been more important to agencies. In an increasingly competitive environment, every opportunity needs to be maximised, from the initial Chemistry Meeting to the final Pitch and beyond. Learn what you should be doing more, and less, of. In this interactive workshop, participants are encouraged to share their own experiences and there's an opportunity to hear some "horror stories" to make you feel better!

We'll share what's really important to clients and help you see these meetings from their perspective; gain some practical ideas that you can implement on your next new business opportunity; be able to ask those specific questions that have been bugging you about new business...and get answers! This session is designed for all those involved in new business, at any level.

AARnewbizmoves.co.uk – our proprietary account moves database

All AAR subscribers are entitled to password protected access to our **new biz moves database**.

This is a unique tool created and managed by AAR that summarises information on account moves from 1997 onwards. Subscribers can run reports on companies, brands and sectors of their choice, customising data ranges, geographical scope and media types. In addition, we compile data on the UK new business market including six monthly, year on year, five year and ten year analysis.

We also deliver a free weekly update email each Tuesday to subscribers registered on the site covering all reported new business activity over the previous seven days.

A separate introduction to **new biz moves database** and how it can help you is available on request.

To register on the site, please email and we'll create an account for you.

3. Retaining client business

As retention and organic growth of business from existing clients becomes increasingly important, we have a wealth of insights, the tools to help diagnose the strength of your client relationship and the ability to benchmark yourselves with your peer group.

Developing a culture of curiosity

A few years ago, AAR was the first to raise the alarm that something was going wrong in Account Management and its impact on both new and existing business. We have worked with agencies to reinvent the role and remit, concluding with a focused list of key attributes needed.

Using independent research to add to our insights and experience, we took this list out to clients. We wanted to explore not only the Account Management function itself, but also contextualise their views against their current and future needs.

The one attribute that, above all others, the clients latched onto was 'curiosity'. At a time of increased demands for new working models and transformational thinking, we explore in this session what lies behind this need and how you might respond by developing a culture of curiosity.

Getting your retention MI right

To build the right retention and business development strategy, you need access to useful MI about the strength of your client relationships.

We have developed three tools that can be used to have an informed debate and discussion both internally and with your clients.

RADAAR

Our proprietary approach to help you create a bespoke, adaptable and useful online client satisfaction index tool that works across your whole client base to deliver useful, relevant and trackable MI and ultimately drive better client retention.

We'll consult with you to understand your brand values, ethos and what's important to you as an agency to develop an approach that reflects your brand and what you stand for as opposed to a generic solution. It's designed to be highly diagnostic as both a client satisfaction index and tracker that can be used by your teams in the here and now, as well as a collated "all client" dashboard making it invaluable for your management team or board.

AAR Health Check

A mutual client/agency relationship review recommended during your first year of working with a new client, whether project based or retained. Health Check pinpoints and diagnoses what's working well, what needs a tweak and what needs changing to enhance overall output, considering both the how and the what.

There is a specific focus on the original objectives, intent and ambitions from the pitch that most annual reviews lack which we think is critical once the realities of working together vs expectations are known. In our experience, that's usually six to nine months in, depending on the overall scope of work and the scale of any transition.

Using an AAR-developed online survey that's quick, simple and time efficient for both client and agency teams to complete, Health Check doesn't detract from critical priorities or day to day delivery. It's also entirely mutual, with both client and agency committing to the review process, with clear recommendations using the results as well as AAR insights from other "new" client/agency relationships to recommend the right action plan to enhance overall efficiency and effectiveness.

AAR Deep Dive Review

A mutual client/agency relationship review which can be delivered at any stage of a client/agency relationship, from year one onwards. It works across any scope of work, all disciplines, all categories and relationships whether UK based, pan European or global, project based or retained relationships. This review offers a deeper dive than RADAAR, providing valuable MI and insights and clear recommendations to improve performance.

This review can be undertaken as a one-off project triggered by change e.g. client leadership, scope and scale of work. Or it can be undertaken as an ongoing annual review programme, if strategically it's a critical account for the agency and therefore worth regular investment.

The Deep Dive Review is highly diagnostic, providing an objective assessment of crucial capabilities and behaviours that drive performance and enable client /agency relationships to thrive. The output delivers a dashboard report of MI, enabling strengths, issues and development areas to be identified, blocks and barriers to be flagged and assessed, and the right solutions recommended for next steps.

"I want my agencies to challenge me, challenge themselves to think again, bring me new relevant ideas, show they are listening and thinking about my challenges."

AAR Account Management Research

Agency hourly rates benchmark data

Every two years, AAR undertakes research into the agency hourly rates in core departments and job functions across the industry. Our most recent study was completed in spring/summer 2020.

Subscribing agencies receive access to this unique data set, including peer group data and an 'all agency' data set comprising average, high and low figures from all agencies in all disciplines covered, enabling you to compare and contrast your own hourly rates against a comparable industry average.

Your lead consultant will be able to provide you with the latest hourly rates figures from our research.

4. Community

A strong agency community is an essential part of a healthy and successful marketing ecosystem. We invest a significant amount of time in understanding what is working and what is not working, so we can identify and resolve these performance issues through discussion and debate in our one-on-one sessions, at our Town Halls or set about resolving them through our continuous seminar programme.

Town Halls

Our online Town Halls are designed to bring key groups together to share experiences and discuss issues of the day. Currently we are running them for the following groups and we'll ask you to nominate the key contacts for invitations:

- Leadership
- New Business
- Client Service
- Mental Health First Aiders

Your seminar programme

The topics covered in the seminar programme are constantly evolving as it is designed by you to help tackle some of the strategic issues of the day that can affect performance, as well as those around developing core skills and introducing new ones to keep your teams running to the maximum of their potential.

We are running our 2021 seminar programme online. Each agency is offered a maximum of 5 places per seminar and the slots are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. We'll contact you by email to let you know when bookings are open for each topic so please make sure we have the correct details on file. Typically, bookings open three weeks in advance of each seminar.

We've worked with the IPA and the IDM to secure CPD accreditation for our seminar programme, thus helping your employees fully integrate these seminars with the rest of their training.

Finally

Through our network of contacts we are confident that if we can't help directly, we'll quickly be able to put you in touch with someone who can. Your lead consultant will be able to offer support and advice should you have specific queries.

"Thank you AAR for a brilliant and insightful piece of work which will only help us to be better for our clients. And for continuing to be great partners."

Agency – Managing Director



Core Seminar Programme 2021

Team Resilience and Mental Health Weds 27 January
Vonnie Alexander

Curiosity at the heart of account management Weds 17 February
Paul Burns

Pitching in COVID times Weds 17 March
Tessa Morton

Client servicing during COVID Weds 21 April
Abigail Dixon

The importance of agency culture Weds 19 May
Jenny Williams

Consultative Selling Weds 16 June
Lizzie Palmer

New topic TBC Weds 15 September
Anthony Tasgal

Redefining Account Management Weds 13 October
Joanna Howes

What CMO's are wanting from their agencies Weds 17 November
Gareth Turner

Meet the team



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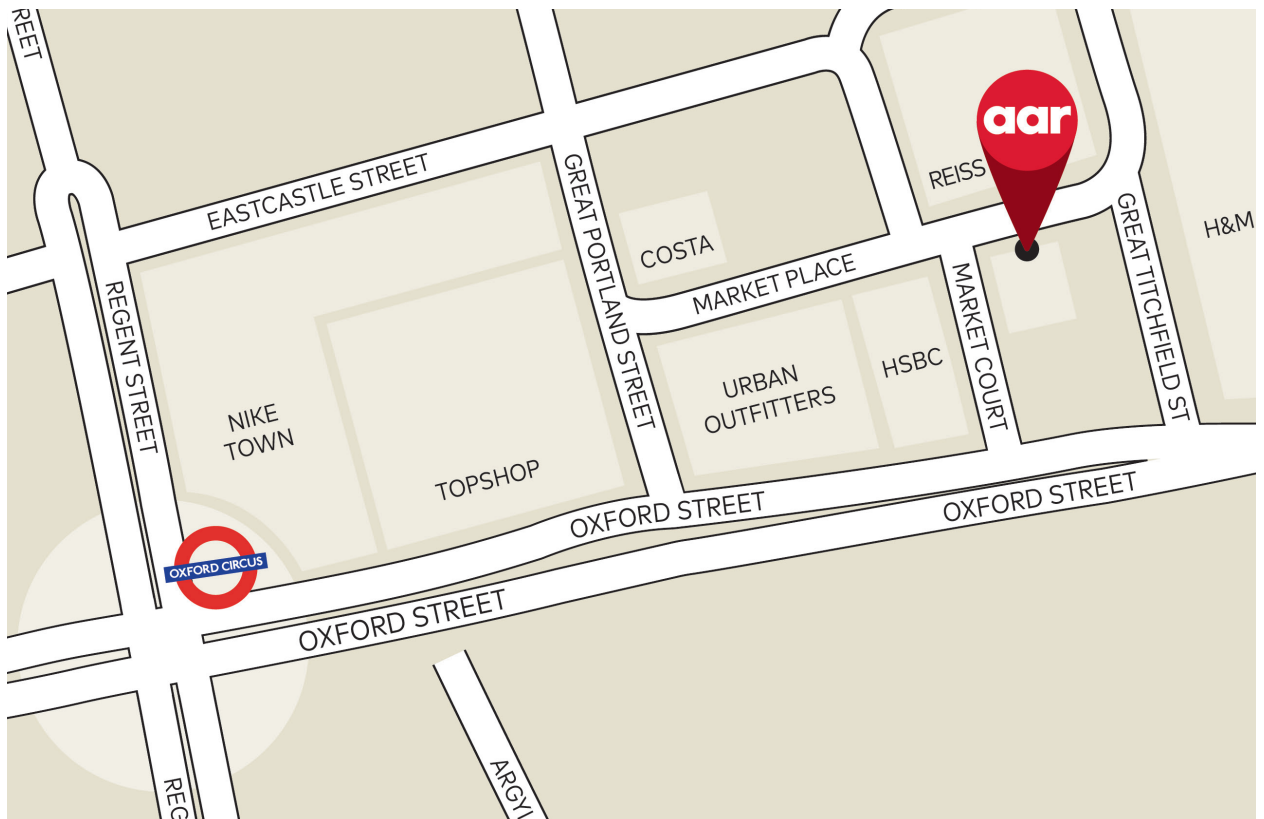


For any queries regarding AAR subscription, the training and consultancy outlined above or how we can help your business grow, please drop us a line at info@aargroup.co.uk or give us a call on **020 7612 1200**.

We'd love to speak with you.

How to find us

From Oxford Circus Tube Station, walk east along Oxford Street, past Top Shop. Turn first left into Great Portland Street. Turn right into Market Place (Urban Outfitters and Costa Coffee bridge the entrance to Market Place). AAR is just past Market Court, on the right. Opposite Reiss and next to HSBC. Number 26.





AAR: Experts in Marketing Ecosystems

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