



All entrants have to obtain formal permission from clients for their Awards entry to be published.

This permission cannot be taken for granted and some entrants have been understandably frustrated by a refusal to grant approval, with this decision sometimes arriving late when work has been done on an entry. With this in mind we recommend you set up a face-to-face meeting with your client from the very start.

It is in all our interests that clients should be encouraged to permit entry to the Awards unless there are very sound reasons to withhold it. Below, we offer suggestions - some for good practice and some for arguments which can be deployed to ensure that your client makes an informed decision and that your effort is not wasted on unpublished cases.

The main, if not the only, reason for refusal to grant permission is concern that publication will bring confidential, commercially significant client data into the public arena.

It is important to restate at the outset, therefore, that the risk of this disclosure is inherently small and often non-existent.

Any commercially important data can be put in an entry version that will be seen by judges but not included in the published version of the entry, and they can also be masked by using selective quotation or indices to represent scale of impact rather than actual business figures.

The fact is that data can be up to three years old when it is submitted in an IAPI Awards entry. It will be a further five months out of date by the time the final case is published because of the lag between submission and the publication of the winning cases.

In reality, almost all data used in entries will be at least one year old. By the time this data is made public, therefore, it is either likely to be out of date or well known by the brand's competitors.

However, some companies, have strict policies about disclosing any information regarding their business. It may not be possible to get around these, so it is worth finding this out early on.

Conversely, do not assume that permission will be withheld until you have asked and done your best to persuade the client in question. Such disclosure rules typically relate to new information. They do not tend to apply if information is already in the public domain by means of annual reports and public filings etc.



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Below, we list further suggestions and arguments that may help you make the case for publication:

- 1 Maximise your chances of getting permission to publish by identifying and contacting early on the individual who needs to give approval. If it is a very senior person, an approach by a top agency person may help oil the wheels and emphasise the importance that the agency attaches to the Awards.
- 2 Seek approval from the most senior client possible not just the Marketing Director. An approach to the top usually flushes out any issues and gives plenty of time for a rational debate. It is a fatal error to get a 'soft' authorisation at the Marketing Director level or below, only for that person to decide that – having seen the final paper – he or she needs to get sign-off higher in the organisation. At a very late stage and under time pressure, it is hardly surprising that a Managing Director or CEO will often opt to say 'No' to a request for publication.
- 3 Assure clients that they will be able to vet the entry paper in question before entry and that you will submit it to them in sufficient time for them to read it and for you to make any changes. Do your best to find out about the key person's availability in Feb-April as per the supplied timeline. Do not forget that reading your case study is unlikely to be a priority for them, so the earlier you can provide them with a final draft, the better.

Consequently, you need to finish your final draft well before the closing date – and we would suggest doing this absolutely **no later than two weeks before you need to submit** the case as part of the entry process.

- 4 Establish as early as you can any sensitivities for the client, and see if you can agree ground rules for excluding or disguising via selective quotation or indexing (often financial data is most sensitive). Try to clarify how the client thinks any particularly sensitive information could be used by a rival. Marketing activity is by its nature in the public domain and even the thinking behind it is history after a year or two. Much basic market data (Nielsen, etc.) is likely to be available to major competitors anyway who will be tracking their rival's activity.



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- 5 It is also true that most qualitative research about attitudes and behaviour in a given market will be revealed to competitors in their own discussions and tracking studies.

- 6 Some clients worry about exposing their strategic thinking to competitors. However, as John Brady, of McKinsey, argues, this does not appear to be much of a problem in reality. Any competitor can know everything there is to know about a retail brand like McDonald's and yet no-one has managed to copy it.

- 7 Some clients have a misguided view that only an agency will benefit from winning an award. Point out that the IAPI ADFX Awards benefit advertisers by improving the industry's overall standards of evaluation and by making establishing proof of effectiveness a higher priority for agencies. The very existence of the Awards scheme depends on clients allowing cases to be published in detail.

An ADFX paper can also be of invaluable use within the client's own organisation. It can be used to vindicate the key role that marketing plays in the organisation and to validate the effectiveness of investment in advertising, media and marketing communications to the company's main board.

In addition, the Awards reward both the client and the agency while creating good PR for the brand.

- 10 Across many years of publishing the Awards cases, there are no known instances of a competitive disadvantage being suffered by a brand as a result of being featured in a case study. Doubtful clients should take comfort from the fact that even the famously secretive P&G has entered effectiveness awards.

- 11 Advertising agencies are not only motivated by money. A successful paper will improve the client's profile within the agency and the team's motivation to work on the client's business.



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- 12 If you have a client who has published and been successful in the past, you might even try and enlist their help in persuading a more reluctant client.

- 13 The evidence suggests that if a client and agency form a team to produce an entry paper, it can have a beneficial effect on their working relationship. Writing an effectiveness case may involve getting answers to questions the client and agency don't often ask, and it means they will probably get a lot of useful analysis and extra work done for the brand.

- 14 If you think it would help, IAPI is happy to meet with any client who may have concerns about allowing an entry.

If you would like to take us up on this offer, please contact Jay Taberner by email - jay@iapi.com or call IAPI on 01 676 5991.