



The
Comms
Avenue

AGENCY OR CLIENT SIDE: MAKING THE MOVE



WPRD A Special World PR Day
WORLD PR DAY (WPRD) 2024 Publication

INTRODUCTION

Working in the Communications and Public Relations industry can be an exciting adventure but it can also be a daunting maze to navigate.

To choose the best career path, professionals have to answer a number of key questions such as: “Should I become a specialist or a generalist?” or “Should I work on the agency side or the client side?”

The question of whether to explore career opportunities on the agency side or client side – or both – is an important consideration because they represent two distinct paths that PR professionals can choose to pursue, each offering its own unique set of experiences, challenges, and opportunities.

With either side having its own advantages and disadvantages, how can professionals within the industry determine which side will be best for their career growth?

How can they leverage the benefits of each side of the divide? These are some of the questions that we seek to provide answers to through this Guide.



Put together by The Comms Avenue, this Guide, *'Agency or Client Side: Making the Move'*, is a comprehensive resource that contains perspectives of seasoned professionals who have navigated both sides of this divide.

Through their candid narratives and personal career experiences, Communications professionals will be empowered with the knowledge and wisdom necessary to make informed decisions about which side of the divide they want to pitch their tent.

Whether you are just starting out or contemplating a career transition, this Guide will serve as a go-to resource to make your journey or transition smoother.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS



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SECTION

GETTING INTO THE INDUSTRY

AGENCY-CLIENT SIDE GUIDE

1. Getting Into The Industry

The Public Relations industry attracts individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences. While some already have their eyes set on working in the PR industry from the onset, others simply stumble into it by chance. For both groups, however, the reality of carving a suitable career path within the industry soon becomes evident.

For professionals currently practicing within the PR industry, there are similarities and differences in how they entered into the industry and began their professional journeys.

In this section, we spotlight three paths to getting into the industry as highlighted by our contributors. While there are several ways to get into the PR industry, it is clear that there must be some commitment to understanding the role of PR and the outcomes that can be delivered for any organisation.

Education

The first path to entry into the PR industry is through formal education. This ranges from having a Bachelor's or Master's degree in Public Relations or Communications, to obtaining a recognised professional certification.

Whether you stumble into PR or you've always had a passion for the field, continuous education is a key requirement for building a successful career within the industry.

When I studied Mass Comm as an undergrad, PR was the course that fascinated me. I was interested in building and changing narratives. I also loved curating and organizing events, so naturally I was drawn to PR. **Mafue Forchu**

I studied Mass Communication in the university and majored in Public Relations and Advertising. I enjoyed specific courses in Public Relations and my first role in the industry introduced me to Public Relations. **Nancy Ladeinde**

Transition

It is not news that there is a synergy between Journalism and Communications. Several professionals within the industry have transitioned from a career in Journalism to become Communications practitioners.

Increasingly, however, there has been a wave of career transitions into the industry from fields such as Law, Finance, Engineering, and even Medicine. So, your academic background does not have to be a hindrance in your journey within the Communications industry.

While the industry welcomes professionals from different backgrounds, making the transition requires determination, the willingness to learn and the ability to spot and leverage transferable skills.

I had spent over a decade in business journalism and Corporate Communications at a bank and got an opportunity to roll up my sleeves for a leading PR agency in Lagos.

I knew instinctively that this was a golden opportunity to grow professionally, learn a lot more than I could ever learn working for one company or client, taste the sweet and sour realities of agency side experience, and deepen my proficiency. **Olumuyiwa Moyela**

Somehow, I found out about PR and wanted to do that instead of Journalism. Maybe I didn't like the part where I had to go out on assignments to do stories but rather preferred to be behind the scenes and work on brands. **Faith Senam Ocloo**

Honestly, for the longest time since I was in university in South-West Nigeria, I always wanted to be a Corporate Communications Manager. I had no clue what it really was, but I knew I was talented in communications. Broadcast journalism helped me to gather communication skills that were transferable to Public Relations. **Aniwura Omolayo**

I simply felt it was a good idea to expand my knowledge in Communications by taking PR certification exams having practised as a broadcast journalist for four years. **Omotayo Okewunmi**

Interest and Passion

The third route is the good old “interest and passion’ route. Some of the skills required to succeed in the Communications field include writing, storytelling and strategic thinking.

If you already have these skills and you want to hone them further, they can be leveraged as points of entry into the Communications industry. Several professionals have done this successfully and continue to do so.

My passion for PR stems from a deep love for storytelling and a desire to help people see things differently. In PR, I find the perfect blend of creativity and impact where I can craft compelling narratives that connect with audiences on an emotional level.

This profession allows me to challenge perceptions and present information in ways that broaden understanding and open minds to new possibilities. **Thato Matobele**

My inherent ability to connect with people and my passion for writing and storytelling drew me to pursue a career in Public Relations. I am energised by the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of the field.

I thrive on the opportunity to engage with journalists and play a pivotal role in shaping and enhancing clients' images, reputations, and brand awareness through effective stakeholder engagement; and to apply my skills across different cultural landscapes, particularly in Africa and Europe. **Cyrille Djami**

I enjoy telling stories and managing reputations. Public Relations is the art of managing reputations through captivating stories. That is what drew me to pursue a career in it. The key is to use storytelling as a tool to manage reputations and influence perceptions in your favour. **Tokiso Molefe**

I was drawn to a profession in Corporate Communications because it provided me with the opportunity to blend creativity with strategic thinking and it gave me the platform to drive positive change within an organisation. **Basetsana Morekure**



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SECTION

STARTING OUT: AGENCY OR CLIENT SIDE?

AGENCY-CLIENT SIDE GUIDE

2. Starting Out: Agency or Client Side?

Making the decision to build a successful career in Communications is one thing; deciding how to begin this career journey is another. Professionals are faced with two key options: To work on the agency side or on the client side? While it may look easy on paper, choosing the route to go with can be a challenging task because both sides have their unique benefits, challenges and opportunities.

On one hand, it is believed that having agency experience first serves as a good foundation for professional success. On the other hand, there is a school of thought that as long as you understand the principles of communication and develop your ability to deliver the required results, it doesn't really matter whether you have agency experience or not.

In this section, we explore both sides of the divide from the perspective of our contributors and we leave you to decide what side works best for you. Yes, ultimately, it is your decision to make!

► The Agency Perspective

Working in an agency opens practitioners to a world of diverse professional experiences. One day you are working on a campaign for a lifestyle brand; the next, you're handling a crisis communications brief for a financial institution.

That's how dynamic working in an agency can be.

Not only will you develop expertise in the core Communications and PR competencies, you will also gain a broader understanding of the Communications landscape and master how to work collaboratively with multiple teams and stakeholders.



Whether you're just starting your Communications journey or you are contemplating a shift in your career path, the insights in this section will shed light on why many professionals within the industry choose to gain agency experience.

Benefits of Working on the Agency Side

Without a doubt, there are many benefits of working on the agency side. From the vast opportunities for professional growth to the ability to build a solid professional network, our contributors attest to how valuable working in an agency has been for them.

These are some of the key benefits highlighted by our contributors:

Some of the benefits of working in an agency include the ability to develop the confidence, competence and diverse skills to thrive in the PR industry.

Working on the agency side is almost like enrolling for a Master's in PR and getting paid for it. It is a win-win in my opinion, and it paves way for greater opportunities when it comes to working on the client side. **Toyosi Ajayi**

Working in an agency has played a crucial role in shaping and redefining my career and professional development.

One of the key benefits of working in an agency is the opportunity to gain hands-on experience working on different briefs and campaigns for a wide range of clients across multiple sectors. This helps you to understand the varied principles, nuances and contexts that apply to various sectors and industries. **Nana Akua Frimpomaa Amofa**

The fast-paced nature of agency work keeps you constantly engaged and challenged. This environment is ideal for developing quick thinking, problem-solving skills, and the ability to manage tight deadlines. Juggling several projects at once enhances your multitasking and time management abilities, making you adept at prioritising tasks and handling high-pressure situations. **Eunice Hansen-Sackey**

Working in an agency will give you the opportunity to attend lots of client and industry events which will give you an opportunity to meet new people. **Oluwatoyosi Yusuff**

Challenges of Working on the Agency Side

While there are many benefits to be gained from working on the agency side, our contributors also note that there are some challenges which include working in a high-pressure environment, a lack of defined career progression, low compensation and so on.

Here are some key challenges to be aware of:

Agencies often operate under strict deadlines to meet client demands which can create a high-stress environment. Managing multiple clients with high expectations can be overwhelming, especially when dealing with demanding or difficult clients.

In addition, the nature of agency work often requires long hours, including evenings and weekends, especially during major campaigns or crises.

Career advancement in agencies can also be competitive and uncertain. Promotions and raises may not always align with individual performance.

Furthermore, agencies often require employees to be generalists to serve a variety of clients, which can limit opportunities for deep specialisation in a particular area of PR. **Irene Toyon**

One challenge will be the lack of depth per project or organisation because you basically do the work and move on to other projects and this may be unsatisfactory for some.

Another thing to mention is the pay; the agency side often does not pay as well as the client side. **Olayinka Edmond**

Some of the challenges professionals working on the agency side have to deal with include poor work/life balance, lack of specialisation, ethical concerns (for example, marking up budgets and billable hours), job insecurity, and the lack of recognition for efforts put in. **Francis Jakpor**

One of the primary drawbacks of working in a PR agency is that the salary is often lower compared to the client side. Agencies do not offer the same level of benefits that are typically available on the client side.

Job security in agencies can be less stable when compared to corporate positions. Agency employment often depends on the acquisition and retention of clients. If a major client leaves, it can impact the agency's financial stability and, consequently, the job security of its employees.

While working with multiple clients can be exciting, it also means that you may not get the opportunity to dive deeply into the strategic and long-term planning of a single brand. **Thato Latobebe**

The work never stops, especially during peak periods. You can find yourself working all day and every day.

What I have learnt to do at such times is to pace myself. **Santher Mbacham**

▶ The Client Side Perspective

Usually less hectic and fast-paced, working on the client side gives professionals the opportunity to dive deeper into the core of an organisation and implement well-tailored strategies that are aligned to the strategic priorities of the organisation.

When leveraged properly, this deep understanding of the organisation and its goals can put professionals in a position where they become trusted advisors within organisation.

If you believe working on the client side may just be for you, our contributors share their perspectives on the value of working on the client side and how this has shaped their careers.

▶ Benefits of Working on the Client Side

One common benefit that stands out from the client side is job stability. Unlike the agency side where the acquisition and retention of clients largely determines staffing levels, professionals who work on the client side tend to enjoy greater levels of job security.

From better remuneration to a clearer path to developing deep expertise in specialist communication areas, these are some of the benefits that our contributors have found useful:

On the client side, you have a laser focus on a single brand/industry which leads to a deep understanding of that particular industry.

There is also a greater sense of ownership and direct influence on decision-making. **Basetsana Morekure**

The biggest benefit, in my opinion, is the opportunity to work on very varied projects that cover different sectors of activity within an organisation.

It is a very enriching experience that allows you to rapidly increase your expertise and you also gain mastery of the entire operational chain of activities. **Siliki Nsangue Akwa**

From my experience, the benefits are just as much as being on the agency side. The individual makes it worth it, or otherwise.

Knowledge garnered on both sides is invaluable to building a great career for those that have the opportunity to. Those that don't have are not missing anything, trust me.

One thing I advocate for both sides is to avoid treating each other as strangers. You must work as partners and as a team to achieve greater impact. Position is transient but friendship and partnership will build a mutually beneficial relationship for the present and the future.

Enjoy whichever side you are on, and be a person of value.
Godfrey Adejumoh

There is versatility in the tasks to be done so it is rare to get bored because of monotony. On the client side, there is also relatively higher remuneration and benefits, as well as more opportunities for work-life balance. **Esther Njangali Asimwe**

Working on the client side often involves close collaboration with various departments. This integrated approach enables a holistic understanding of the company's operations.

Corporate organisations offer professional development opportunities, including training programmes, workshops, and the chance to attend industry conferences. Corporate roles also often come with more defined career progression opportunities.
Thato Latobele

Things are more comfortable on the client side. You are the boss, with more control over vendors.

You may also find that you have some more time to take courses and do other personal things for yourself because you have the time to commit to them. **Grace Alegeh**

➤ Challenges of Working on the Client Side

Similar to the agency side, working on the client side also has its own challenges. You may need to learn how to navigate through a web of internal politics, as bureaucracy and high expectations from senior management can also bring their own pressures.

For some of our contributors, working on the client side is not as much fun as working on the agency side! We love how **Thato Latobebe** explains it: "The environment at agencies is more fun because most of the staff are young - creatives have the most fun."

Here are some of the other challenges highlighted by our contributors:

Being part of the internal team means there are high expectations for PR to deliver results that directly impact the company's reputation and bottom line. As a result, there is often pressure to continually demonstrate the value and ROI of PR activities to internal stakeholders.

Even though client-side roles may have more stable budgets, there can still be constraints and the need to justify expenditure to higher management, which can limit the scope of PR activities. **Irene Toyon**

While deeply understanding the brand is a benefit, it can also lead to limited exposure to diverse clients and industries. Internal politics and slow decision-making processes within the organisation may hinder the execution of PR initiatives, while resource constraints and dependency on internal factors can add further complexity. **Cyrille Djami**

It can be boring especially if you are the only Comms/PR Manager for that role. You could be doing the same thing year on year, since it is the same company you are working for. **Faith Senam Ocloo**

On the client side, there is a danger of an insular or narrow approach and a limited analytical capacity for problem-solving. **Olumuyiwa Moyela**



3 SECTION

MAKING THE SWITCH: WHEN AND HOW

AGENCY-CLIENT SIDE GUIDE

3. Making the Switch: When and How

The flexibility that exists within the industry gives room for practitioners to move freely from one sector or specialist area to the other. The same is true with regard to working on the agency side or client side. Even though it is not impossible to make the switch, it is essential to think strategically about how you want to make the switch and when you want to make the switch.

At the centre of this is the why - you need to make the switch for the right reasons because as we have seen, the grass is not necessarily greener on the other side.

Here are some of the reasons why our contributors made the switch:

I wanted to be a Corporate Communications Manager on the client side. Being on the agency side exposed me to clients who were in the role which I desired. I felt that being on the agency side was only a tip of the iceberg in Marketing Communications and I wanted to have the full experience.

Also, I wanted to earn so much more, and I did on the client side!
Aniwura Omolayo

Firstly, it got boring for me. I always felt like there was a lot more that could be done, but then you have to deal with office politics and the fact that some organisations do not consider Communications to be a priority. We are regarded as a cost centre with no visible ROI.

So while I could come up with the best strategies, I barely got the chance to implement them. **Mafue Forchu**

I believed I had done everything I could do on the agency side.

I also had a need to work with one client instead of working with multiple clients in different sectors like when I was in an agency.
Tokiso Molefe

I have to say that the compensation was a big motivation. I wanted to be better paid and I knew I could get that on the client side.

Having said that, I had also worked on the agency side for some time, and I felt that it was the next best move for me.

I had spent quite some time working across a wide range of industries and organisations and the experience was invaluable, but I felt it was time to put my long-term efforts towards building one brand/team/organisation, where you do the work and are around long enough to learn the lessons and see the impact.

Olayinka Edmond

I wanted to experience both sides and be a more rounded person with hands-on knowledge, insights and depth. I also wanted my experience to be practical and real time. **Godfrey Adejumoh**

I decided to combine both and gain experience from the other side to expand my earning possibility. **Omotayo Okewunmi**

The How of the Switch

Once you are clear on your why, the next step is to figure out the how. Switching from one side of the divide to the other will not happen by chance. Depending on the peculiarities of your career journey, you may find it necessary to create a plan for your switch and map out the important steps you need to take.

Thankfully, you do not have to create a plan from scratch. These are some of the steps taken by our contributors when they decided to make the switch:

Before I made the switch, I searched for organisations that needed my skill set. I ensured their mission and culture aligned with my personal values, put in the applications, tailored my CV to match their requirements, interviewed for the role and got the job. **Francis Jakpor**

I began by reflecting on my long-term career goals and why I wanted to make the switch. I considered factors such as the desire for deeper industry knowledge, greater strategic influence, and better work-life balance. I also assessed my current skill set and identified any gaps that needed to be filled to meet the requirements of client-side roles. I conducted thorough research on industries and companies where I wanted to work, focusing on sectors that aligned with my interests and expertise.

Then I created a list of target companies that were known for their strong communication teams and had a culture that appealed to me. I enrolled in courses and obtained certifications relevant to client-side PR roles and I also took on projects and volunteer opportunities that allowed me to apply client-side skills.

For each job interview I secured, I researched the company's communication needs, challenges, and recent initiatives. This allowed me to articulate how my experience and skills could address their specific needs. Finally, I prepared for common interview questions and scenarios specific to client-side roles. **Irene Toyon**

My most recent switch was into entrepreneurship/agency. So I started by identifying the right partners and building a nest egg. As I did these things I also began training and understanding the market a bit better, trying to craft a niche for what I was getting into.

We drew up a 10 year plan with my partners and then one day, I walked out of one office and straight into the other. **Cedric Nzomo**

My switch from agency to the client side was planned. After completing my Master's, I felt it was time to make a move. I learned about a job opening at one of the banks in Ghana, applied, and prepared thoroughly for the interview.

After securing the job, I began familiarising myself with the bank's operations before officially starting the job. So, I will say for such a move, get a mentor to guide you through the process and know what sector you want to work in. **Phoebe Pappoe**

When I resigned from the agency I worked for, I took a month to rest. When I was ready to apply, I detailed my PR experience, skills and results in my CV and started applying for Comms Manager roles. I got up to five offers from very good organisations to lead their Comms teams and I believe that the agency experience I had led to the favourable responses. **Toyosi Ajayi**

One of the very first steps I took was to network and glean insights from some industry professionals. I started actively looking for new roles and opportunities where I felt I could build more on my skills and experiences.

I was also very active on LinkedIn sharing my experiences and also some knowledge on Comms which played a key role in my transition and helped me land my current role. Joining professional communities and platforms also helped. **Nana Akua Frimpomaa Amofa**

First, I made time for self-reflection, then spoke to very close colleagues and family for support and encouragement. It was a phase in my career where I had ended my client-side role and decided to go back to nurture the ambition I had to handle PR for fashion, beauty and lifestyle brands. **Faith Senam Ocloo**

Typical Challenges You May Face

For the professionals who have successfully made the switch, one thing they agree on is the fact that there are obstacles to overcome. While you may not be in control of the challenges that may arise, you can learn from our contributors and use their insights to prepare for your switch. These are some of the typical challenges you may face:

It is quite an adjustment to switch to the client side because agencies are versatile, hardly bureaucratic, encourage openness and have great teamwork, which is the complete opposite on the client side.

One may take quite some time to adjust to the client side. **Esther Njangali Asimwe**

I reckon that most people might struggle with the comparative perks, pains and privileges of where they are coming from, to where they are switching to, in the PR sector.

Statistically, and from anecdotal evidence, most of the switching happens either from young folks just out of school moving into entry-level positions in PR or mid-career media practitioners who switch into full-time PR practice within an agency. Very few folks move from the client side into agencies. **Olumuyiwa Moyela**

Fear of the unknown can be a real challenge because you are not certain what the future holds. You may resolve to stay back because of this. Sometimes, this may be because of financial comfort and stability. **Santher Mbacham**

Adapting to a new work environment may be a challenge. An agency, even if it is large, is often characterised by a “family spirit”, whereas, on the client side, the environment is more formal.

When you make the switch, you will also be forced to acquire new skills which can require additional time and effort. You may also need to establish a new professional network. Doing this in an unknown sector can be a challenge. **Siliki Nsangue Akwa**

The fear of leaving your comfort zone is challenge that some may need to overcome. In addition, the fast-paced nature of the agency side could throw some people off when they switch from the client side. **Grace Alegeh**

Having the right credentials and industry experience may be required to make a switch. For some of us on the agency side, we’ve worked with clients in diverse sectors. That is valuable and you should highlight it if you’re making a switch to the client side.

On-the-job training is great on the agency side, but it might not be tangible enough for prospective employers on the client side. So, having certifications and professional qualifications is worth it. **Aniwura Omolayo**



4 SECTION

THE NOW AND THE
FUTURE: TRENDS TO
PAY ATTENTION TO

AGENCY-CLIENT SIDE GUIDE

4. The Now and The Future: Trends to Pay Attention To

Without a doubt, changes in technology, consumer behaviour and societal expectations will continue to disrupt the way we practise Communications and Public Relations. Whether you work on the agency side or on the client side, it is essential to stay on top of new and emerging trends that could positively or negatively impact your work and the results you are able to deliver.

These are some of the trends our contributors believe will significantly impact the industry in the future:

I anticipate significant shifts in the PR landscape. We will be delving deeper into digital tools like AI and data analytics to fine-tune our strategies.

Authenticity and transparency will become non-negotiables as people increasingly demand the real deal. Leveraging influencers who genuinely resonate with our brand will remain crucial.

Additionally, the virtual realm will become even more vital, requiring us to elevate our online event game. Amidst all this, maintaining a balance between storytelling, data privacy, and compliance with regulations will be key.

It's a dynamic journey, but I'm excited to navigate it. **Cyrille Djami**

I foresee a demand surge for PR specialists proficient with AI tools. In this age, clients and organisations require a much faster turnaround time for tasks compared to the past. Only PR specialists that can exploit the potential of AI to achieve this feat will remain relevant.

Also, I foresee the demand for what I'll call 'omnibus PR specialists' increasing. Specialisation might need to be sacrificed for proficiency in graphics design, video editing and production, content writing, digital marketing as well as campaign planning and execution.

Francis Jakpor

Artificial Intelligence has come and is here to stay, unfortunately, many creative tasks are being impacted by the rise of AI. Also, with the rise of freelance remote jobs, it is easy for organisations to hire people globally, so communications professionals have to be on top of their game if they want to be relevant. **Grace Alegeh**

Tech will impact the PR industry, just as it is doing in every sector. Those who learn, embrace it and evolve to use it will thrive.

In addition, the policies and the dynamics of the business operating environment are now like a flowing river. This will impact the industry. Those that will thrive must master how to manage disruptions and lead change. **Godfrey Adejumoh**

The influence of data analytics on PR, AI and automation, social media and media hybridisation, consolidations (mergers and acquisitions in the marketing communications industry), and the political environment - shocks, uncertainties and vulnerabilities. These are some of the trends that will continue to impact the industry. **Olumuyiwa Moyela**

More and more, we are seeing a rise in PR being integrated into Marketing roles. Also, there are more tools and responsibilities than ever before to get familiar with, or at least have working knowledge of them. PR professionals, on both sides, need to upskill in this regard. **Aniwura Omolayo**

Impact of the Trends on the Agency Side

According to our contributors, these is how these trends will impact the agency side:

PR agencies will need to cultivate a diverse skill set among their teams, including proficiency in digital marketing, data analytics, AI integration, and crisis management. Agencies that adapt quickly to these skill demands will be better positioned to offer comprehensive and effective PR solutions to clients. **Phoebe Pappoe**

Clients may present more detailed briefs after leveraging AI for preliminary ideas. Agencies are also keen to now recruit staff who have specific skills related to influencer management and storytelling. **Eunice Hansen-Sackey**

Increasingly, agencies will have to prove to their clients that their activities add to the bottom line. **Nancy Ladeinde**

I don't think the current agency model will last long. A lot of insourcing will occur and eventually this will mean that the few agencies that remain will either be really big or really good. And everyone currently thriving on mediocrity will be replaced by AI and insourcing. **Cedric Nzomo**

I think a professional specialising in a particular industry within an agency could be a great asset, as the person gains more experience in their niche to become an industry leader. **Faith Senam Ocloo**

Impact of the Trends on the Client Side

For those on the client side, this is how the emerging trends will impact them:

In-house teams must embrace digital transformation, adopting AI and automation tools while upskilling in data analytics. Content marketing demands a focus on high-quality, engaging material with consistent brand messaging.

Social media strategy requires adaptability to new platforms and investment in advanced listening tools. CSR and ESG communication calls for effective promotion of initiatives and transparent reporting. Crisis management necessitates robust planning, regular training, and the ability to respond swiftly through digital channels. These key areas form the foundation of modern PR, demanding continuous adaptation and strategic thinking from in-house teams. **Irene Toyon**

The public now having more access to information and a voice will possibly lead to more appreciation of the PR function, because no company wants to be in the bad books of the public.

Esther Njangali Asimwe

More in-house teams means more focus on comms and creativity. AI will also impact rote roles like some base forms of communication, analysis and administration.

There will be more unicorn Marcomms professionals who are able to replace multiple roles because they have learned to work with a suite of tools. **Cedric Nzomo**

We will see more and more clients bring the agency capabilities in-house and use agency less. **Tokiso Molefe**



5 SECTION

GUIDANCE FOR
YOUR MOVE
OR TRANSITION

AGENCY-CLIENT SIDE GUIDE

5. Guidance for Your Move/Transition

By now, we are sure you have a clearer idea of where you'd like to pitch your tent. There really isn't a generic right or wrong answer to the question whether or not you should make the switch. It all depends on you and what your career goals are.

Since we know that the fear of the unknown is real and can be a limiting factor, we asked our contributors what they would have done differently with their transitions, and this is what they had to say:

I would have stayed a little longer at the agency to acquire more experience in strategy, up to the level of account director, before going to work for the client.

Indeed, when working for the client, one is left to their own devices. Most of the time, you are your own gauge. It is therefore important to arrive there well-seasoned in order to effectively meet the needs of the company. **Siliki Nsangue Akwa**

I would have spent more years on the agency side, allowed myself to make more mistakes and learn from it. **Nancy Ladeinde**

I am grateful to have started from the client side because I developed my confidence and ethical operations from there which helped me to remain resolute in the sometimes brutal agency environment. I do recognise that it is very difficult to make the switch when you begin from the client side but the skills and connections you build from agencies make it worth it. **Eunice Hansen-Sackey**

Nothing. My career path in this regard has worked out very well and I feel blessed and grateful. **Olayinka Edmond**

I am happy with the decision that I made of starting out in an agency and gradually moving to the client side of the business. **Basetsana Morekure**

Professional Advice for Your Career Transition

As you decide whether or not to transition to the agency or the client side, we hope these words of counsel from our contributors will encourage and guide you:

Before you transition, have a clear understanding of what you really want, versus an idea of what you think you want. Your why is a major driving force of what retains you on the path you are on or have chosen. **Omotayo Okewunmi**

Any transition would have to be based on what it is you want and what you feel the most fulfilled doing. What drives you? Is it focusing on a single brand, or do you need multiple brands at a time to feel 'gingered'? **Mafue Forchu**

Be passionate about the industry and be ready to work tirelessly. **Oluwatoyosi Yusuff**

It is important to write down your career objectives and determine what (skills/connections/opportunities) you want to get out of a new role before making the switch.

If money is the only motivator, you may burn out quite quickly when the work environment becomes hostile. It is also helpful to know your personality type and assess how you will fit in based on the different work cultures. **Eunice Hansen-Sackey**

If you're contemplating a career transition, my advice would be to embrace the opportunity wholeheartedly. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone and explore different paths, even if they seem unconventional at first.

Remember, every experience, whether it's in an agency, on the client side, or as an entrepreneur, offers valuable lessons and insights that will shape your journey. **Cyrille Djami**

Make the move if the agency is 100% better than everything you experienced on the client side, or vice-vers (salary, benefits, positive and thriving work culture, growth etc). Do your research, as well. **Santher Mbacham**

Research and familiarise yourself with the corporate culture of the organisation you are interested in. Each corporate environment has its own dynamics, hierarchies, and expectations. Understanding these nuances will help you to navigate the transition more smoothly.

Assess how your skills and experiences from the agency world align with the requirements of the corporate role you re pursuing.

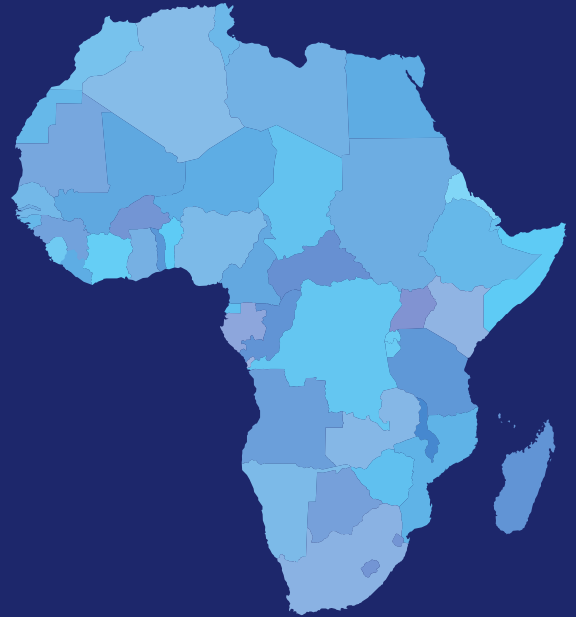
Highlight transferable skills such as project management, client relationship building, and strategic communication, which are valued in both settings. **Phoebe Pappoe**

It is good to transition, but it is more important to build yourself to become a person of value.

There's knowledge on both sides. Whichever side you find yourself in, focus on learning for impact. Your impact is not a function of which side you operate from. **Godfrey Adejumoh**

ABOUT THE COMMS AVENUE

The Comms Avenue is a capacity building and networking platform for communications professionals across Africa and beyond. We currently have over one thousand five hundred (1500) communications professionals from twenty-five (25) African countries in our mission-driven community.



Our vision is to become a close-knit community of communicators who work collaboratively and who are empowered to contribute to positive change in various industries, across Africa and globally.

To achieve this, we put together programmes, webinars, knowledge exchange and networking events that allow our community members to Learn, Collaborate and Connect with senior communications professionals and peers across the African continent and beyond.

We also produce practical resources and learning materials to help communications professionals to perform better on the job.

To support the work we do or partner with us, click [here](#).

Have questions about this guide? Contact us!

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