



The Client Agency Barometer

# Closing the Gap:

Why we urgently need to build a more meaningful relationship between agencies and client



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# ON STAGE



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# WHAT WE DID

## QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In-depth interviews with leaders and stakeholders across marketing procurement organisations around the world.

## DYNAMIC QUANTITATIVE INSIGHT

YouGov research with 150+ key decision makers in procurement roles



# Our objective

To better understand the role of procurement in the Agency/Client relationship dynamic

To give procurement more of a voice alongside the Marketing decision makers

To understand how agencies can create more effective long-term partnerships with clients



The  
future  
is now

58%

Of procurement  
leaders say they are  
now future focused in  
their role.

They are increasingly  
responsible for  
driving innovation,  
digital transformation  
and adopting new  
strategies

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022



**For some,  
innovation has become  
their No1 priority**

**1 in 4**

See transformation as the  
most important thing they  
do.

**This is a far cry from  
the traditional view of  
procurement as  
focused on the  
numbers and cutting  
costs.**

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022



CHANGES TO MARKETING  
PROCUREMENT

# Procurement as a driver of business transformation:

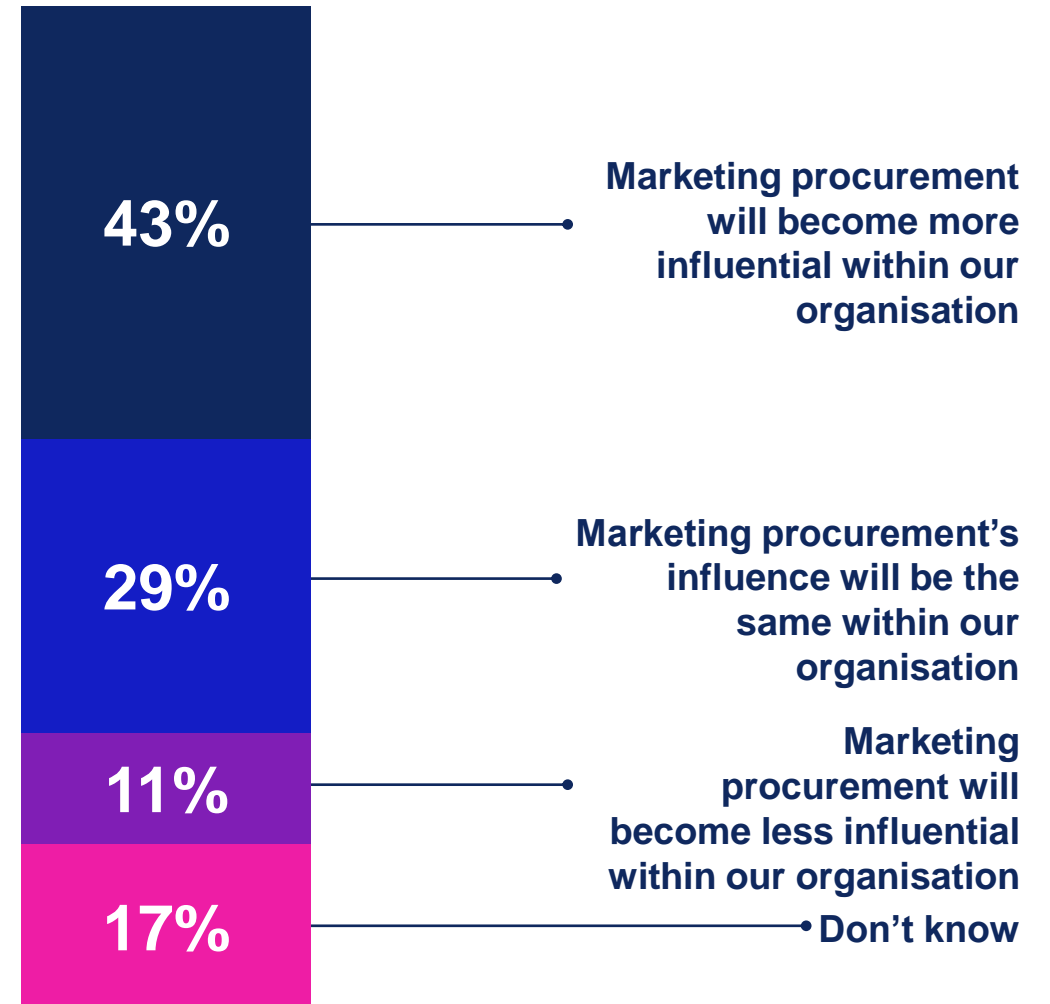
As a result, two-fifths  
believe marketing  
procurement will  
become more important  
in their organisation in

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022



Q21. How do you see the influence of marketing procurement  
and your role changing in the next 3-5 years?

Base: All respondents (109)





**The once strong &  
secure 'client/agency'  
partnership is now  
coming under some real  
scrutiny...**





**You talk the talk....  
but do you walk  
the walk...**

**56**

**%**

**believe their agencies 'over  
promise and under deliver'**

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022



For half our  
respondents (1 in  
every 2 instances) the  
value-exchange is  
broken

50

%

believe 'there is a disconnect  
between what we need and what  
our agencies are providing'

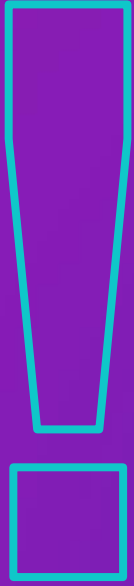
Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022





**It is very much treated as ‘them’ and ‘us’ and there's very little trust on the client side of their agencies. I don't get a sense of working together and collaboration and I think that the guards are up on the client side. There can be suspicion that they are trying to upsell us other products”**





# Agencies innovate for the wrong reasons

**1 in 5 believe that agencies  
present innovation that is new  
and shiny, rather than what's  
right for their client's business**



The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred image of hands placing puzzle pieces together. The puzzle pieces are in shades of blue and green, matching the overall color scheme of the slide. The hands are positioned as if they are carefully fitting a piece into a larger structure, symbolizing innovation and collaboration.

“

**I don't necessarily need  
innovation for innovation's  
sake...”**

“

**I need your expertise to come in and  
do this with me. Making sure that  
they're equipped to be able to read a  
room”**



# Are we living on different planets?

40

%

believe 'our agencies don't make  
an effort to understand our  
business'

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022

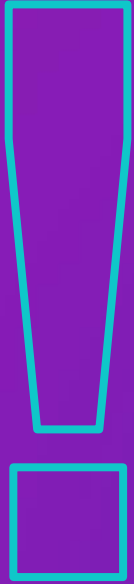


**For many, there's no equity in the partnership – it's easier to start again than to fix it...**

**A staggering 42%**  
**(More than 2 in 5 respondents)**

**believe 'the only way to improve our agency relationships is to put the business up for pitch'**





Is this a lost cause?  
Can we close the gap?  
Some relationship therapy...

**7 ways to (re)build a  
more meaningful  
relationship**





# **We studied the levels of importance vs satisfaction on a number of critical attributes**

**“what’s important vs level of satisfaction”**

**If agencies (and clients) can work on ‘closing’ these critical gaps, we can build a robust and more meaningful relationship.**

**Responsibility on both sides to work these through.**



# CLOSING THE GAP

No.1: Get ahead of the curve

27%

Biggest gap between importance and satisfaction

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022

“My agency innovates for the right reasons, rather than just for the sake of it”

High importance / low satisfaction





**I want them to be innovative for the right reasons, don't follow the greatest, biggest shining star that's actually not relevant to me”**

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (Quals Prescient) | May 2022

# CLOSING THE GAP

No.2: Help to inspire  
and manage change

24

0%

“My agency helps us  
prepare for change and  
transformation”

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022



# THE SATISFACTION GAP

No.3: Stay close, stay  
honest, work it out

24

%

“We have an honest and  
transparent relationship”

“We have an honest and  
transparent relationship”

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022



# CLOSING THE GAP

No.4: Help to  
educate and inspire

21

%

“We are always learning  
from our agencies”

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022



# CLOSING THE GAP

No.5: In a changing  
world relevance

20

%

“My agency really  
understands our  
business”

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022



# CLOSING THE GAP

No.6: Not the most  
senior, the most

20

%

“We have the best talent  
working on our  
business”

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022







**When working with the agency, it's about people, it's about working with the people who are servicing your brands. It's really about buying brainpower”**



# CLOSING THE GAP

## No.7 tie efforts to rewards

21

%

“The agency delivers  
real value for money”

Source: Havas | MB Special Report Procurement (YouGov) | May 2022





**“I don't want you to think that we control everything, but I do want that partnership”**

**“We need to see the agency leaning in and having an active role in what is going to increase our business results, more than just putting a plan together and saying, ‘I really don't know what's going to happen with it, but this, in my experience, is a good plan’”**

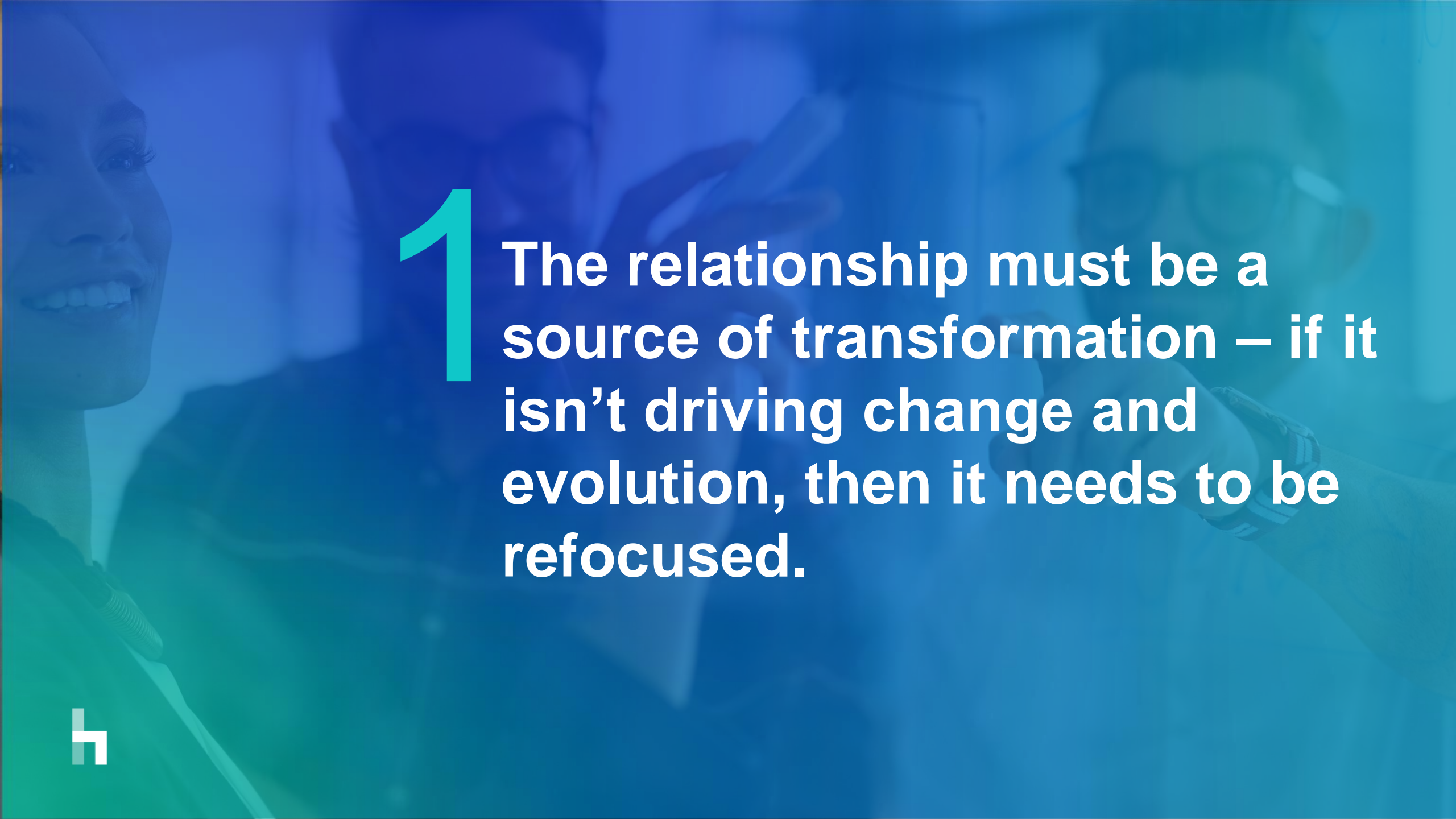
**“It's more about how do we get the agency to deliver more for us?”**



# The 7 Ways to build more meaningful relationships

- 1 The relationship must be a source of transformation.
- 2 First agree the level of ambition needed, then manage change together.
- 3 Stay close and stay honest –transformation isn't easy
- 4 Always be educating and inspiring.
- 5 Build a way to understand the impact of your actions on the business.
- 6 Bring new experts and talent to the table (ESG / Sustainability / Purpose).
- 7 Tie everything back to tangible value and return on investment.





**1** The relationship must be a source of transformation – if it isn't driving change and evolution, then it needs to be refocused.







# 2

**First agree the level of ambition needed, then both parties must help manage change through the organisation.**





# 3

Throughout, you must stay close and stay honest – transformation isn't easy, and you likely won't get it right first time.





4

It's important that the whole team goes on the journey – always be educating and inspiring.







5

Everything must be driven by its relevance to the business, so build a way to understand the impact of your actions.





6

**Create forums for new experts and talent to come to the table (ESG / Sustainability / Purpose).**







7

**Tie everything back to the delivery of tangible value and actual return on investment. If you feel like you're getting great value, you probably are.**



# Let's discus s



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# Thank you

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