Educating clients about data makes agencies more accountable. For London's Osaka Labs - that's precisely the point.

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Whilst most of us will agree that TV is dead and digital marketing is the way forward, the decision to implement online outreach strategies is not always so straightforward.

For many business executives, trying to understand the world of digital marketing requires skills that live somewhere between the world of dark magic and having a master's degree in digital science. It seems increasingly impossible to fully comprehend and understand the ROI on, yet at the same time, statistics show that digital spending is imperative to the success of businesses globally.

In a study by Gartner in 2022, **72.2**% of businesses marketing spend is now allocated towards digital channels. In addition, the same CMO Survey found that online video represented the highest growth category, with the anticipated investment more than **doubling** between 2016 and 2021. In addition, social media advertising investments are still
on the rise, with a **17**% annual compound growth rate for the same period.

Someone who is no stranger to the well-documented, meteoric rise of the digital world is the Founder of Shoreditch based Activation Studio, Osaka Labs, Sam Gormley.

Gormley is a (very) vocal spokesperson against the dirty tactics and 'smoke and mirrors' approach often undertaken by marketing agencies. Instead, Sam uses his position to help educate his clients about data science, with the company's goal to 'bring data out of the dark.'

Sam explains, *"**Many early marketing agencies were built on dirty tactics - lying to clients about what results were being achieved, and not being transparent on what they were actually doing. Many of these agencies STILL use people's data in the wrong way, scraping stuff off the internet and plugging into lookalike audiences, then selling things to an audience unfairly."***

He continues, ***"This type of business is simply unethical and encompasses a myriad of poor practices. This sort of behaviour is exactly where "marketers" have gotten their "bad name. Let's face it, lying to clients is an entitlement issue, focusing only on the agency's short-term success… certainly not in the client's best interests."***

Sam believes that it all comes down to mutual respect. He says, ***"Like any other B2B relationship, respect goes both ways; the greater the respect the stronger the relationship."***

Osaka Lab's transparent, educational approach doesn't just sound good, it actually works and has been embraced by some of the UK's biggest brands who have given control of their online marketing presence to his team's capable hands.

Osaka Labs have achieved 16x growth over the past two years due to increased contract size of their existing client base, working with brands such as Yamaha, Pedigree and Fortnum & Mason, helping to educate the brands' executive teams on data science, metrics, and analysis of campaign statistics.

As the internet continues to rapidly mature, Gormley asserts that educating brands and business owners will build a stronger, more trustworthy internet for consumers - something he believes is fantastic for us all.

Below are Sam's top 3 'best practice principles' he believes marketing agencies across the board should implement, and the bare minimum that clients should demand of their agencies.

1. **Bring the data out of the dark - share it and discuss it regularly!**

It's obvious that the more eyes you have viewing the real-time results of your work, the more you're going to be held accountable for the work you're doing. Rather than being scared of this, we believe it helps our team strive for better results.

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At Osaka Labs we don't hide any of the data, even that which could be seen as "bad news" - all data is important and all results form part of our development. We've seen how excited clients are when we explain how to read results and then they view their data for the first time. We show them exactly what we see, which in turn helps to build a level of trust and understanding.

Rather than shying away from the work, openly discussing results (the good and the bad) means the client can understand, learn and win more often.

2. Simple explanations avoid dangerous territory

With tech and data, everything is constantly changing, so unless you have formal training every other month you probably won't be up to speed with how the digital world has changed in respect to your business and be equipped to make informed decisions about your campaigns.

Since the world that we operate in is constantly evolving, agencies should do their utmost to provide regular explanations to clients, partnered with full transparency. Empowered clients are those that understand, but also who receive ongoing support in that understanding. Instead of leaving out 'tricky information', agencies should respect their clients enough to properly educate them on what is happening - and this is an ongoing process.

By removing technical jargon and explaining terminology in a digestible way, it shows Osaka Labs' clients exactly what we are doing for them (which in turn lets them see where their money is going)

3. **Flexibility is effective, there's no other way**

The real world is not stagnant, and neither are effective campaigns. Osaka Labs build campaigns that are **real world centric -** this means they work with how the real world works, **rather** than how we would like the world to be.

What we have found (and what should be quite obvious) is that not everyone in the world will react to content the same way on the same platforms. It's impossible to precisely predict this, meaning you won't know how things work until you've set up campaigns.

When Osaka Labs builds campaigns, it's done with all available information at the current time including client data, competitive data (current market), and trends data - but we have one core difference. The ability to adapt.

We build our campaigns in 2 phases. Phase 1 encompasses a **linear** strategy - where we plan, produce and go live. Then, Phase 2 has a **reactive** marketing approach (which has been adapted by our own methodology) which allows us to be wrong and adapt. This is precisely why Osaka Labs' services are second to none.

About Osaka Labs
Founded in 2017, Osaka Labs is a Content Activation Studio based in Shoreditch built for future-thinking businesses. The infamous team of young talented masterminds such as 25-year-old Head of Digital, Shannon Osborne, develops remarkable and trackable digital brand experiences from social to purchase. Osaka Labs pushes industry boundaries by giving their dynamic staff a platform to preach individualism. The thriving studio has worked with some of the nation's most well-known and trusted household brands such as Pedigree, Wrigleys Extra and Mars.

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