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2023

Agency workforce trends report

How agencies can use shifting
workforce trends to their advantage

💡 Industry Expert Report

Contributors from:

McCANN



cxld studio



launch mappers

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WE SCALE STARTUPS

Introduction

Agencies have to constantly shift and adapt to win new clients and keep them happy. And between the pandemic, the aftermath, and the great recession, the last couple of years have thrown the global workforce into one massive shift after another. How are some agencies staying ahead of the workforce curve to ensure they can keep their clients happy and great work flowing? And what should every agency be focused on to ensure they find success?

We gathered four agency workforce leaders for their takes on some of the biggest changes that are happening in the agency world and how they stay ahead of them. Below are our biggest takeaways.

Expert Speakers



Georgina Batty

Group Operations Director, McCann

[LinkedIn](#)

George has over 25 years experience in marketing having worked with some of the largest brands such as Audi, British Airways, AEG, KFC, Barclay's and Tesco to name a few. Having started out as a Marketing Exec she then worked her way up the career ladder becoming Corporate Marketing Manager, Head of Project Management, Creative Services Director and then moved into Operations 10 years ago.

Now Group Operations Director across the whole of the McCann Central network, she has helped grow the business, lead it through change and ensures that it's 5 offices run smoothly day to day.



David Odier

Founder, Launch Mappers

[LinkedIn](#)

David is the founder of Launch Mappers, an on-demand growth marketing team for hire. Through Launch Mappers, he's helping dozens of startups to make the most out of their go-to-market. Before that, he was the UK Country Manager for a freelance marketplace and has supported the self-employment movement together with the overall future of work.



Gabriela Pinto

CCO + Founder, CXD Studio

[LinkedIn](#)

Gabby is the CCO and cofounder of CXD Studio. She is a versatile graphic and web designer who has worked at Amazon, Toast, and athenahealth. She loves interior design and lives outside of Boston.



Daniel Johnson

Founding Partner, We scale startups

[LinkedIn](#)

Daniel is the founder of We Scale Startups, a growth marketing agency for early-stage tech. Outside of this, he mentors Google and Techstars and lectures at universities.

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#1

Attracting great talent is the top concern for agencies

“Agencies face a number of challenges today, but at the top of that list is attracting and retaining good talent. Recruitment has therefore rightly become a priority for senior management in recent years, not just HR departments. As a result, we’re seeing the full employee experience being constantly reviewed to ensure it is competitive – from employee benefits and salaries through to wellbeing initiatives and hybrid working models.”



Georgina Batty

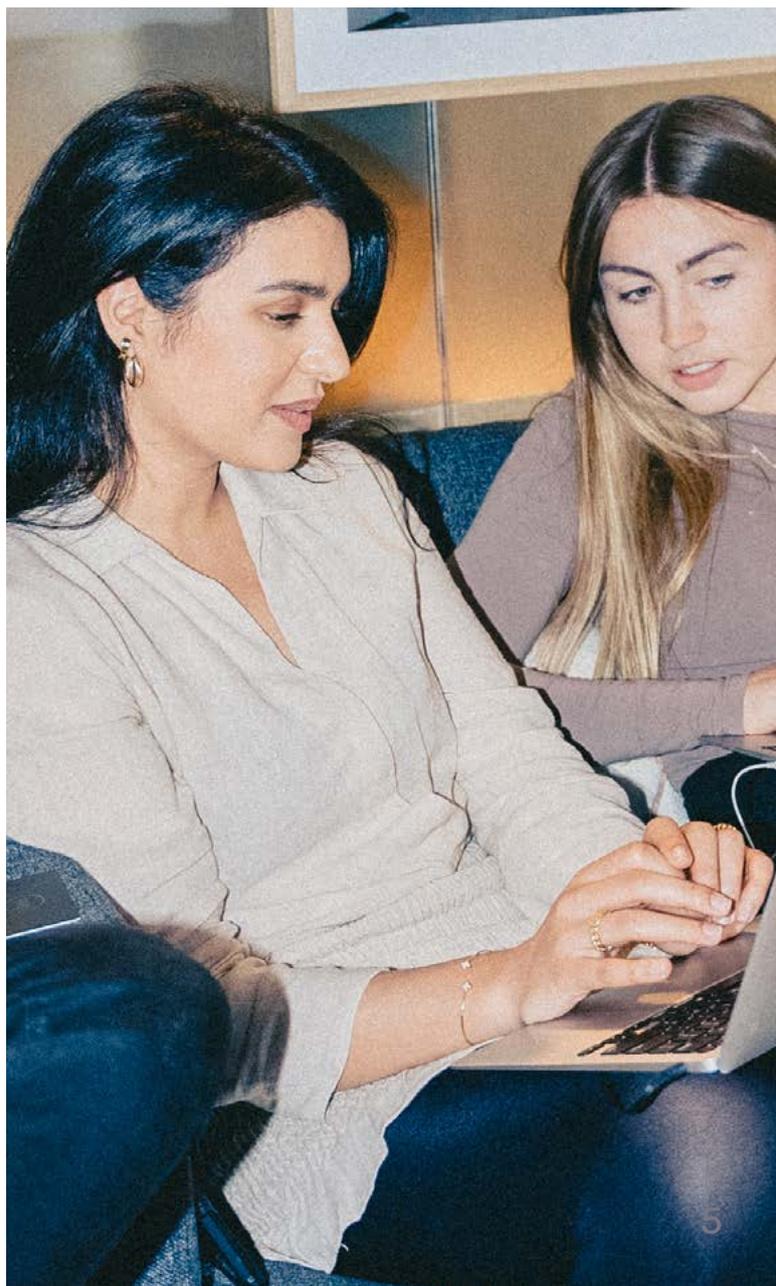
Group Operations Director, McCann

“Everything to do with talent and talent retention is our top concern. You need to put your employees in the best working position, which is easier said than done considering the great resignation. When people want the best possible working conditions, it’s really important to try and give them that so that you can get the best possible talent available. There’s a war for talent and it’s especially true for agencies because you’re only as good as your people and your talent.”



David Odier

Founder, Launch Mappers



#2

Freelancers are fundamental to the success of every agency



“We have a very different structure which I’m more and more confident about. We have a team of strategists, full-time senior employees. They plan strategy and understand what the client needs. And from then the execution work is carried out by our freelancers. When you go freelance you’re focused on one thing exclusively. That’s how you become that much better at what you do and that’s how you make yourself irreplaceable. These are the freelancers we bring on and they’re supported by our full-time internal employees. Essentially 50% of my staff is freelancers.”

**David Odier**

Founder, Launch Mappers

“For us, recruitment is ‘always on’ – it doesn’t just start when there’s a role to fill and we are always willing to meet good people across the full range of roles and skillsets. The use of freelancers is also a fundamental part of our operating model. The onboarding is minimal and they usually come with a large amount of experience to draw from, adding value to a job the moment they start. Ultimately, the use of freelancers provides flex both in terms of cost savings and how/when you can be most efficient.”

**Georgina Batty**

Group Operations Director, McCann

“We rely on freelancers for a bunch of different things, depending on what we’re looking for really. I like freelancers because they’re often reliable, easy to work with, and consistent. It’s like working with a cog in a machine and you can know that it’s going to work out. People are becoming increasingly skilled and don’t want to stay with one company, so it’s up to us to identify ways of working that enable people to add value how and when they want, resulting in highly flexible contracts.”

**Daniel Johnson**

Founding Partner, We scale startups

“Lots of agencies, ours included, have shifted to a more flexible business model that’s made up of a core team and a crew of freelancers we work with consistently. It helps us have the time to maintain close relationships with our clients and work with talented creatives. Once the work is steady enough over at least one year, if not more, we feel comfortable bringing an employee on full-time.”

**Gabriela Pinto**

CCO + Founder, CXD Studio

#3

Good communication and transparency are essential for success with clients

“It comes down to communication and project management. You should never overpromise and underdeliver. That’s something to be extremely mindful of, the biggest agency mistake you can make is overpromising and then under-communicating is even worse on top of that. Even if things are going great with a project and you haven’t communicated with the client, they will think it’s going badly. Even if you’re doing the best work you possibly can. It’s all about how clients perceive your work on top of the metrics you’re judged by.”

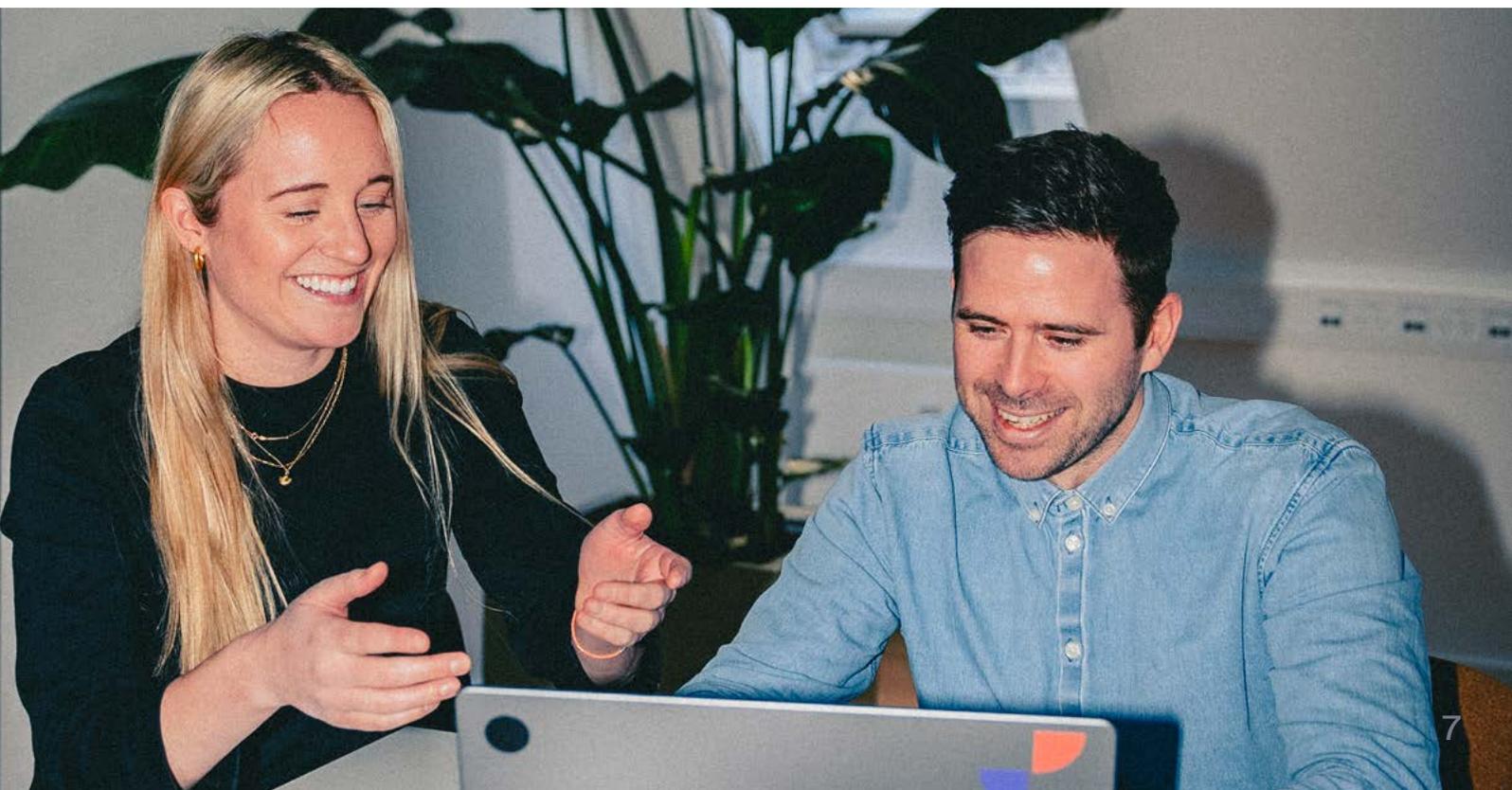
**David Odier**

Founder, Launch Mappers

“In our experience, clients switch agencies because they aren’t happy with the work produced, the communication is poor, or they don’t feel they’re getting value for what they are spending. Clients often look to creative marketing agencies for a new perspective or strategic lens.”

**Gabriela Pinto**

CCO + Founder, CXD Studio



#4

There are many different great opportunities for agencies on the horizon

“One of the biggest opportunities for agencies today is AI and augmented Tech. This enables us to produce more with less and be more scalable and efficient. An example of this is using Jasper AI to assist our freelance copywriters so they can drive more content faster.”



Daniel Johnson

Founding Partner, We scale startups

“Agencies have a chance to grow their own media channels with informative content and build communities of engaged creatives. This helps them line themselves up perfectly for young talent to want to work with them. As young people enter into the creative industry, they can find agencies that align with their goals, values, and expectations for work-life balance.”



Gabriela Pinto

CCO + Founder, CXD Studio

“Some changes inside of agencies right now are more of an emphasis on things like Employee resourcing, mental health, and, empathy. It’s a fun place to be and there are lots of learning opportunities but it is absolutely killer sometimes. There’s a great opportunity for us here to help our workers by looking at their health and identifying how we can help our team.”



Daniel Johnson

Founding Partner, We scale startups



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