Account Executive

Also known as...
Account Handler; Client Services Executive.
Often a Graduate Trainee entry-level position..

The role in brief...
The Account Executive, and wider account management team, are the bridge between the client and the agency. Account Executives are responsible for ensuring the smooth running of client accounts within the agency. They need to develop effective working relationships with client contacts, and all the key functions that go into creating the agency’s advertising output. They will get involved with solving problems, drafting internal and external communications, and documenting progress on a variety of agency projects.

Working with...
- Internal: Agency account team, including planners/strategists; Creative teams and directors; Creative services and production staff; Finance/accounts.
- External: Client marketing team; Other agencies on their Client's roster e.g. Media, Public Relations etc; Regulatory bodies.
- Account Executives will usually report into an Account Manager or Account Director, depending on the size of the team/agency.

Responsible for...
- Building good working relationships with client and agency contacts.
- Managing the day-to-day administration of the client account, including issuing of invoices, timing plans, estimates and client contact notes.
- Organising a variety of meetings, including room bookings, catering, technology, transport and personnel required.
- Attending client briefings and gathering relevant data to support the development of creative briefs in response.
- Preparing materials for presenting and selling creative work.
- Supporting the development of creative work by documenting client feedback and attending creative review meetings.
- Monitoring project deadlines and budgets, identifying and communicating potential changes that may be required.
- Maintaining accurate records of meetings, decisions and next actions.

Those who succeed are...
- Interested in advertising, business and communications.
- Personable, and able to work effectively with a variety of different people.
- Organised, with strong attention to detail and time management skills.
- Effective communicators, both verbally and in writing.
- Able to manage projects, budgets and events.
- Flexible, and able to solve problems.
Where they come from, and where they go...

Account Executives are usually recruited as graduates from a wide variety of degree subjects, which include many non-vocational subjects, as well as Marketing and Business courses. At larger agencies, this is done via formal graduate recruitment schemes, typically on an annual basis. Account Executives can also be taken on following agency apprenticeship schemes where there is no requirement for a degree, although A-Levels, or equivalent are still expected.

Account Executives can then go on to become Account Managers and Account Directors, before progressing into agency management roles. These promotions will come as a result of delivering excellent work for the client, managing effective relationships, finding and pitching for new business, and demonstrating a passion for the role. Some Account Executives transition into other agency disciplines such as Account Planning.

Suggested Learning

IPA Qualifications: Foundation Certificate
IPA Courses: Inspirational Foundations, Time Management, Presentation Skills, Demystifying Advertising, Strategic Boot Camp, Basic Analytics

Suggested Reading

Delaney, Sam, Get Smashed!: The Story of the Men Who Made the Adverts That Changed Our Lives
Myerson, Jeremy et al, Rewind: Forty Years of Design and Advertising
Tungate, Mark, Adland: A Global History of Advertising
History of Advertising Trust  http://www.hatads.org.uk/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advertising

Advertising Theories:
IPA Foundation Certificate Learning Path 1 Video on History of Advertising and E Lesson 1
Levine, Robert (2006), The Power of Persuasion: How We’re Bought and Sold
Thaler and Sunstein (2009), Nudge

From the Golden Age:
Abbott, David et al, Remember Those Great Volkswagen Ads?
Della Famina, Jerry, From Those Wonderful Folks Who Gave You Pearl Harbor
Ogilvy, David, Ogilvy on Advertising and Confessions of An Advertising Man
James Webb Young, A Technique for Producing Ideas

End of the Golden Age:
Anything by Jeremy Bullmore e.g. Behind The Scenes In Advertising, MoreBullmore
Rothenberg, Randall, Where the Suckers Moon. Life and Death of An Advertising Campaign
Sullivan, Luke, Hey Whipple, Squeeze This