



## THIS WEEK IN MUD WRESTLING

It's been quite a week here in Mudville...I mean Adland.

The ANA (Association of National Advertisers) released its long-awaited report on agency media-buying "transparency" and it turned into party time at the monkey house as advertisers and agencies hurled mud and abuse at each other.

If you enjoy internecine warfare, this was prom week.

To nobody's surprise, the ANA (Association of National Advertisers) found that they were getting hosed big-time by slippery agency operators. To nobody else's surprise the 4A's (American Association of Advertising Agencies) said, "Oh yeah, prove it!"

The ANA made a huge tactical (and ethical) mistake by claiming that financial hanky-panky was "pervasive" in the ad industry. The only proof they produced was a boatload of "he said/she said." Without specifics, without naming names, the report tainted everybody and accused nobody.

I have been saying for years that there was corruption and fraud that needed investigation, but the ANA blew it and gave the shabby holding companies cover by not being specific and foolishly accusing everybody.

The 4A's were equally tone deaf in their response. All you need to know about this crowd is that 5 of the 6 major agency holding companies refused to allow the ANA to interview their senior executives.

For more about the ineptitude of these two groups, you can read my blog post here.

This hostility is bound to have huge repercussions and change the dynamics of the client-agency relationship. There have got to be some very unpleasant meetings going on in advertiser board rooms all over the world.

Less than 48 hours after the release of the report I had already received an inquiry from a major global brand about helping them figure out what's going on with their advertising media dollars. It's going to get ugly.

There are many factors that have led us to where we are today. Here are some that I particularly don't like:

1. *The rise of ad tech*: It has been a scourge and has given rise to all kinds of fraud and corruption. Nobody understands it, and nobody knows where their money is going.

2. *The role of holding companies*: The ad industry used to be run by advertising people. It is now run by financial sharpies, accountants, money manipulators, and other crafty men in grey suits. We're seeing the results.

3. *The cluelessness of CMOs:* So far nobody has connected the dots. The CMOs have not taken the blame for this mess. But pretty soon CEOs are going to figure out who was asleep at the wheel.

4. *The effect of procurement:* As agencies have been demoted from partners to suppliers, clients have relied on procurement departments to vet agencies and reduce their compensation. They have failed miserably. When procurement dimwits take away a deserved agency dollar, agency sharpies find a way to pick up two.

This is shaping up as a nightmare for the aristocrats of the advertising and marketing industries, and the best comedy in town for the rest of us.

---

## Provocative talk about marketing

Prof. Mark Ritson is a no-bullshit marketing guy who exposes the nonsense perpetrated by advertising and marketing "experts." Watch it [here](#).



---

Visit the website

Read the blog

---

**TYPE | A** TYPE A GROUP  
www.typeagroup.com  
bob@typeagroup.com

---

Sign up for our free newsletters [here](#). Links to our previous newsletters [here](#) Contact Bob [here](#)

Type A Group | 6011 Acacia Av, Oakland, CA 94618

[Unsubscribe](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by bob@typeagroup.com in collaboration with

**Constant Contact** 

Try it free today