Quality Assurance Policy

Introduction

The objective of this policy is to protect our clients and our business by ensuring that all the work we produce is:

- Consistent and aligned with the client's brief and expectations
- Of a required quality level
- Within the budget levels agreed with the client/project manager
- Managed according to a rigorous process/project plan incorporating checks, proofing and internal and client approvals.
- Delivered on time, on spec/scope, on budget and supplied in the correct outputs/format.

Background

The Social team has a proven and successful structured approach and process for the development of a wide range of new projects.

This provides both Social and our clients with a high level of clarity, insight, agreement and confidence. We work collaboratively with the client and key stakeholders from the commencement of any project and during the discovery, development, delivery and evaluation stages.

It also ensures that all parties are fully aware of agreed outputs, standards expected, budget available, timings/deadlines and the respective agency and client responsibilities at each key stage.

Detailed monitoring

The document will be tailored for each client and project, and will include some or all of:

- Job number and description - every single job has a separate job number to ensure accurate tracking of time and resources, supporting correct invoicing.
- Risk status (red/amber/green) - we monitor the risk levels on every project, using a red-amber-green status. Green shows projects that are progressing to plan. Amber highlights those which need corrective action, if they are running behind schedule, for example. A job classified as red would be one suffering a major blockage.
- Mitigating actions (if status is amber/red) including owners and deadlines - for amber or red projects, we set out steps to get them back on track, agreed with our clients where necessary.
- Project services (from within Social) - this identifies the team working on that particular project together with any support or input required from the broader team including: Digital, Content, PR, Public Affairs (PA).
- Priority level – this is the priority as agreed with the clients, ensuring that we are using our resources in a way that best meets our clients' needs.
- Team members - this sets out individual team members working on a project, ensuring clarity and accountability for progress and updates on the work.
- Client contact - our lead contact with the client.
- Current status - Where the project is up to, with reference to key agreed milestones.
- Next steps - this sets out the next steps for the project, including the individual responsible and the deadlines for doing so for both the agency team and clients.
- Approvals/sign off dates and requirements – detailed for complete clarity for the agency and client teams.
- Completion/supply date - This is the date when the project is set to be completed.

The above proven project and quality management approach and systems ensure accurate, timely and cost-effective delivery of our services to our clients in an efficient way.

Internal review and approval

With all projects across the wide range of our agency's services we use quality and project tools such as the above WIP/Status Report, together with a project timing plan (normally in the format of a Gantt Chart) and sign off documentation for agency and client team.

Before any project commences, the agency and client-approved project timing plan will incorporate internal reviews/approvals and client reviews and approvals at key stages/milestones for each project.

It is the responsibility of the agency project manager to review and approve project materials/content at key stages and also gain review and approval from the relevant Social Director.

Where there are changes requested to the scope or requirements of a project, this is reviewed, discussed and agreed with the client, including any impact on project costs and timings.

Final sign off and approvals based on the agreed output (including formats and versions/adapts for projects such as video) are carried out by the nominated Social project manager and relevant Director and client contacts, using standard sign-off documentation.

Regular feedback

We exchange feedback with clients through weekly status calls and monthly strategic planning meetings. At the latter we review work from the last month and, in partnership with our client, agree the actions and priorities for the next four to six weeks. This means that everyone is clear on priority actions, and that our work is contributing as it should to our client's overarching objectives.

These monthly meetings also provide an opportunity to raise any concerns clients may have with the agency and its work. Our team are of course always available to respond to clients' queries.

Client delight

In addition to regular formal client meetings, our Group Chief Executive, John Quinton-Barber, undertakes a programme of calls to our clients to chat with them informally, check whether our team is delivering 'client delight', a core aim of the business, and to see how we could better meet their needs or deliver even higher quality in our work.

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