THE CREATIVE COLLABORATION SERIES

Talking the Talk

Agency Jargon Cheat Sheet

Good ideas speak every language.

Baba Idea-Nath

Your guide to agency-speak.



75 essential terms. Clearer conversations. Stronger ideas.

TALKING THE TALK

Agency jargon, decoded.

75 terms in plain English / Read down each column, then move right.

Accessibility - Engagement

Accessibility
Design usable by people with disabilities.

Adaptation
Creative adjusted for a new format or market.

Art direction
The guiding visual approach to creative work.

Aspect ratio
The ratio of an image's width to its height.

Bleed
Artwork extending beyond the trim edge.

Brand guidelines
Rules for using a brand's visual and verbal style.

Brand identity
The visual and verbal expression of a brand.

Brand positioning
The place a brand aims to own in people's minds.

Brief
A summary of objectives, audience and scope.

Call sheet
A shoot's schedule, locations and contact details.

Carousel
A sequence of swipeable social posts or cards.

CMYK
Cyan, magenta, yellow and black printing inks.

Colour correction
Adjusting colour and exposure for accuracy.

Colour grading
Styling colour to create a particular mood.

Conversion
A desired action, such as a purchase or sign-up.

Copy
Written text for an ad, design or experience.

Creative concept
The central idea behind a creative execution.

Crop marks
Printed guides showing where to trim a sheet.

CTA (Call to action)
A prompt telling the audience what to do next.

CTR (Click-through rate)
Clicks divided by impressions, as a percentage.

Deliverable
A specific item agreed for delivery to a client.

Depth of field
The distance range that appears in sharp focus.

Die-cut
A custom shape cut into printed material.

DPI (Dots per inch)
A measure of a printer's output dot density.

Engagement
Audience interactions such as comments or saves.

Exposure - Preflight

Exposure
The amount of light captured in a photograph.

Frame rate
The number of video frames shown per second.

Gutter
Space between columns or facing-page content.

Hero image
The main image that leads a page or campaign.

Impressions
The number of times content or an ad is shown.

JPEG
A common image format using lossy compression.

Kerning
Adjusting the space between specific letter pairs.

Key visual
The core visual used across a campaign.

KPI (Key performance indicator)
A metric used to track progress towards a goal.

Landing page
A page designed for a particular visitor action.

Layout
The arrangement of text and images in a design.

Leading
The vertical distance between lines of type.

Lockup
A fixed arrangement of a logo and related text.

Markup
Review annotations; also a charge added to cost.

Media plan
Where, when and how an ad budget will be spent.

Mockup
A realistic preview of how a design will look.

Moodboard
Visual references that establish a creative style.

Motion graphics
Animated graphic elements, shapes or text.

Negative space
Empty space around and between design elements.

OOH (Out of home)
Advertising in public spaces, such as billboards.

Organic reach
People reached without paid distribution.

Pantone
A standardised system for specifying colours.

PNG
Lossless image format supporting transparency.

PPI (Pixels per inch)
The pixel density of an image at a given size.

Preflight
Checking artwork for technical production issues.

Proof - Wireframe

Proof
A preview used to check work before production.

Prototype
A model used to test a product or interaction.

Raster
An image made from a grid of pixels.

Reach
The number of distinct people exposed to content.

Render
Generating final imagery from digital source data.

Resolution
Image detail, often expressed as pixel dimensions.

Retouching
Editing image details, blemishes or imperfections.

RGB
Red, green and blue light used to display colour.

Rough cut
An early video edit before final polish.

Safe area
The zone that keeps key content clear of edges.

SEO (Search engine optimisation)
Improving content's visibility in search results.

Shot list
A planned list of shots needed for a production.

Spot colour
A separately mixed ink printed as its own colour.

Storyboard
A sequence of sketches planning a video's shots.

Target audience
The group a communication is intended to reach.

Tone of voice
The characteristic way a brand writes and speaks.

Tracking
Uniform spacing across a selected run of text.

Trim size
The final dimensions of a printed piece.

Typography
The selection and arrangement of type.

UGC (User-generated content)
Content created by users rather than the brand.

UI (User interface)
The controls and visuals people interact with.

UX (User experience)
The overall experience of using a product.

Vector
Path-based graphics that scale without pixelation.

White balance
Adjusting colour so neutral tones look neutral.

Wireframe
A basic plan of a screen's structure and content.