

Find out in one meeting if your agency in Japan is working

Three checks you can do yourself in 15 minutes, and nine questions for your agency. None of them is a trap: a capable agency answers them in one meeting, and the answers usually point at opportunities, not failures.

1

Do the three checks first. They need no one else, and they tell you what to ask about.

2

Send the nine questions a few days before the meeting, so the agency comes with data, not impressions.

3

Write down what they say and mark each answer. Use the last page to decide what to fix first, together.

Mark each answer: Clear (it matches the green box) · Partly · Not yet (it matches the coral box, or there is no answer).

PART 1 Check it yourself (15 minutes)

1 Log in to each ad account: Google, Yahoo! JAPAN, Meta, LINE. Is it in your company's name, with you as an admin?

GOOD ANSWER

Yes in every platform, with at least two people from your side as admins.

LOOK CLOSER IF

You can't log in, or the account sits under the agency. Common in Japan for invoicing reasons: ask to move it.

WHAT YOU FOUND

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet

2 Put last month's invoice next to what each platform billed. Do the media figures match?

GOOD ANSWER

Media matches platform billing, and every fee is a separate, named line.

LOOK CLOSER IF

One total, or a media figure higher than what the platforms charged.

WHAT YOU FOUND

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet

3 Open the change history in Google Ads. When did someone last change an ad, a keyword or a bid?

GOOD ANSWER

Changes every week or two, and new ads tested regularly.

LOOK CLOSER IF

Nothing has changed in a month or more.

WHAT YOU FOUND

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet

4 What did a new customer cost us on each channel this month, and how has that moved over the last three months?**GOOD ANSWER**

A short table by channel, the same definition of "customer" every month, and a sentence on why each line moved.

LOOK CLOSER IF

Only a total, a definition that changes between reports, or an answer about click-through rate.

THEIR ANSWER

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet**5 When Google, Yahoo! JAPAN and Meta each report a sale, how do you make sure it isn't the same customer counted three times?****GOOD ANSWER**

They check platform totals against your own orders or CRM every month, and count only purchases or sent forms.

LOOK CLOSER IF

"The platform reports it", or "add to cart" counted as a result.

THEIR ANSWER

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet**6 How much of our spend goes to people who were already searching for our name, and what would we lose if we cut it for two weeks?****GOOD ANSWER**

Brand reported on its own, with its share of spend and of new customers, and a test they are willing to run.

LOOK CLOSER IF

Brand mixed into every campaign, or the test turned down with no reason.

THEIR ANSWER

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet**7 Which search terms did we pay for last month that have nothing to do with what we sell?****GOOD ANSWER**

They open the search terms report, name a few, and those are already excluded.

LOOK CLOSER IF

Nobody has looked at it lately, or "Google handles that".

THEIR ANSWER

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet**8 When did someone last send a test order or form and see it arrive in every platform?****GOOD ANSWER**

A date, a name and what they checked.

LOOK CLOSER IF

"It's set up", with no date. Tracking breaks quietly after site changes.

THEIR ANSWER

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet

9 Why is the budget split this way between Google, Yahoo! JAPAN, Meta and LINE, and what result would make you change it?

GOOD ANSWER

Each channel tied to your customers (Yahoo! JAPAN because your buyers skew older, for example) and a clear rule for moving money.

LOOK CLOSER IF

"This is the standard split", or last year's split rolled forward.

THEIR ANSWER

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet

10 If our budget dropped 20% next month, what would you cut first, and why?

GOOD ANSWER

An ordered list in a few minutes, with a reason for each cut.

LOOK CLOSER IF

Everything cut evenly.

THEIR ANSWER

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet

11 What is coming in our category in the next three months, and what is the plan for it?

GOOD ANSWER

Dates for the sales and seasons that matter (Rakuten Super Sale, year-end gifts, the March-April new-life season), with budget and ads ready weeks before.

LOOK CLOSER IF

The plan is "same as last month".

THEIR ANSWER

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet

12 If this were your money, what would you change first?

GOOD ANSWER

Something specific, maybe uncomfortable: a slow mobile page, a budget spread too thin, a product page that reads like a translation.

LOOK CLOSER IF

"Everything is fine."

THEIR ANSWER

☐ Clear ☐ Partly ☐ Not yet

Reading the answers

CLEAR _____	PARTLY _____	NOT YET _____
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Ten or more clear: your setup is in good shape. Keep the sheet for the next quarterly review.

Several "partly" or "not yet": fix them in this order. Each step makes the next one easier.

1 Your accounts and invoice (1 and 2)

Cheap to fix now and expensive later. Accounts in your name, admin access, and an invoice you can check line by line.

2 Measurement (5 and 8)

Every other number depends on it. One shared definition of a customer, checked against your own orders each month.

3 Where the money goes (6, 7, 9 and 10)

With clean numbers you can see which channels bring new customers, and move the next yen there.

A "not yet" is not a verdict on your agency. Most gaps come from default platform settings and reporting habits built for a Japanese manager in the room, and they are usually fixed together within a few weeks.

Want a second pair of eyes?

Send us your agency's latest report, Japanese is fine. We tell you, in plain English, what it proves, what it doesn't, and the three opportunities we would act on first. Free, and yours to keep.

Request a free outside review →

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