

September 10, 2026

In April, the production trade associations of Europe (EPA), the UK (APA), and the USA (AICP) assembled a global group of 25 production trade associations around the world and issued a letter warning advertisers of the moves by holding company production entities to push them into a less than competitive scenario, blocking off the normal routes of due diligence to find the correct creative partners; in favor of directing work for its own profits and gains. That letter can be found [here](#).

Yesterday, news broke that WPP Productions has instructed its 10,000+ employees in 43 cities around the world to do just that.

WPP's instructions to staff:

"Our goal is to avoid traditional commercial triple bidding by proving the value of a centralized partnership by positioning WPP Production as the default, trusted partner.

- If a client or creative team **requires triple bidding to assess different options**, we should evaluate if WPP Production can provide all three bids internally from the same or different markets. We can satisfy this need by offering three different production approaches, locations, and director treatments within the same country or within the region—keeping the work entirely within WPP Production.
- When dealing with Procurement, we must actively convince them to send all of the work to us or at least establish **minimum financial thresholds for triple-bid requirements** (e.g., every production below €500,000 should be directly assigned to WPP production).
- If a client still requires a **commercial triple bid with different external companies**, and if time allows, we can present our proposal (e.g., ballpark, approach, and directors proposal) upfront. If they still want to proceed with an external triple bid.
 - We participate in a triple bid with sufficient safeguards: the WPP Production bid is shared with the client before any external companies are briefed. External companies are briefed only after the client has received the WPP Production bid, using the exact same brief, and are informed that a WPP Production quote has already been shared with the client. Evidence of the dates when the internal quote was shared with the client and when the external companies were briefed should be compiled and saved.
 - We don't participate in the bid. Instead, we work directly with the client teams to demonstrate the overall savings of centralizing all work with us."

Our response:

This is a serious threat to the free market in commercial production, and not only to the independent production, editing and post companies within it, also to the marketing investments of WPP's clients if they don't take note and understand this as the anti-competitive, self-serving "offer" from their "agencies" within WPP that it is.

Professionalism as an agent means putting clients' interests ahead of your own. WPP has effectively directed their employees to do the opposite.

The free market is what allows companies to deliver the best value. That's what has made advertising great: strong agencies, with their producers, planners and creatives, coming together with the right choices of independent production companies and post companies to make great work, all to the advertiser's benefit.

The triple bid is central to that system. Independent companies compete for work on the strength of their creative approach and on price. With an oversupply of directing, post, VFX and production talent, that competition creates a sweet spot where advertisers get maximum value for money. Advertisers count on an unbiased evaluation from their agents to meet their needs.

Filtering out creative and business options from their clients isn't in their interest. And having a "triple bid" that may be just three internal bids from the same company isn't a triple bid at all; it's a plan to mislead clients into thinking they're getting competition and choices they have asked for when they're not.

There will be no savings from centralizing work within WPP, because the one thing that actually drives savings, real competition, is missing.

We hope clients see through this attempt to pull the wool over their eyes, and push all the entities under the WPP umbrella and other named advertising groups applying these methods, to rethink this scheme to bolster the holding company's bottom line, prioritizing a model where their agencies' creatives and producers work with the free market to the same end, to get clients the best work at the best price.

APA : <https://www.a-p-a.net/>

Association of Independent Commercial Producers (United States) - info@aicp.com / <https://aicp.com/>

European Producers Association - contact@epa.film / <https://epa.film/>

SIGNATORIES

APA



The APA is the trade body for commercials production, editing, post, audio and music companies who are engaged in the production of commercials, in the UK. Its mission is to create the best possible business environment for its members.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



The Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP) represents, exclusively, the interests of 400 independent companies in the U.S.A. that specialize in the production and post production of commercials in various media - film, video, digital - for advertisers and agencies.



The European Producers Association (EPA) brings together independent advertising film producers from all over Europe. We are national associations, companies, and professionals who share the same drive for creativity, high standards, and fair practices in commercial film production.

EPA was created to connect producers across borders, to give our industry a stronger voice at the European level, and to build a place where knowledge and experience can be shared openly. We believe that collaboration is the only way to protect and strengthen our craft in today's fast-changing and global market.

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