

I S B A

Media Excellence Certificate



September 2026



Introduction

As the advertising and media landscape continues to evolve, those responsible for leading media agency relationships face increasing complexity and responsibility for effectiveness. Success requires the confidence, knowledge, and skills to get the best out of agency partners, ensure that planning remains both media-neutral & resultsdriven, and to lead transformative change within their own organisations.

Our members asked us to help them with this challenge. In response, ISBA joined forces with The Aperto Partnership in 2024, to launch the CPD-accredited Media Excellence Certificate.

This two-day course is designed specifically for senior professionals, responsible for leading the relationship with their media agencies, enabling participants to learn alongside peers, set individual learning goals, and create actionable plans with measurable outcomes.

The course has been a great success, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants. My aim is to ensure that this initiative continues to evolve, alongside others, helping today's marketing & communications leaders to stay ahead, embrace change, and have impact. Together, we will aid the understanding and effectiveness of advertising in the UK and ensure that both ISBA & its members remain relevant and impactful in the market.



Simon Michaelides,
Director General, ISBA



About The Aperto Partnership

THE APERTO PARTNERSHIP

The Aperto Partnership is an independent expert media advisory business, with real practitioner expertise in helping advertisers drive business and brand growth through the use of media and building more valuable media agency partnerships. Their team have worked in senior roles client-side at advertisers including Sky, Coca Cola, Proctor & Gamble, PepsiCo and Coty, and agency-side in WPP, Publicis, Omnicom, Havas, IPG and Dentsu.

Consultancy support includes helping advertisers set up their internal media operating models and building effective media agency partnerships, contract, and commercial consultancy, and running media agency pitch processes.

UK brands The Aperto Partnership has worked with include L'Oréal, Barclays, Sky, Specsavers, M&S, BBC, Morrisons, Direct Line Group, MoneySupermarket and TUI.



About

Who is the Media Excellence Certificate suitable for?

This two-day course is tailored for senior professionals with seven to 10+ years of experience or at least one year leading media agency relationships. It is CPD-accredited for 14 hours of learning and development.

How will it be delivered?

Delivered by senior practitioners from The Aperto Partnership, with experience in client-side and media agency roles, and guest speakers from media agencies. The course will be a combination of trainer-led learning and group discussion. Participants will be encouraged to bring their own perspectives to share with the wider group and to connect on a longer-term to build a network of support and advice.

What is the cost of participating?

For ISBA members the price per person is £1,500 plus VAT and for non-members the price per person is £1,750 plus VAT.

Timings and dates

The course will run over two full days at ISBA's offices in Covent Garden from 09:00 – 17:00 with refreshments and lunch provided. The next cohort is taking place on Tuesday 15 and Wednesday 16 September 2026.

How will participants be evaluated?

During the course, attendees will be asked to capture learning outcomes, identifying new learnings and any gaps in knowledge that have been filled, and reflecting on what they can do differently moving forward.

At the end of the training course, attendees will create an action plan of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objectives, of what they will do differently back within their organisations. They will be encouraged to agree the action plans with their line-managers and team and the value that will add to their companies.

Terms & Conditions

We can accept name changes once members have applied. However, if you cancel your place less than one month prior to the practical, we cannot offer refunds.

Key modules

	Modules	Learning outcomes
The role of media in an organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of media within a company? • Different tasks performed by in-house media teams • Structure, resources and capabilities needed • Engaging with other stakeholders in the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A framework to build an internal media operating model • Setting up a media team for success • Dealing with internal finance stakeholders and demonstrating the contribution of the media team to brand and business outcomes
Getting the best from a media agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up to get the best from your media agency • Best practice briefing and feedback • How a media agency works commercially • Aligning goals for effective media planning and buying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A framework for building an external media agency model • Considerations in setting up the advertiser-media agency partnership to maximise success • Practical methods for leading agency relationships, coaching the agency team for better performance
Media agency commercial model deep-dive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media agency remuneration models • Inventory/proprietary media considerations • Media agency contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How media agencies make money • The commercial set-up within a media agency • What is inventory media and how do agencies position it? • Setting up agency fees • Building a strong media agency contract
Measurement and effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of measuring media effectiveness • Short and long-term measures of success • Building a measurement system in your organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guiding principles for best approach to measuring media effectiveness • Balancing short and long-term effectiveness • Benefits of marketing mix modelling (MMM) • Selecting measurement partners
Digital accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible media and digital accountability • Considerations for maximizing the effectiveness of digital media • Data governance • AI in media • Brand safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks around data and importance of data governance • Considerations for the use of AI • Understanding digital accountability and ongoing maintenance of standards
Running a competitive media agency pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When to pitch, and when not to pitch • Stages of a pitch process • Agency engagement • Pitch briefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers and considerations of pitch versus contract renewal • Best practice pitch principles • Understanding digital accountability and ongoing maintenance of standards • Managing incumbents and attracting new agency participants • Creating a process to test agencies in the right way

Testimonials

'Thank you so much for this course, it was one of the best I have ever done!'
Global Retail Hair Media Director & UK Media Lead, Wella

'The Media Excellence Certificate was a valuable two-day course to really get under the hood of how media operates and agencies work. Getting to hear from and share with likeminded senior media leaders about their goals and challenges was very beneficial in sparking new ideas and opportunities to take back to giffgaff. It was expertly facilitated by the Aperto Partnership and was an overall very engaging experience. Thank you ISBA for introducing this offering to your members.'

Head of Go To Market & Media, giffgaff

'This two day session was packed with really tangible content and takeaways for not just day to day media planning but also more future focussed on how to drive media excellence both internally and with external agencies. The group was also great and there was a lot of discussion in the room around the different subjects covered which added a lot of value to the training. Overall I would recommend this course to anyone who works in media and leads agency relationships.'

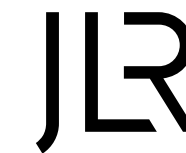
Group Marketing, Specsavers

'Absolutely loved this course! Lots of food for thought that I've already started implementing!'

Head of Marketing Planning, Performance & Analysis, Aviva

'Fantastic course from ISBA and the Aperto Partnership. As an exclusively client-side marketer, the course was a great induction to the inner workings of a media agency and how to optimise our agency partnerships for success.'

Head of Marketing, easyJet



To join the next cycle of ISBA's Media Excellence Certificate, please send your details to BinaB@isba.org.uk

