

LAKESIDE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, GHANA  
SOFTWARE ENGINEERING PROJECT WORK

GROUP MEMBERS

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Introduction to Agate

Agate is a Birmingham-based advertising agency founded in 1982 by three executives: Amarjeet Grewal, Gordon Anderson, and Tim Eng. The name combines their initials.

Before Agate, Amarjeet and Gordon worked at a top London ad agency but left due to limited creative control. They started their own business in the West Midlands in 1981 and were later joined by Tim Eng, a colleague from a Hong Kong project.

In 1987, they incorporated Agate as a UK limited company. Today:

Gordon leads as Managing Director

Amarjeet oversees finances as Finance Director

Tim drives creativity as Creative Director

The company has 50 employees in Birmingham and 100 more across seven global offices. Each international office is a joint venture with local directors.

Agate initially served the UK motor industry but now works with clients across manufacturing and service sectors worldwide. Its strategy focuses on slow, steady growth and attracting multinational clients by offering globally themed, locally tailored campaigns.

To support international operations, Agate prioritizes IT systems. Current plans include:

A new business information system

In-house digital video editing tools (previously outsourced)

Recent ISDN upgrades enable fast video transfers between offices, making video editing investment feasible.

Key notes retained:

Founders' backgrounds and motivations

Company structure and leadership

Global presence (7 offices, joint ventures)

Shift from motor industry to diverse clients

Growth strategy (multinational focus)

IT priorities (new system, video editing)

ISDN upgrades enabling video transfers

ISDN upgrades enabling video transfers:

Agate recently installed ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) connections in their offices. This is a special type of phone line that can transmit digital data much faster than regular lines. For an advertising agency that works with video content, this upgrade is important because:

- It allows large video files to be sent quickly between offices worldwide
- Makes video conferencing between locations more reliable
- Eliminates the need to physically ship tapes or hard drives
- Enables real-time collaboration on video projects across different countries

Shift from motor industry to diverse clients:

Originally, Agate mostly worked with car companies (the UK motor industry) because:

- Many car manufacturers are based in the West Midlands where Agate started

- This was their specialty and main source of business

But over time they've expanded to work with:

- Other types of manufacturers (like electronics, appliances)
- Service businesses (banks, hotels, retail chains)
- International clients beyond just the UK

This shift happened because:

- They wanted to grow beyond one industry
- Their international offices brought new types of clients
- They developed expertise in different advertising areas
- It makes the business more stable (not dependent on just car companies)

IT Priorities (New System, Video Editing)

Agate is focusing on two main technology upgrades:

New Business Information System:

- Will replace their current outdated systems
- Likely includes tools for managing client projects, finances, and global operations
- Helps connect all their international offices more efficiently
- May include analytics to measure campaign performance

In-House Video Editing Capability:

- Currently they outsource video editing work
- New hardware/software would let them edit videos themselves
- Combined with their ISDN upgrades, they can:
  - Share raw footage between offices instantly
  - Collaborate on edits across locations
  - Deliver finished work faster to clients
- Saves money long-term vs paying outside editors

Growth Strategy (Multinational Focus)

Agate's plan to expand involves:

Targeting Large Multinational Companies:

- These are big clients with offices worldwide (like Coca-Cola, Samsung)
- They need advertising that works globally but can adapt locally
- More profitable than small local clients

How They'll Do This:

- Use their existing international office network
- Offer specialized service:
  - Create one core campaign concept
  - Customize it for different countries/cultures
- Example: A car ad might keep the same slogan but change the visuals for different markets

Why This Makes Sense:

- Plays to their strength of having global offices
- Matches where the advertising industry is moving
- Builds on their experience serving international clients
- More stable than relying on local/regional businesses

Both these priorities support each other - the IT upgrades help them deliver better service to multinational clients, and those big clients justify the technology investments.

## What Agate Ltd Does

Agate is an advertising company. They help other businesses (called clients) to run advertising campaigns, like ads in newspapers, magazines, on TV, radio, posters, and leaflets.

## Keeping Track of Clients

For each client company:

- Agate keeps a record of who they are.
- There is one main contact person in the client company whose name and contact details are saved.
- Agate also assigns one of its own staff (a director, account manager, or creative team member) to be the main contact person for that client.

## Managing Campaigns

Each client has one or more advertising campaigns.

- One Agate staff member is made campaign manager (usually a director or account manager).
- Other staff can help on campaigns too, and they might work on several campaigns at once.
- For each campaign they work on, staff report to that specific campaign's manager, even if that manager isn't their usual boss.

#### Planning & Finishing Campaigns

- When a campaign starts, the manager estimates how much it will cost and agrees on it with the client.
- A finish date may be set and can be changed if needed.
- When the campaign ends, the real end date and actual cost are recorded.
- Once the client pays, the payment date is also recorded

#### What a Campaign Includes

Each campaign includes one or more types of ads, such as:

- Newspaper or magazine ads (written content, graphics, photos)
- TV ads (videos, actors, music, etc.)
- Radio ads (audio, voice-overs, music)
- Posters
- Leaflets

#### Buying Ad Space

Agate has purchasing assistants who buy:

- Newspaper and magazine space,
- Billboard (hoarding) space,
- TV and radio time.

#### How They Calculate Campaign Costs

To find out how much a campaign really cost, they look at:

- Time staff spent on writing, design, etc.
- Costs of actors and studio time
- Costs of using photos, music, videos
- Money spent buying ad space or air time
- Agate's own profit margin on these services

#### The Computer System

- Most of this info is still kept on paper.
- But the estimated and actual costs of campaigns are now stored in a new computer system.
- The new system also knows each staff member's salary level and hourly rate, so it can calculate how much their time costs based on the timesheets they fill out.
- However, this computer system is only partially working right now and not fully used yet.