

**Play to win!**

**MARKETING®  
DEPARTMENT**

# **HIRING A MARKETING FIRM**

**5 questions to answer before outsourcing  
marketing to a firm or consultant.**

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# **Are you thinking it's time to outsource your marketing?**

Agencies are not one-size-fits-all so it's important to recognize reputable firms in seconds. There are several things you should know before you engage with an agency. After all, the team that you hire will be responsible for your brand and your budget.

Large companies with large budgets have the in-house resources to manage multiple specialty agencies. Small businesses with small budgets benefit much more greatly by outsourcing their marketing to one agency. Outsourcing marketing to one agency assures brand consistency, costing efficiencies and a strong, more trusting partnership and most importantly – more results.

Please consider answering these 5 things before hiring a firm:

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## What are your real goals?

Are you looking to increase sales?

Attract good leads?

Improve your image?

Increase website rankings?

All of the above?

If your goal is to increase sales 20% in 16 months, the firm you hire will be different than if you need to improve your SEO.

There are firms that specialize in business growth, firms that specialize in website development, firms that specialize in market research... you get the idea. If you're looking to grow business, you will need a team who is very established and has a proven ability to grow businesses.

Write down your goals – this exercise will help you quickly and accurately vet agencies. If you need to grow sales, a prospective agency should quickly give you three recent success stories. If you need your current website redeveloped and slightly refreshed, an agency who prides themselves on cost will be a good fit. Once again – you get the idea.

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## **What services does the agency provide?**

Marketing encompasses specialties from research and branding to advertising and customer experience. Some agencies specialize in B2C marketing, while a handful of small agencies specialize in B2B. Additionally, there are niche agencies that have specific expertise in markets and industries. These agencies will understand your business quickly and you may get better results. If an agency can't deliver a clear value proposition in 20 seconds, move on.

## **What drives the agency's success?**

Full-service agencies are not driven by advertising commissions and mark-ups. They are more likely to remain dedicated and loyal to the success of your company and your budget. How can you find out? Ask.

## **What is the agency's pricing model?**

Some agencies charge by the hour and others by the project. There are also agencies that have retainer structures. Most agencies are flexible because every client, strategy, situation and project is unique. It is important that you make it clear from the first conversation which pricing models work for you. Request two or three budget options from the agency. Each has its own pros and cons:

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Hourly – The end game costs are less predictable and have a higher potential of going over budget. Once you're into the project, surprises are more frustrating and unavoidable.

Project – You know what your single project will cost, but be careful and read your contract. Agencies need to protect themselves from excessive client changes, so the project will often include a maximum number of changes.

Retainer – This scenario is a safe bet when you're truly outsourcing multiple aspects of your marketing – especially strategy. Both you and the agency can predict your budget and the relationship is focused on successful outcomes (instead of invoicing). Retainers do not include outside costs, so make sure to have the agency give you an idea of what those may include.

## Does your team and the agency's team have good synergy?

Does your team and the agency's team have good synergy? More times than not, internal marketing teams feel threatened at the idea of an agency. They fear they will be replaced or lose control. Agencies who are experienced in integrating with in-house teams can actually ignite new energy into your in-house marketing team right away. If this doesn't happen during the engagement process, they may not be the right agency. Make sure to check in with your staff.



**Call us direct to understand how you can work with a firm. It doesn't have to be us – this is not a sales call. We truly are driven by wins!**

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