



AGENCY ADVANTAGE SERIES

EISEN



In our six part series that explains the many benefits of working with an agency rather than increasing overhead and staff in house to handle non-core, marketing related duties, we aim to educate businesses and brands, both large and small, as to the many advantages of having agency representation. Over the past decade, we have seen a fairly significant shift in businesses hiring more and more internal staff, verses outsourcing these tasks to an agency.

And, while we understand and appreciate why it may seem attractive to house all these folks internally, this series seeks to debunk a number of myths of internal placement, and give business owners and in house marketing executives a viable, and in our opinion better, alternative to additional internal hiring and the time and effort of that practice.

1. MORE EXPERIENCE, LOWER COST

What if your business could hire someone for literally any marketing position you have available, and you would be accessing or working with someone that has 20 + years of experience? No matter which piece of the puzzle you feel you need, you would get executive level, senior level experience, expertise and know how. And, accessing that level of expertise would actually be tens of thousands of dollars LESS than the average entry level salary of a marketing person. Does that sound too good to be true? Absolutely not, that's how an agency partnership works.

Hiring a firm gives you access to a vast group of the right professionals that in many cases, have decades of experience each. And the right firm will afford you access to this level of experience, yet it's still significantly less cost than adding even entry level staff internally – which is about \$30K annually plus benefits. So, hiring an agency, you CAN afford to hire experienced, expert people to manage and execute marketing tasks.

In addition, there are no benefits to have to pay out. No sick days, no office supplies and a host of other benefits typically offered by businesses that make low salaries add up. And, if you're looking for senior level expertise and experience, \$30K/annually isn't going to cut it – now you can expect to pay on average \$70K for director level and into six figures for executive level. You can have executive level for less than the price of entry level when you work with the right agency partner. And, when you don't need that level of expertise, the agency has entry, junior, and mid-level practitioners each with expertise in varied areas of marketing.

No ONE person is going to possess all of the key and core expertise you need (not to mention, there's only so much time in the week), and continuing to hire more and more folks as the marketing industry continues to get even more specialized is, very simply, not a good investment. With the right agency, clients pay for exactly what they need. Salaries and increasing overhead are a killer for businesses, which is why in most cases, when cuts are made those cuts are made to the marketing staff and marketing budgets. And, as if this weren't enough, the average internal marketing person is actually working on productive core marketing activities slightly less than 50 percent of the time, so even that entry level practitioner that is costing \$30K is actually only working the equivalent of \$15K.

At the very least, you owe it to your business to consider outsourcing marketing and marketing communications activities – not just for big ideas or big projects, but rather for the day to day marketing of your business. In most cases, the cost savings are significant, and the ability to afford exception talent is within your grasp.

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2. ABLE TO HAVE THE BEST/BRIGHTEST

It may be one of the most difficult things a business leader or supervisor must deal with – finding, training and retaining good talent. There are thousands of articles from HR experts on how best to go about this, but the fact remains, chances are your SMB can't quite attract the type of talent that a Coca-Cola or professional sports team or pick a dream job business that exists out there. Because of this, you are in most cases forced to raise your salary to exorbitant rates or settle for lesser talent. Even if you have special days, offer great benefits and a host of other things, attracting the best and brightest marketing executives internally to your tool and die manufacturing business is unlikely – it just ain't Madison Avenue. And, while we're sure your business is awesome, attracting top marketing talent is tough.

True, some folks prefer to work in certain types of environments – be it the type of business or size of business – but in all reality, if you're having trouble attracting the best and the brightest, which is the case for most marketing executives in SMB, you're hurting your business. But, you CAN have the best and the brightest with agency help. Good agencies are filled with experienced, expert and amazingly creative and talented professionals whose sole objective is to bring that expertise and experience to their clients – regardless of industry or size. You want Madison Avenue thinking and ideas and creativity for your SMB? Hire a good agency

that has experience and expertise in that industry – and you know what? Likely, it will still cost less than the entry level person.

Think pragmatically – regardless of choosing agency or in house – you still have to “buy stuff.” Placing a series of ads will cost the same, buying collateral will cost the same, creating a video will cost the same and a trade show will cost the same. All of these “things” associated with the marketing of the business will still cost the same, but now you have experienced, expert representation managing it, laying out the strategy, developing copy, proactively creating fresh ideas and proven programs, and offering executive (objective) counsel. Instead of “telling” your marketing team what to do, your marketing agency proactively advises what to do – and executes – all to the objective benefit toward the growth and success of your business and success.

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3. TOOLS IN PLACE

Look around your office or place of business. Assuming you're not a landscaping company, does your office have a set of riding and push lawnmowers? Rakes and shovels and line trimmers? Mulch? How about weed killer? Probably not.

Why, because unless you're in that specific line of work, there's no reason to invest the dollars into having all that stuff. It would rarely, if ever get used. It also takes up a lot of space and would be costly to purchase and maintain. Same is true in the marketing industry. You would be amazed at all the nifty whiz bang things good agencies invest in, and things that we use each day and frankly, couldn't do our job without. Design software, business databases, and competitive audit software, tracking software, media databases, and media planning software, research tools, and video equipment and on and on it goes – tens of thousands of dollars in annual subscriptions for basic tools needed – and without which doing the job would be virtually impossible and most certainly incredibly tedious and inefficient.

The greatest carpenter in the world, without tools or wood, won't be able to build a simple stool. Same holds true for that poor marketing person you just hired, but now she needs the tools to do her job in house. You don't understand what they are or why you should spend the extra money (after all, you just paid her \$75K +

benefits and now she needs an extra \$20K in tools) so, you don't get them.

And she languishes. Not to mention, the poor internal marketing person you hired for \$75K now needs to buy advertising space, send direct mailers, purchase mailing lists, put releases on the wire, buy stock photos – so now we're up to \$150K – but we've discussed that already. Why not just hire a professional that already has the right tools? The good agency has made that investment to bring to bear for all of its clientele. It's built into the fees of the agency professionals, so you don't need to pay for them (unless the agency would need a highly specific and specialized tool just for your business, however.)

So, knowing that you need not only skills but also the tools of the trade, you have two choices: Buy the lawnmower for your office or just hire the landscaper.

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4. REVOLVING DOOR SYNDROME

Do you have a LinkedIn account? If you do, in the upper right hand corner each day you have the opportunity to congratulate someone on their new job. Now, because I'm in the marketing industry, many of my LinkedIn connections are as well. And I do a LOT of congratulating. You know why? Because those marketing folks keep changing jobs.

They are laid off as soon as business is soft – as most bosses erroneously believe that marketing is an expense rather than an investment. What is rather common is that more internal marketing overhead appears to be required only to have much of that work dry up, so the new marketing person is now doing other tasks "as assigned," which isn't what they signed up for. Sadly, often times to folks hiring a marketing person understand very little about what skills are needed let alone what marketing activity is required so they bring someone in and almost immediately, they are languishing – unclear as to what to do, or not given any authorization to "do marketing" work. Simple tasks like crafting and distributing press announcements are brutally painful and inefficient, ads are not done, events don't happen – because "the boss" thinks marketing is sales. Marketing people don't want to be cold call salespeople or make power point presentations all day.

So, quite simply they move on to the next "gig," as the average in house marketing professional will work at your business for a whole nine...

...months. Yep, that's the industry average. So, that person that hounded you, penned follow up letters, had a great interview and promised to work hard and do great things. They're going to leave you in nine months. And you get to do it again. This costs you money. This costs you time. Perhaps worst of all, it hurts your brand because it leads to inconsistency in how things are communicated both externally to potential and current clientele, and also internally to employees and stakeholders.

With an agency, when there isn't a lot of marketing work that needs to be done, as is and should be normal as a natural ebb and flow, you can simply cut back. You can't do that with a salaried employee as you feel the strain to "justify their salary." With agency, you can do an entire marketing campaign, paid items and all, in many cases for less than the salary only of even entry level marketing folks.

I know of a specific instance where a marketing director was hired (\$75K+) and the business asked them on their first day to redo their website. The marketing director said I'll begin interviewing web development firms. Business said: "no, that's what we hired you to do." Marketing director said: "I'm not a web developer." Business said: "that's what we need, that's what we hired you for." Marketing director said: "I quit." They were on the job for one day. And, if you're the hiring person, and you need a website, why on earth would you hire someone at \$75K for a website – that would be the most amazing website in the history of the Internet. A firm can offer you the exact expertise for what you need, be it strategy and planning, right down to tactical executions such as building a website (or making a fancy new business card).

With the right agency, you can create a consistency of message and brand, and actually create a legacy of high quality, professional work. You can create a true mutually beneficial business partnership over time – rather than an awkward "vendor" type relationship or employee relationship. You are a paycheck. An agency has a vested interest in your success and growth – it's important to understand and know the difference.

So, the next time you see that marketing person on LinkedIn and you're asked to congratulate them, think how long it was since you just did that for them and now that business is looking yet again. Oh, but this hire will be different...

...it won't.



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5. COMBINATION OF WIDE RANGING AREAS OF EXPERTISE

A big area of head scratching comes when we see job postings in the marketing industry for in house marketing positions. Some are so vague as to not offer much insight into the actual position, or so specific that the pool of candidates in both cases likely don't have all the skills necessary. More amazing, we see job postings that basically list ALL marketing expertise all rolled into one person.

They need skills ranging from design and web development to being an expert in marketing strategy, writing, social and even advertising strategy. Like unicorns, this is going to be a very challenging expedition. Most recently when I saw the All In One job posting as I like to call these, the salary was so absurdly low that even if someone did possess all those skills, they are not going to be bringing them to you "industrial B2B manufacturing job where you will work under tight deadlines and close scrutiny (really, that's what it said, sounds like a fun job, right) for the whopping salary of \$40K. They wanted someone with 10+ years of experience as well – sounds like a dream job. High skill with PowerPoint was also listed, and I know that with my 10+ years of experience, I would love nothing more than be making PowerPoint presentations for the sales team all day. Refer back to the revolving door, even if you did find this person, the job sounds truly awful.

Best of luck with that unicorn hunt.

Great creatives aren't necessary great writers. Great writers aren't necessary great project managers. Web designers are likely not good publicists. In all my years in the industry, I have never seen a single person with high proficiency in EVERY aspect of marketing.

With a good agency that offers comprehensive and integrated services, you will get all this wide range of expertise and skills, with folks that specialize and are experts in the myriad of disciplines in the marketing field. And, aside from clients being the occasional pain in the butt, no type of business is viewed as an awful gig – the agency is paid to objectively provide their best effort and give great work. No office politics. No "I hate my job," nor problems with the boss or supervisor. The agency will give a wide range of expertise and bring the exact mix to the table to accomplish what needs to be done – from executive level marketing strategy to yes, making great PowerPoint presentations.

The best part is a good agency partner will provide project management acumen, great content, creative and the ability to be proactive and resourceful in finding solutions to a client challenge. They will offer options and suggestions and perhaps most importantly, provide honest feedback if they believe something won't work or doesn't look or sound right. They also have tremendous collective resources, and an agency can work more than 40 hours/week. Again, back to that dream job referenced earlier, folks with 10+ years of experience are not looking to do tactical work for 40+ hours/week and they are most certainly not looking to work 50+ hours/week for that type of salary. Not that it ever was realistic, but in this day and age, very few amazingly talented folks are even going to consider that gig – but you could have an entire team of amazingly talented folks. In my eyes, it's a no brainer. You manage, the agency gets it done – no complaining, just doing. No vacation time. Just objective expertise offering a team of experts that will provide the ever changing strategies, tactics and executions a business needs to be successful.



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6. NO DOWN TIME (VACATIONS, SICK DAYS)

When you hire in house, the average person will work approximately 2 – 3 hours per 8 hour day on actual work related tasks. Over the course of a 365 day year, the average worker will only work about 220 days. So, you can see quickly that the “annual salary” is not particularly good nomenclature. You’re paying a full salary + benefits for someone working approximately 900 hours/year. And, when they’re off, who is getting that work completed?

With an agency, you only pay for the hours being worked either as part of a retainer or hourly fee depending on the agency structure. When nothing needs done, there’s no billing. When work needs to ramp up, it increases – you only pay for the labor you need and the team involved in the work. When one person at the agency goes on vacation, there is no interruption in service because the rest of the agency continues to operate as most agencies have several folks that are involved on accounts so they can be properly staffed and running at all times. That is also a challenge with freelancers and solo practitioners who have time off, Timmy’s baseball game and

Tiffany’s ballet recital.

One of the best reasons to have agency representation is you’ll never have to hear the “sick call” from a marketing employee – you know, that call in the morning to HR where they can barely speak because they “caught a cold.” Businesses lose millions of dollars in productivity due to employee “illness,” and not that you have to be Scrooge where you doubt illness or don’t allow vacations, but with agency, you’ll never have to worry about it. Call the agency (or in my agency’s case, we’ll be proactive and come to you) and they’ll get the task done. No complaints. No “I’m sick.” Nothing, just getting work done when you need it. At less cost, too.

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