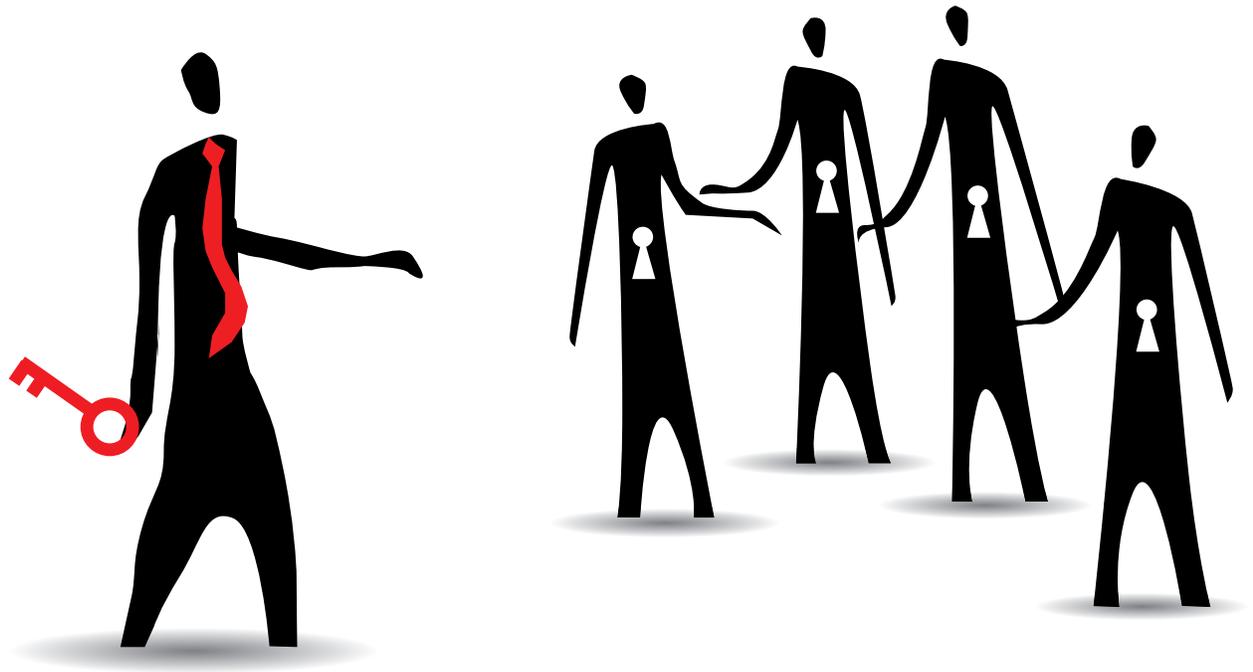


Why Outsourcing Your Marketing Makes More Sense Than Ever

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In today's unsettled economic climate, there is simply no leeway for companies to accept average results and sub-standard execution. Due to the proliferation of diverse marketing and media options, it's also more difficult than ever to create and maintain an in-house department with the requisite depth and breadth of knowledge.

As a result, small and mid-size enterprises are increasingly looking to outsource partners to streamline and unify their overall marketing effort. The reasons for doing this speak to the wide range of daily and long-term challenges faced by the typical marketer. Some of those challenges and solutions outsourcing provides are discussed below.

The need for diverse and relevant expertise.

Relying on “the smartest people in the room” to sculpt and implement your marketing strategy is no longer a viable approach – especially when you consider the channel-specific expertise that can be found outside your company walls. That's why alignment with the right outsource partner provides an enterprise with several key advantages. The biggest advantage is the ability to affordably access a network of supporting talent and service providers – often on a nationwide basis.

Resources that are chosen for a particular enterprise – or even a particular project – can be assembled into a virtual team of experts. This team can be retained for follow-up efforts, adjusted to meet changing needs, or totally revamped if the next assignment requires a markedly different combination of expertise and skill sets.

Flexibility is everything.

Today, the ability to anticipate and respond to fleeting opportunities is especially crucial. Accordingly, an enterprise needs the strategic and organizational mobility to shift gears at a moment's notice – while keeping a continual eye on market and response indicators that signal the need for tactical adjustments.

In the new best-selling book *The Future Arrived Yesterday: The Rise Of The Protean Corporation and What It Means For You*, Michael Malone speaks of shape-shifting organizations that “will be able to adapt and change themselves at lightning speed... yet they will retain at their core something enduring and unchanging.”

Nowhere will this flexibility be more crucial than in a company’s marketing operations. Enterprises will continually be faced with the need to adjust their product mixes and in extreme cases to reinvent their customer value proposition – to maintain relevancy and competitive advantage in today’s rapidly changing markets.

The high cost of maintaining in-house resources.

The assembly of a modest in-house department is an investment that easily stretches into six figures. It also creates an area of year-round overhead – including benefits, vacation pay, etc – that becomes an immovable, fixed expense. This is something fewer and fewer companies can justify in their overall financial picture.

By enlisting an outsource marketing partner, an enterprise can create a lean and focused marketing-team model for about the cost of hiring one entry-level marketing employee. Enabling the enterprise to pay only for services used, for the length of time needed, this model can also be adjusted throughout the year in response to changing parameters of seasonal activity, fluctuating cash flow, and other considerations.

Transparent pricing for accurate accounting and control.

Traditional outsource marketing firms have been built largely on commissions and markups. The problem with this arrangement is that the outsource firm’s income level is directly tied to the size of the media buy and/or production effort. Budget creep can often needlessly inflate the total cost of project delivery.

An outsource partner that works on a flat-fee or retainer basis is more closely aligned with the client’s interests. With this arrangement, the sole focus of both client and partner is the need to make each invested dollar work harder and go farther. The elimination of incentive-based biases also provides the client with a maximum level of transparency and objectivity for evaluating the results and cost of the entire project or program.

The value of an objective strategic vision.

An in-house marketing effort is often subject to insular and even myopic thinking. People within the enterprise tend to view things within the narrower framework of their niche industry. The need to address a series of immediate issues – in order to “put out fires” – can easily turn into a string of tactical executions with no overarching connection.

A strategic outsource partner can contribute an objective view to the overall effort. This is informed in part by the cross-industry experience and viewpoints developed by working for a diverse body of clients. The resulting comprehensive strategy serves as the enterprise's marketing compass going forward – while incorporating enough flexibility to refine strategic elements to address changing needs and market conditions.

Measurement expertise for quantifying program results.

For decades, accountability was somewhat of a step-sister for the overall marketing effort. In many cases, measurement was barely considered among a dizzying collection of competing tasks. This is an omission the post-modern enterprise can no longer afford.

Today, it is more crucial than ever to find an outsource marketing partner who embraces measurement and metrics as paramount elements in the marketing continuum. This requires a keen focus on the integration of quantification into the core of the process.

By incorporating measurement and metrics into the heart of the program, an infrastructure is established to monitor and maximize ROI in real time. This interactive feedback loop is essential to ensure that an optimum mix of solutions and channels is firmly in place – one that is capable of driving exceptional performance and results across the entire effort.

TribalVision is a marketing consulting firm whose mission is to help small to midsize companies market smarter. As a marketing department for hire, TribalVision is a flexible, cost-effective alternative to the traditional marketing solutions available to the business community. The TribalVision value-add includes the crafting of strategy, channel-mix optimization, tactics implementation, executive leadership services, and the building of highly differentiated brands.

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