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## HOW TO IDENTIFY GOOD AD AGENCIES

If you operate a small or mid-sized business, marketing is the fastest way to grow it by multiples. Done properly, it can empower any business to dominate their market space. Bar none!

If you agree, but don't have the time or expertise to pull it off on your own, you might consider hiring a marketing consultant or ad agency to help you. But how do you tell who the experts are?

Ask these 5 questions knowing what answers to look for.

Q1 - "What System Do They Use To Create The Messaging For Your Ad?"

To entice you, ad agencies will showcase eye-catching marketing pieces they've done for other clients. Whether it's print, radio, video or web design - for them, their end result is artistic design. These pieces may catch the eye but if the underlying strategy is wrong, they flop. Graphics must support the message - not the other way around. The real result is the number of leads generated, percentage converted to sales, and dollars that flow into your business. Don't be fooled by glitz and glitter - marketing is science, not art. Ask what method they use to develop the message. If the answer is, "We ask the business owner", walk away. That's not a system.

Q2 - "Do They Know The Top-Ranked Customer Hot-Buttons For Your Business?"

Most ad agencies don't understand what's important to your customers. If they don't know what drives prospects in your industry to buy from one provider instead of another, you can only expect dismal results.

Although too detailed for this article you can find your customer hot-buttons by going to our web site, click on "Industries Served" and then select your industry. They're in priority sequence along with the marketing challenges you're likely to face. Compare these answers with the marketing consultant you're evaluating, then decide.

Q3 - "How Do They Measure The Effectiveness Of Your Ads?"

This is especially important if you're running ads through different media. A great ad in the wrong place will produce dismal results. Suppose you're running the same ad in 4 magazines and getting good call volume, you'll probably continue running them, right? What if you learn that 80% of the calls are coming from one magazine? You'll probably cancel the others and use the money for something else, right?

If you can't measure it, you won't know what works and what doesn't. The only way to know is to have an "accountability tag" in each ad.

PS - Don't let any marketing consultant fool you into believing that your receptionist will ask prospects which ad prompted them to call? When they're busy they have no time to ask.

Q4 - "Do You Have A Program That Fits My Budget?"

Cost is always a factor. You'll find that some ad agencies won't return your call unless you are prepared to spend \$15K to \$20K for a monthly retainer. Look for ad agencies that have programs for small and mid-sized companies. In fact, depending on your management style, you might want to hire a marketing consultant that gives you the choice of a turnkey solution or a "shared effort" teaching and coaching program that encourages hands-on involvement on your part. It just depends on your business philosophy and budget.

Q5 - "How Long Before I See Results?"

Excellent results can't be produced overnight, but seriously, should you have to wait 6 to 18 months just for the development phase of your marketing campaign? A typical ad agency can take this long or more. For small companies, this is too long a time period and it could actually be your death sentence. Expect some results within 60 days.

### Summary

There is too much at stake to attempt "trial and error marketing" on your own. In this digital age you are better off working remotely with a marketing consultant who can pull it off than a local one that may not produce results.

Find an ad agency that can deliver the right marketing strategy the first time using a systematized development process. Be sure they use "accountability tags" so you'll see exactly how effective (or ineffective) it is. If your budget is tight see if they have a program that allows you and your people to share some of the workload.