



Who can I get to help with my marketing?

Moving from “how do I do it?” to “who can I get to do it?”

“Marketing” is a horribly fuzzy word, which is why we suggest focusing on the aspects of marketing that matter to business owners: growing Revenue, having the Capability to do things well and repeatedly and managing Reputation. To get this sort of marketing function and culture working well in a business the owner or CEO is going to have to ensure a number of things happen.

Things like:

- Creating a realistic marketing and business development plan
- Working out how much to budget, and on what
- Getting the right skills and resources
- Turning good intentions into action - not just once but on an ongoing basis
- Measuring effectiveness and the return on your investment

Note that we said “ensure things happen” not “do all this yourself”. You’ve no doubt heard many times that one of the key skills of a business owner is being able to get the right team in place. It’s good to be curious about how this or that aspect of marketing works, but it’s vital that you get the right people doing the marketing. That’s your job as the owner. In this article we review the options open to you and share with you a tool RCR uses to help answer the question: “Who can I get to help me?”

What are my choices?

How broad are you thinking when you consider putting the right

marketing and revenue generating team in place? At our most evangelical we’d like you to be thinking about everyone who has contact with your customer and client base. Not just those with marketing, or sales, or business development or service in their job descriptions. But for practical purposes we’ll keep the definition more traditional.

Agencies

To grow your revenue you’ll work with a wide range of marketing agencies over the course of time. Ad agencies, web agencies, PR agencies, research agencies, even list brokers, telesales and CRM agencies. The important thing is to know whether you want them as a long term member of your team. For example, to many businesses the list broker is just an occasional supplier and part of “getting things done”. For a few, they can be a long term strategic ally, giving you increasingly valuable information on your target markets as they get to know you better. In addition, you’ll need to find out if the agencies you use are just good

deliverers or whether they can bring you more, providing that creative spark that gets you and your messages noticed and keeping you abreast of the possibilities in their field.

Two things to bear in mind when selecting long term agencies for your team:

- An agency is only as good as the brief you give them. How good are your marketing agency briefing skills?
- With rare exceptions, an agency will only recommend solutions that it delivers. A web design agency, for example, is not going to tell you that your budget is better spent on sales training or client research.

Freelancers

Often overlooked because they are hard to find, freelancers with various marketing skills can be a great boon to small and growing businesses. If you know what you want, it’s often quickest and most cost efficient to find, for example, a copy writer who knows your industry or a telesales freelancer



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How broad are you thinking when you consider putting the right revenue generating team in place?

“What, specifically, do you want your marketing team to do?”

who wants a few more days regular work with a business they like. You can even make use of freelance marketing execs to fill gaps in your team for specific projects. The trick with freelancers, after finding them, is to manage them well.

Marketing staff

For SMEs creating a revenue generating team, it is often difficult to know exactly what you want out of a permanent marketing hire, especially if you are creating or restructuring the marketing function in the business. Do you need a self-starter who may go off at a tangent (from your point of view) or someone who diligently executes your chosen strategy? Do you want creativity and flair with words, or rigour and an ability to handle and interpret data? Since you want these to be permanent hires, you should also be thinking how you can manage and mentor them. Is that young marketer an efficient doer who will get things done once pointed in the right direction, or will they need constant hand-holding (and do you have the time to do that)? Or, at the other extreme, a rising star who will need to know there's a career path with you and, in the best cases, will rightly be expecting a share of the action as they get more experienced and can demonstrate how they're growing the revenue and reputation of the business.

In-house or outsourced partner?

Over the last decade smaller businesses have been able to take advantage of a change in the world of work, with more and more senior

roles being performed by outsourced directors until such time as the business can afford a permanent member of staff and their team. Only rarely, for example, do you need an IT or finance director full time - it's now common to use an IT managed services provider or FD business to perform this role, advising on strategy and supervising new projects as needs be. The cost, flexibility and lack of employment hassles are obvious reasons for this, but so is the ability to bring a range of current experience to bear on your business. Consider whether now is the right time to get a permanent marketing and revenue generating director on board, or whether you would benefit from partnering for this role too.

A decision making tool for building your team

Depending on where you started from, there are a number of people you may already be considering working with to ensure you achieve your revenue goals. We'd like to share a simple tool we use to help focus on the decision. So, grab a piece of paper and jot down across the top the different sorts of people you have in mind. You may have a marketing person in-house, you may be using a number of agencies from the worlds of design, PR, market research, CRM, social media, SEO etc. You're probably quite involved yourself.

What do I want them to do?

Our tool works on two levels: gut feel and detailed thinking. When building a team, it's very easy to get lost in detail. It's difficult to compare someone who understands



client databases with someone who's great at writing creative, impactful marketing copy. Our advice? Start by thinking about the high level functions that your business needs and trust your gut instinct. Once you have clarified what's important to you, re-run the exercise looking at the detailed marketing functions your business needs - and who will deliver them.

Again, for this exercise, take the piece of paper you had with the different types of people on it and start a column on the left hand side of what, at a high level, you need to get your marketing right.

Some obvious contenders are:

- **Vision.** Your money will be wasted if you don't have someone who shares your vision of what marketing can achieve for your business. You can't delegate having that vision, but you can assemble a team of like-minded individuals who can help you refine it.
- **Strategy.** Who's going to work out *what* you need to do in the business in order to be good at marketing: growing revenue, capability and reputation? It probably won't be you, even though you can't abdicate responsibility completely here. You've got to believe in the strategy too.
- **Implementation.** It's only by doing and testing things, lots of things, that you'll actually get any results. Some of these are going to be internally-focussed, like coordinating sales and marketing or working with directors. And some of them will be externally-focussed, like

building websites, conducting detailed market research or lobbying journalists.

- **Mentoring.** Somewhere in the team you assemble you will want someone who is able to see beyond the current project and think about who's going to do it next time and how you can prepare them for it. You can't grow a marketing culture or function without thinking this way. This is in addition to the day-to-day mentoring of members of staff with marketing and business development responsibilities.

You may also want to add in parameters that are important for your business. Some examples could be:

- **Implementation neutrality.** When it comes to implementation you want people who do the same thing time and again. When it comes to choosing the right thing to do - your strategy - you want to make sure there is no bias for one marketing tool over another. As mentioned above, would you ask a web design agency that employees coders and graphic designers whether you should be spending less on your website and more on researching what customers want?
- **Flexibility.** These days good competitive marketing outside the world of large corporates requires trying lots of new things and testing how, if at all, to make them work for you. You need to be able to turn taps on and off. Can you?

Start by thinking about the high level functions that your business needs and trust your gut instinct.

“An agency is only as good as the brief you give them. How good are your marketing briefing skills?”



Assembling a team

If you now take your piece of paper, it should be looking something like the table below. This is an example worked through with the CEO of an accounting firm. These are the people who he was used to talking to about marketing matters. (It's at the next stage that you can go on to create a more detailed version breaking the main headings like "implementation" into its sub-parts like writing copy, database entry, organising events etc.)

	Myself (CEO)	Partners	Web agency	PR agency
Vision				
Strategy				
Execution				
Mentoring				
Neutral				
Flexible				

Trusting your gut instinct, you now need to go down each column to either tick or cross the boxes to indicate who you believe can really help with each part. This is how the CEO saw things when we started work with the firm:

	Myself (CEO)	Partners	Web agency	PR agency
Vision	✓	✓	✗	✗
Strategy	✓	?	✗	?
Execution	✗	✓/✗	✓	✓
Mentoring	✗	✗	✗	✗
Neutral			✗	✗
Flexible			✓	✓

The CEO felt alone in formulating strategy. His partners all had opinions, but they varied and weren't informed by marketing expertise or best practice. He also felt there was a gap between those in the firm who did come up with strategy and those who implemented marketing activities. (With phrases like "they just don't get it" and "why does our marketing feel so disjointed?") The agencies the firm used were fine, but weren't able to help the CEO take an across-the-board strategic view of what they needed to do to meet their revenue targets.

If you do this for your business, what does it tell you about who you need to have working on your marketing?

Case study: Multiple office accountancy firm with 10+ partners

The CEO and accounting firm we are talking about, although weathering the recession successfully, was looking to grow its fee income by around 16 per cent while extending its positioning as all-round business advisors. The partners knew they should be doing more proactive marketing if they were to achieve their financial goals, and they also felt the time had come to invest in a marketing function for the first time, but they were unsure as to what level of person to recruit.

The firm also wanted to move fast, so RCR stepped into the breach and acted as the firm's hands-on marketing director for a few months, working on projects two days a week. Some of this involved acting as a strategic advisor to the CEO, helping tie priorities to financial objectives. Some of it involved the day-to-day legwork that marketing small businesses requires.



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The CEO finally had the make-up of marketing team he wanted to ensure that the right activities were chosen and done:

	Myself (CEO)	Partners	Outsourced Marketing Director	Full time Marketing Manager	Web agency	PR agency
Vision	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Strategy	✓	?	✓	?	✗	?
Execution	✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mentoring	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Neutral		✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
Flexible		n/a	✓	✗	✓	✓

While working in the business we then fleshed out a detailed spec of who would do each marketing job and this helped identify the right sort of marketing manager to recruit. That person is now in place managing agencies, managing day-to-day marketing activities and working with the RCR outsourced marketing director, who provides strategic guidance and mentoring and is called in for special projects like opening up new markets.

Over the year following the adoption of the marketing strategy, RCR and the accounting firm have been monitoring a range of indicators to track progress, such as numbers of mailings, digital activity and increased numbers of formal client plans. The key measure, particularly in convincing the partners that a marketing function is a good investment, has been the firm's increase in revenues to hit the targets set for the year.

Moving forwards

Boosting your business's marketing performance is not about becoming better at marketing and revenue generating yourself. It's about making sure you've got the right people staffing your marketing engine and managing how they perform. If you'd like to discuss how this could work for your business, please do get in touch.

At RCR we specialise in transferring marketing skills to our customers, helping them boost their revenue, improve their marketing capability and enhance their reputation. In short we provide an outsourced marketing director service for our clients, tailored for their specific needs and budgets.

By understanding the demands of growing businesses we have well developed processes and systems to deliver marketing to our customers with focus, structure and direction. This is achieved through a mixture of coaching, consulting and hands-on implementation. If you'd like a bit more of an insight into working out what you should be doing with your marketing, we'd be delighted to have an informal, no cost conversation.

For more information about RCR, visit www.rcrpartnership.com or email us at info@rcrpartnership.com