



The Complete Guide to Marketing Consultancy.

**Find, Hire And Engage the
Right Support For Your Business.**

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Chapter 1

What is a Marketing Consultant?

If you're looking for expert marketing advice or considering outsourcing some or all of your marketing, then you have a difficult task ahead of you.

Many people struggle to understand what a marketing consultant actually is because there are so many different types of marketing support services and/or providers to choose from. To complicate matters further, each of these providers will take a slightly different approach.

As you search for marketing support suited to your business' individual needs, you are likely to encounter both marketing consultants and marketing agencies, alongside other types of marketing providers.

At face value, a marketing consultant and marketing agency may seem to be performing a similar role. While there is some overlap, there are also some key differences which, unless properly considered, can rapidly lead your business down the wrong path.

This section of our guide is designed to help you make the right decision for your business by providing a definition of a marketing consultant. It explains the nature of their work, and outlines how marketing consultants differ from marketing agencies.

What is a Marketing Consultant?

Commercially, a marketing consultant is understood to be an external specialist and advisor with advanced knowledge of marketing.

Marketing consultants can provide a wide range of services that cover:

- Marketing strategy development
- Audience and market research
- Marketing analysis
- Marketing campaign optimisation
- Campaign management

A marketing consultant empowers businesses to create an effective and strategic marketing approach grounded in data and extensive analysis.

Some marketing consultants may also be able to assist with strategy implementation and execution. Although the extent to which they can provide support in this area will vary between different consultants.

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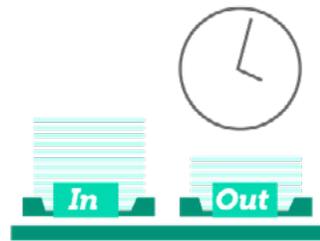
What is a Marketing Consultant?

While some marketing consultants offer a comprehensive array of consultancy services, others provide a narrower, more specialist range. For example, an individual marketing consultant might specialise primarily in advising on conversion optimisation.

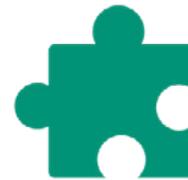
The type of marketing consultant best suited for you will depend on:



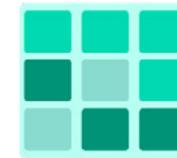
Your company's requirements



How you like to work



The skills gaps within your team



And the problem you are trying to solve

The answer to the question “what is a marketing consultant?” should always come with an important caveat—which is that every self-proclaimed marketing consultant will answer this question differently.

Answers to this question vary because our understanding of marketing varies so significantly between service providers. Because of this, it's a marketing consultant's approach to marketing that businesses should be interrogating.

What does a Marketing Consultant Actually Do?

“Marketing consultant” is a bit of an umbrella term that applies to a broad range of activities.

As this chapter has already touched on, every marketing consultant will have a slightly different understanding of what their job entails.

So you may be wondering what to expect from marketing consultants.

What do they do on a day-to-day basis?



Marketing Strategy

the brand

Brand



SEO and Content Marketing



Training and Development



Social Media



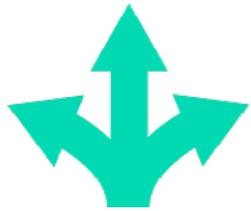
Website Development



Conversion Optimisation

What does a Marketing Consultant Actually Do?

Although responsibilities vary depending on the specialist, here are some examples of the activities that marketing consultants may be contracted to undertake:



Marketing Strategy

- Conduct business and marketing analysis to provide recommendations and a roadmap for improvements
- Develop a unified marketing strategy to help you either improve your marketing of your current product or service, or to help you launch a new product or service
- Evaluate a particular marketing campaign strategy—such as digital marketing, SEO, or social media—to determine how effectively they resonate with the audience and where improvements could be made
- Identify new opportunities for engagement with existing clients, as well as new clients
- Maximise value by devising initiatives to encourage pre-existing customers to make another purchase or enlist another service



Brand

- Refine and shape your business' branding, to help you create an identity
- Control damage and manage brand in the event that your company's reputation takes a hit

What does a Marketing Consultant Actually Do?



SEO and Content Marketing

- SEO analysis, website analysis and competitor analysis
- Development of a content strategy and/or creation of search engine optimised content to boost site rankings and visibility
- Coordination of content platforms, including blog, landing pages, and website within a unified content strategy
- Outreach and digital PR support to get your brand in front of new audiences and gain backlinks



Social Media

- Improvement of customer engagement across social media platforms, often by devising innovative social media campaigns
- Management of social media and email marketing campaigns, local marketing initiatives, and digital advertising
- Design and creation of new campaign designs

What does a Marketing Consultant Actually Do?



Website Development

- Website development
(site structure analysis, development issue analysis and even a new website build)
- Project development



Conversion Optimisation

- Track and review conversions in order to benchmark current performance and provide improvement recommendations



Training and Development

- Provide training in online digital marketing for internal teams on a particular aspect
- Work directly with business leadership to develop management and marketing strategies
- 1-2-1 consultation

Agency, Consultant, or Consultancy?

Once you've decided what problem you are trying to solve and the type of marketing support you require, you will have to determine what type of provider you'd like to work with.

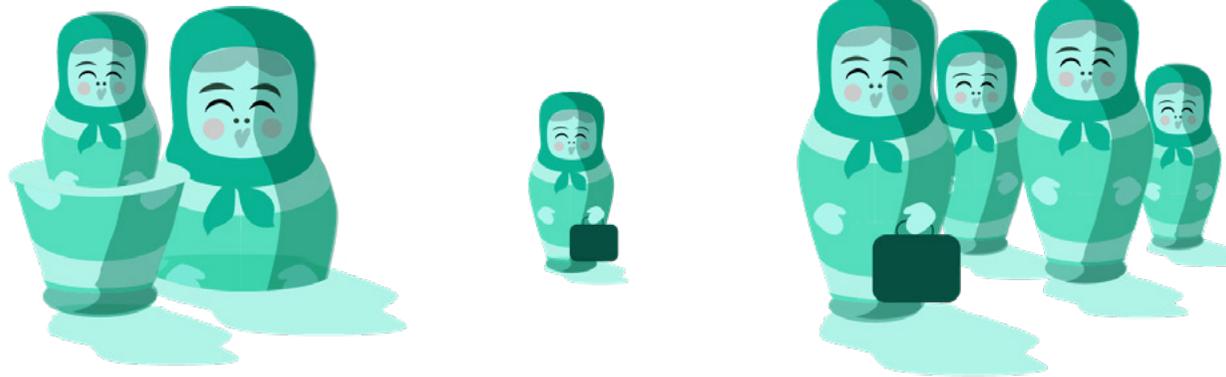
Although there are many—including business coaches and management consultants—let's take a look at the most common types of marketing support companies; an individual marketing consultant, a marketing consultancy firm, and a marketing agency.



What's the Difference Between a Marketing Consultant and a Marketing Consultancy Firm?

In the simplest of terms, a marketing consultant is an individual expert that companies tend to work with on a one-to-one basis. A marketing consultancy, on the other hand, refers to a company with multiple employees.

Although this may seem like a trivial difference, one is likely to be more suited to your business' individual needs than the other.



Individual Marketing Consultants

So, should you choose a marketing consultant or a marketing consultancy firm?

It really does depend entirely on your circumstances and preference. For example, smaller companies with limited marketing support requirements, may feel more comfortable working with an individual freelance marketing consultant.

There are some notable advantages to doing so. First and foremost, you will only ever need to liaise with one person. Which allows you to develop a strong working relationship.

This person, having worked with you right from the start, will know your company intimately. As such, they will have access to all the information necessary to deliver their service. This means that you'll never have to worry about information not being communicated effectively, which is a consideration when working with a team.

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Secondly, a freelance marketing consultant will only work with a handful of clients at a time due to their capacity. Therefore enabling them to give you more of their attention. However, this does not necessarily mean that you will get more of their time than if you were to work with a marketing consultancy firm.

As one person, a marketing consultant is unable to delegate to other individuals and their time is very limited—this can prove to be a disadvantage if your marketing consultant fails to manage their workload effectively or takes on too many clients.

Keep in mind that an individual freelance marketing consultant may well be managing their own admin, accounting, and other responsibilities that a marketing consultancy firm would delegate or outsource. These administrative activities, if not properly balanced, can quickly overwhelm an individual's workload.

In other words, individual marketing

consultants have less flexibility with their time, which can cause time management problems. Because of this, businesses must be able to trust a marketing consultant to manage their time effectively and not overload their schedules, which could compromise the quality of their work.

A benefit of working with an individual marketing consultant is that they tend to have lower costs. This allows them to potentially deliver their service at a lower price.

It is worth noting, however, that freelance consultants have a broad pricing structure. For instance, if you find a consultant on a gig site like Upwork or Fiverr, you could be paying a pittance (though the quality of work is likely to be sub-par).

It is also worth noting that a lot of people become freelance marketing consultants by accident (e.g. a redundancy) rather than as their chosen career. There is a fundamental difference between someone starting out as a

marketing consultant and someone with years under their belt.

On the other side of the spectrum, you could be paying a premium (perhaps even significantly more than you'd pay to work with a marketing consultancy firm) if you choose a well-known freelance marketing consultant. Especially if they are well-known as a brand (e.g. Neil Patel).

A notable disadvantage of choosing to work with an individual marketing consultant is that they are unlikely to be an expert in every area of marketing. If you are looking for a comprehensive marketing service, this could be problematic.

On the other hand, if you are looking for support in a specific area (i.e., SEO), choosing a marketing consultant who specialises in this area and who comes highly recommended may be especially suitable.

Individual Marketing Consultants

Here's a summary of the pros and cons of working with an individual marketing consultant:

Pros:

-  One-to-one working relationship
-  Single point of contact
-  Fewer clients
-  Suitable for especially small companies with limited marketing support requirements
-  Fewer costs, which allows for a broad pricing structure, enabling you to choose a provider that suits your budget

Cons:

-  Less flexibility with their time
-  Unlikely to be an expert in every area of marketing
-  Unable to delegate to others if they become inundated with work
-  The market is saturated with low-quality marketing consultants (i.e, on Fiverr and Upwork)
-  Single point of failure (if a consultant is sick, nothing gets done)
-  One source of knowledge

Marketing Consultancy Firms

If you are a larger company with a range of marketing needs, working with a marketing consultancy firm is likely to be more appropriate than working with an individual marketing consultant.

A marketing consultancy often starts out as a freelance consultant business, which then grows with demand. This is exactly what happened with Murray Dare, for example.

With the right marketing consultancy, you can benefit from access to a range of specialists. For instance, the Murray Dare team has a dedicated team member for each area of marketing. As a result, this ensures that our clients get access to specialist advice and support directly from experts—yet maintains the one-on-one nature of dealing with a

marketing consultant.

Because marketing consultancies can outsource administrative activities, marketing consultancy teams are better able to focus on providing their service. This makes them more streamlined and minimises points of failure.

Marketing consultancy teams have more flexibility with their time because they are able to delegate and assign work to the most appropriate and experienced individual in the team.

As marketing consultancy teams are made up of multiple experts, they tend to be more strategic in their approach. Which means they are better placed to work towards long term goals. They also tend to invest more in their own processes and marketing; this means that they never

conduct work or provide services “on the fly”. As a result you can expect significantly more from them.

Another notable benefit of working with a marketing consultancy is increased accountability. If you have an issue with a team member, for example, you can raise this issue with the managing director of the company.

In contrast, individual marketing consultants are often the managing director and owner. Which creates very little opportunity to escalate problems and have them resolved.

A disadvantage of working with a marketing consultancy is that you may liaise with more than one individual. Provided that the team’s internal communications are effective, this shouldn’t cause

any issues.

Some business owners may prefer a more one-on-one working relationship; if this is the case, but you are concerned that an individual marketing consultant won’t be able to meet the full scope of your needs, we recommend discussing communication methods with several consultants and marketing consultancies so you can effectively weigh up your options.

For example, small teams may have a single point of contact for discussing your marketing strategy—which may serve as a happy compromise.

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Marketing Consultancy Firms

Here's a summary of the pros and cons of working with a marketing consultancy firm:

Pros:

-  Suitable for companies with a range of marketing support requirements
-  Greater time flexibility
-  Greater range of expertise
-  Higher accountability
-  Larger output
-  Strategic and long-term
-  Better systems and procedures in place
-  Tried and tested

Cons:

-  Clients may have to liaise with multiple points of contact
-  Tend to be smaller than marketing agencies
-  Less tactical and reactionary
-  Fixed processes and methods of working

What's the Difference Between a Marketing Consultancy and a Marketing Agency?

If you're thinking about hiring a marketing consultant or marketing consultancy, then it's likely that you've considered a marketing agency as well.

But what's the difference?

We get this question a lot—primarily because there is some overlap between the two.

To put the difference between a marketing agency and marketing consultancy into terms everyone can understand, imagine that you're on a mission to get fit.

You have a few options.

For example, you could go on one of those meal replacement diets and take up the latest fitness fad—drinking shakes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and doing fifty squats a day. Other people are doing this, and it works for them.

This kind of off-the-shelf remedy may help you lose weight, and may even contribute to your level of fitness. But it doesn't provide a long-term or completely tailored solution.

This is like working with a marketing agency. Their solutions often work, but you have to fit within their program and play to the beat of their drum. You often don't get much control, either (i.e. you might have once a month communication in the form of a report, but nothing more).

Whilst this approach may be perfect, it doesn't take into account your body type, your schedule, your eating habits, your metabolism, your hobbies, or what's realistic for you in the long-term. As a result, your potential for success is extremely limited.

In other words, if you hate diet shakes, you are still going to receive diet shakes in the post because that's what you signed up for.

Alternatively, you could enlist a dietician and personal trainer which, in this analogy, represent a marketing consultancy.

These specialists will be able to tell you why you've struggled to get fit in the past and will tailor their solution to your individual circumstances. They will even teach you how to maintain your fitness and health without their help once you've reached your goals.

Yes, this second route is likely to cost you more in the short term and you will need to be more involved in the process. But with their expertise, you can create a foundation for long-term health capable of seeing you through the rest of your life.

Like a fixed diet and fitness plan, a marketing agency will work with a set toolkit, which they will apply to every client they work with.

A marketing consultancy or marketing

consultant, on the other hand, is able to apply their expertise to your individual business and create a tailored strategy designed to maximise growth.

A marketing consultant's strategy will be geared towards the long-term health and success of your business. This delivers greater value despite the initial upfront expense.

That being said, working with a marketing consultant or consultancy isn't necessarily the right choice for every business.

What's right for you will depend on a range of factors.

This includes:

-  The level of expertise required
-  Your budget
-  Any specific goals and timeframes you have
-  Your commitment to marketing
-  How involved you would like to be with the process
-  How tailored you would like the process to be

With these factors in mind, a marketing agency may be the better choice for your company under certain circumstances.

However, before making your final decision it is worth noting that there are certain pitfalls associated with working with a marketing agency that you should be aware of.

The Pitfalls of Working With a Marketing Agency

As you're probably aware, the Murray Dare team is made up of marketing consultants. We are a consultancy, not an agency—so, naturally, we're a little biased.

But our decision to set ourselves up as a marketing consultancy, instead of a marketing agency, was a very purposeful one.

To help you understand why we made this decision, and why we believe that consultancies are able to provide a better service under most circumstances, here are some insights into the way marketing agencies work.

If you've worked with a marketing agency before, you may recognise some of these issues.

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The Pitfalls of Working With a Marketing Agency



1. Vested Interests

Firstly, it is worth noting that agencies tend to deliver pre-packaged, end-to-end marketing solutions. These solutions often cover everything from strategy to implementation and evaluation.

Because of this setup, it is in an agency's interest to establish a strategy that is geared towards their strengths as a company. As a result, they can succeed during the implementation stage. This means that an agency's plan will not be centred around your needs, but their capability.

In contrast, marketing consultancies don't usually offer fixed pricing for services, as their approach will vary according to their clients' needs. This allows them and your business greater flexibility; they can help you devise a tailored strategy, while affording you the option of implementing it yourself or enlisting the assistance of another provider.

This ensures that the advice of marketing consultancies is completely independent, unbiased, and free of ulterior motive.

The Pitfalls of Working With a Marketing Agency

2. One-Size-Fits-All

Marketing agencies rely heavily on economies of scale. This means that they don't have the time to invest in creating tailored strategies for each client they work with. In fact, this would only serve to reduce their profit margins.

Because of this, marketing agencies have a financial incentive to provide the minimum they can without attracting poor feedback.

One way to achieve this is to provide one-size-fits-all solutions.

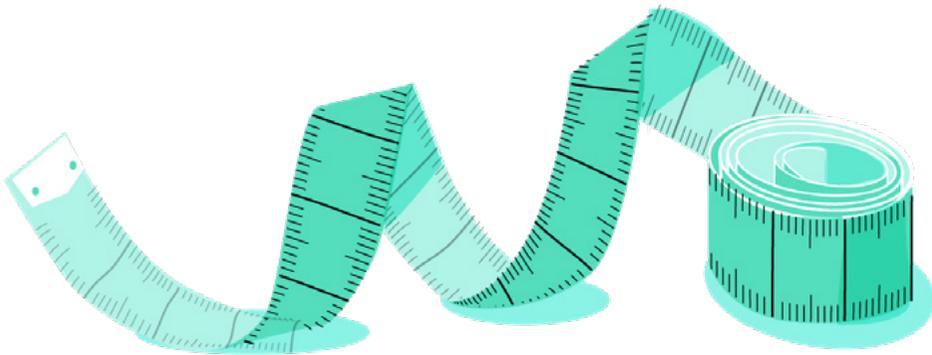
Off-the-shelf solutions require less foresight and planning, which makes them highly time-efficient for agencies.

While these packaged solutions can deliver results, they aren't bespoke.

As we all know, what works for one company does not necessarily work for another.

If you are selling furniture and want to focus on PPC, then it is logical to work with an agency who has similar clients, rather than a consultancy.

If you have a service that is fairly unique, a marketing agency solution may not work for you because what you are trying to achieve is different. You will need a marketing solution that is more involved, so a marketing consultancy is likely to be better suited to your needs.



The Pitfalls of Working With a Marketing Agency



3. Minimal Client involvement

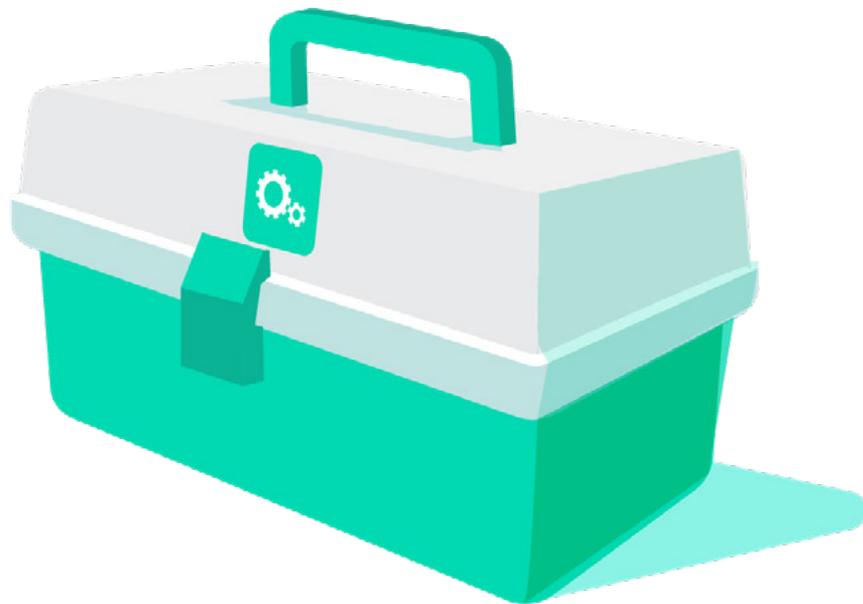
If you are looking for a close working relationship with your marketing support provider, then a marketing agency is likely to fall short in this area.

Marketing agencies tend to take on more clients than marketing consultancies. Therefore, they aren't able to give each client the same level of attention and time.

This means that businesses should expect minimal involvement when they enlist the services of a marketing agency. For some business owners, who would rather outsource areas of their marketing and have nothing more to do with it, this may be ideal.

As a general rule of thumb, the bigger the company, the more suitable a marketing agency will be to a business that wants to outsource their marketing. This is because senior management becomes less involved with the day-to-day marketing activities as the business increases in size.

The Pitfalls of Working With a Marketing Agency



4. Short-Termist

Marketing agencies are all about using a set toolkit to get results. But they do not provide their clients with the tools needed to attain long-term success.

Most marketing agencies provide short-term, off-the-shelf initiatives that don't address the foundational elements of a successful marketing strategy.

A marketing consultancy, on the other hand, can help you redefine your business from the ground up. As a result, every component is purpose-built for long-term success.

They also share far more, as you are working in collaboration, which means they will tell you *exactly* what they are doing and *why*.

What This Means For Your Business

As a consultancy, many of the clients we work with have enlisted the services of a marketing agency in the past. Despite ample investment, they have each been disappointed by the return.

This does not necessarily mean that each of these marketing agencies was “bad” at what they did. As we see it, the marketing agency model is at fault, because it creates an environment where vested interests thrive and exist in direct opposition to providing value.

The disgruntled business owners we speak to are often looking for an approach unique to them after getting the sense that although the agency they worked with was good, they really didn’t understand what their individual business was trying to achieve.

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Should You Choose a Marketing Consultant or a Marketing Agency?

While we understand that this guide seems to have taken a fairly negative view on marketing agencies, we recognise that there are some instances in which a marketing agency may be better suited to your needs than a marketing consultant.

One of the main benefits of working with a marketing agency is that they allow you to wash your hands of areas of marketing you find particularly stressful or time-consuming.

If a path is well trodden, then a marketing agency is likely to be perfect for you. In these cases, we would even recommend choosing a marketing agency over Murray Dare.

This will allow you to focus on areas of your business that you find more enjoyable. Or that you consider to be a higher priority.

If the idea of outsourcing your marketing and putting it out of your mind is appealing, then a marketing agency can provide a viable—albeit generic—solution. This is ideal for business owners who don't want to be especially ambitious with their marketing.

In contrast, a marketing consultant or consultancy will want to spend time with you (often in lengthy discussion). This way, they can truly understand your business, your priorities, and your customers.

Though more time-intensive, a marketing consultant's final solution will be tailored to your business' strengths and weaknesses, your goals, and your current position within the market.

Most importantly, it will have a far higher likelihood of delivering success and growth for your company—saving you money in the long-run.



Chapter 2

Do you even need a marketing consultant?

Should you do your own marketing?
Do you even need a marketing consultant?

Sadly, there are no simple answers to these questions.

The truth is that there are a multitude of factors that contribute to the decision to enlist the services of a marketing consultant—the most important of which is your business' individual circumstances.

As a general rule, the types of businesses we tend to work with fall into one of the following four categories

Each of these types of businesses will have different marketing requirements. If you are a start-up, for instance, it's likely that you've wondered whether you can do your own marketing—saving yourself the initial cost and hassle of finding the right consultant.

Or, if you already have a marketing function or marketing support of some kind, you may be asking yourself if your team has enough experience and expertise.

If you've had poor experiences with agencies, you may be wondering where to turn to next.

With these types of businesses and circumstances in mind, this chapter has been written to help you determine whether you need a marketing consultant by addressing two key questions; can you do your own marketing, and should you?

This guide has been written for businesses looking to improve their marketing, but that lack a dedicated and comprehensive team of marketers.

Like it or not, business leaders are the drivers behind marketing decisions. The buck stops with them and they have the most to gain (and to lose) from marketing.

That's a hefty and often unnerving responsibility.



Start ups or new businesses



Businesses without a marketing function



Businesses with marketing support, but not at a senior level



Businesses who have had bad experiences with agencies

Should You Do Your Own Marketing and Do You Even Need A Marketing Consultant?

We wrote this guide to give business leaders a helping hand. To inform the decision-making process for leaders who are feeling cautious in their pursuit of growth.

Although all decisions involve some element of risk, we hope that this guide empowers you to pick the right solution for your company—and, perhaps more importantly, we wrote this guide to help you avoid choosing the wrong solution. Which can have a monumental impact on your business.

This chapter of the guide will address an illusion surrounding the nature of marketing. One that leads many business leaders to believe that they can do their own marketing—often at great cost to their business.

Having examined the question “can you do your own marketing?”, we will then take a look at a more pressing question; should you?

Following this chapter, we’ll also consider some examples of great marketing campaigns—as well as some failed marketing campaigns that have gone down in history.

These examples will demonstrate the complexity of marketing and the skills required to make it work, and showcase the monumental risks associated with poor marketing.

So, let’s get started.

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There are certain things that you either can or can't do, while other things exist on a spectrum of ability.

Let's take a backflip as an example. This is something that you most likely cannot do (hats off to you if you can, sorry for doubting you).

On the other hand, activities that sit on a spectrum of ability, are fundamentally different by nature—and yet we often still approach them with the same black and white attitude of can and can't.

Cooking, writing, and singing are a few common examples of activities that the vast majority of us "can" do, in the loosest sense of the word. Almost everyone can toast bread, string words together on a page, and sing a song—however out of tune.

With activities like these, it is not a question of "can" or "can't". Though

most can cook, they can't necessarily cook like Gordon Ramsay. Though most can write, very few can write like Dickens. We certainly won't be joining a choir anytime soon.

Marketing falls on the spectrum of ability. As a result, it is completely dependent on you or your team's knowledge, experience and the context.

For example, you may have loads of experience in one or a few areas of marketing. But it is unlikely that you are going to be a master at everything.

After all, you wouldn't be reading this if you were brilliant at everything. We'd likely be calling you, instead.

So instead of asking "can I?", a more appropriate question would be "should I?"

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Marketing is an area which most businesses tend to approach without a proper, robust, and informed plan in place.

This means that marketing plans are often reactive and driven by speculation.

Moreover, the ease of getting started with marketing often lulls business leaders into a false sense of security.

However, just like you can easily fudge a home DIY job, you can also fudge your marketing. And with potentially colossal consequences

- **Want a website?** It can be fudged
- **Do some social media?** Yep, I will have fudge with that
- **Write an article?** Banana and fudge sundae please

But there does come a point when fudging things up becomes less of a minor inconvenience and more of a significant problem. Especially once you get off the ground, want better results and want to develop a proper brand.

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It is at this point that you realise that whilst marketing is easy to start, doing it well is significantly harder than you initially thought.

Business leaders readily outsource activities that fall firmly within the realm of “can’t” for their team, like accounting or coding for example.

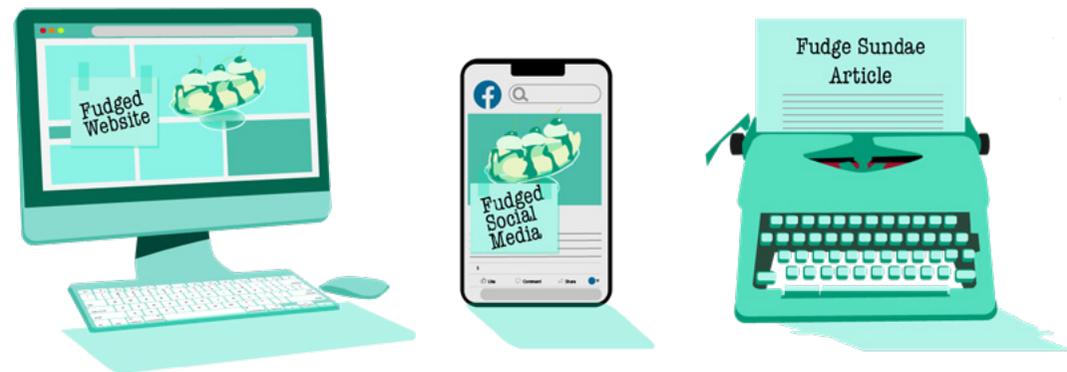
And yet, the skills that exist on the spectrum of ability—copywriting and marketing, let’s say—business leaders frequently decide to take upon themselves.

Why?

For some, doing so is an attempt to achieve cost-savings. After all, having become accustomed to wearing many hats, it may at first seem sensible.

For others, they are not sure who to turn to or, more importantly, who to trust.

Then there are those who feel that outsourcing is expensive, despite wanting to maximise results.



Overestimating Your Ability, Underestimating The Effort



It is very easy to overestimate your own ability when you know that you can do something, at least to a certain extent. However, the onus is on you to determine the limitations of that capability.

And it is *especially* easy to overestimate ability when faced with the prospect of a short-term benefit, like *perceived* cost-savings. “Perceived” because, in reality, taking on the responsibility for marketing without the appropriate level of expertise and experience can be the opposite of cost-effective.

From outside the industry looking in, marketing activities may not seem especially complicated; write a blog, post to social media, create a Facebook advertisement.

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Although seemingly simple, this is a surface-level understanding of marketing that:

- Simplifies solutions to the lowest common denominator
- Means that work is often subpar and rushed
- Overlooks the need for a broader marketing strategy
- Achieves average results, because you weren’t fully aware of what effective marketing entailed



Simplifies solutions to the lowest common denominator



Means that work is often below par and rushed



Overlooks broader marketing strategies



Achieves average results

That being said, if you are a person who truly values marketing and views it as an essential extension of yourself and your business—and you are willing to learn and commit yourself to the effort involved—then you may be suited to doing your own marketing.

Overestimating Your Ability, Underestimating The Effort

If you do choose to do your own marketing, or expand on your current marketing function without external support. Then it is crucial that you dedicate yourself to the learning process and acknowledge its importance. No cutting corners.

Keep in mind, however, that the learning process won't be without its pitfalls. Perfecting a business' approach to marketing can be a bumpy road if you're new to it. So expect things to go wrong and try not to be disheartened. Recognise the value in mistakes by learning from them, and iterate your process until the pitfalls become less frequent.

If you can afford to make mistakes, are willing to make marketing a priority, and can dedicate the necessary time to hone your marketing strategy, then success is on the horizon.

There are, of course, some obvious benefits to doing your marketing yourself. After all, no one knows your business like you do and no one cares more about your business than you.

But if this isn't you, and if you can't afford mistakes or find the time to make your marketing a priority, then the wiser choice may be to outsource some or all of your marketing—at least until you have reached a point where you are able to create your own in-house team or take a more internalised approach.

In marketing, the journey towards success is littered with obstacles—particularly if you're committed to traversing it alone—but what's important is the destination.

Once your marketing starts driving real business growth, you'll thank yourself for making the trip. Before we outline the signs that your company might need a marketing consultant and address the potential benefits—first, let's take a look at what's behind great marketing with some examples of both successful marketing and failed marketing initiatives.



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Chapter 3

Examples of Great and Poor Marketing

So, what can we learn from the success or failure of other businesses' marketing campaigns?

The short answer? A lot.

We have found that the best way to understand what goes into great marketing is to study examples of it. To that end, here are some of our team's favourite examples of mind-blowing marketing.

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Before you read on, it is important that we preface these examples by acknowledging that some of these companies are big name brands. They may have massive marketing budgets—but we urge you not to be discouraged by this.

We are firm believers that size doesn't matter (wink, wink) quite as much as many would have us believe (and yes, we're still talking about budget).



Whether a marketing budget is in the millions or the hundreds, the fundamental tenets of great marketing remain the same:



1. Be clear about who you are

to do

2. Be clear about what you are want to do



3. Know your audience



4. Analyse and predict trends



5. Know your strengths and weaknesses



6. Know the strengths and weaknesses of your competitors



7. Subvert to stand out



8. Be bold

10011

9. Data is key to decision making



10. Context is everything—understand your environment



11. To that end, review and improve



12. Plan for the worst, expect the best

Think About Connections, Not Budgets

When we think about great marketing, we always begin with a desire to stand out in a crowded room.

We at Murray Dare think that any business can make a significant dent in their market. Regardless of their size and budget.

In this chapter, you will discover that just as big-budget marketing campaigns can achieve success, they can also result in massive failure—proving that it's not the size that matters, but what you do with it (honestly, still talking about budget, so get your mind out of the gutter!).

Here are a few gems we love.

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DeadHappy's Messaging & Branding

DeadHappy is a life insurance company that has cultivated significant popularity in recent years. Despite starting out as a small player in a market monopolised by brands like Aviva, Direct Line, and comparison sites like Compare the Market.

DeadHappy is an exceptional example of subversive marketing. Because it applies humour to a subject that we can all unanimously agree is pretty bleak: death.

Here's a snippet of their website content:

We've created a whole new life insurance product, because traditional life insurance policies just aren't good enough any more.

We've also created a way to help folks plan for what happens when they shuffle off this mortal coil. We call these deathwishes.

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So, what do you want to happen when you die? Do you want Rick Astley to sing at your funeral, a bronze statue of yourself for the garden or perhaps send your mates on holiday? Your call.

Nobody likes making plans for their own death. It's a generally depressing experience that many of us perceive as an unwelcome obligation. Which makes life insurance an especially tricky product to sell. By inviting your audience to think about their own death, you're setting yourself up for failure.

DeadHappy makes no effort to avoid the presence of death in the product they are selling, as many life insurance providers do. But instead, embraces it fully and with a dark sense of humour to boot.

By taking a risk, subverting the dominant market approach, and embracing humour, DeadHappy have created a genuinely stand-out brand. One that has been especially successful on social media platforms.

With their modern approach, they have also effectively targeted a market demographic that rarely even considers the prospect of life insurance: millennials and adults in their early twenties.

<https://deadhappy.com>



Lemonade's Website Design

On the subject of insurance, Lemonade is also worth mentioning.

Lemonade's strength is in its website design and branding, which take a minimalistic approach that is simple and positive. With its cartoon-like sketches, Lemonade keeps the tone of the website light. As well as avoiding the use of bright graphics that could distract from important content.

Lemonade's design is largely monochromatic. When it does use colour, it features bright pink in splashes that draw your attention to essential calls-to-action.

Super simple. Highly effective.

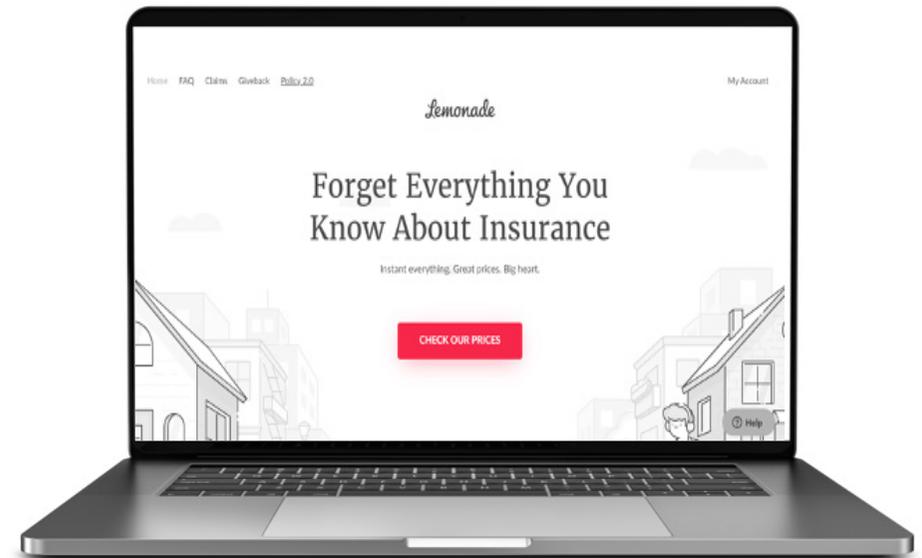
Why did Lemonade take this route?

This branding decision was grounded in audience insights, and Lemonade's awareness of its own strengths. When choosing an insurance provider, most of us are looking for simplicity and ease. We want a provider we can get set up with quickly and maintain with minimal effort.

Lemonade knows this and has created a site that reflects the simplicity they promise to provide; no flashy images or an overload of information—just a clean and authentic product, mirrored in their branding.

<https://www.lemonade.com/de/en>

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The Always “Like A Girl” Campaign

This highly influential campaign helped Always successfully overcome the challenge of increasing the popularity of their feminine-hygiene brand among a young audience.

This campaign was devised after Always lost much of its relevance with the 16 to 24 year old demographic.

While at face value the “Like A Girl” campaign might seem like a stroke of luck or a spark of genius, it was in fact grounded in extensive market research and analysis.

The Always team discovered that more than 50% of young girls quit playing sports when they hit puberty, as a result of a confidence crisis, which was the inspiration for this campaign.

This campaign’s achievements were extensive.

With their keen, data-driven insights into their audience, Always not only bolstered their popularity, but assisted in redefining the public’s perception of the phrase “like a girl”—firmly establishing their brand as one of female empowerment.

But why was this campaign so successful?

By understanding the thinking behind the “Like A Girl” campaign, we can gain key insights into why certain campaigns work and why others don’t.

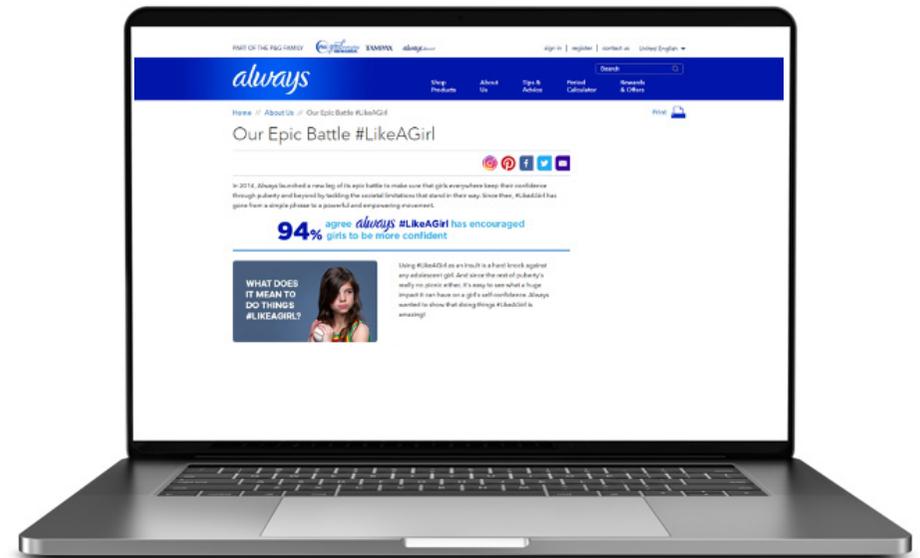
Primarily, the “Like A Girl” campaign succeeded because it subverted the widespread, but damaging notion that being a girl translates to weakness and inability.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs&feature=youtu.be>

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By addressing how and where this misguided assumption originated, Always undermined it. This in turn established Always as a pioneer of activism, a cultural disruptor, and as a company reinventing femininity for both their customers and their product.

Always’ originality sparked a discussion, which increased the visibility of their campaign.



Spotify's "Thanks 2016, It's Been Weird" Campaign

Spotify's global campaign, which paid homage to the year 2016, was a monumental success—and it was entirely data-driven.

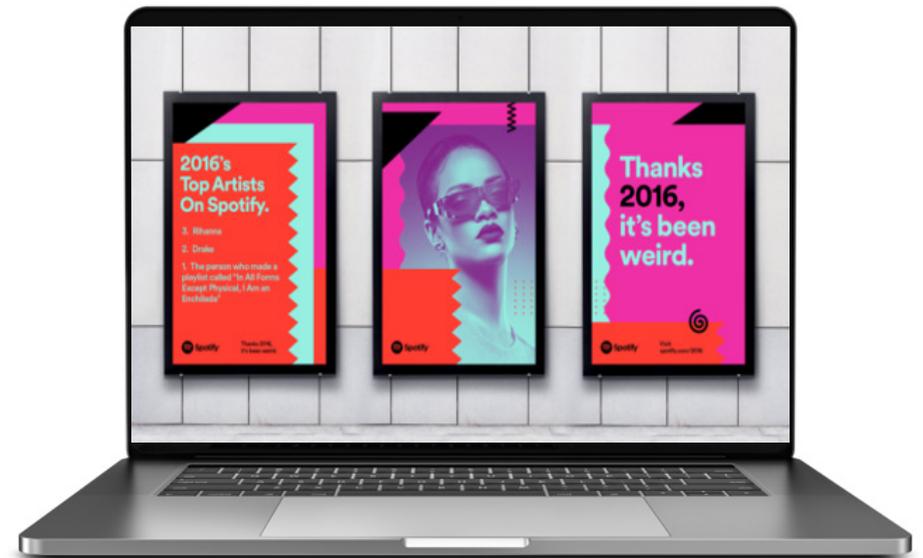
Despite fears that the increasing use of big data would be the nail in the coffin for creativity in marketing, Spotify was able to use big data innovatively to create real connection and a sense of shared experience.

In this campaign, Spotify used data on listening habits to personalise their approach to customers and mirror popular culture.

Spotify used humour to unite consumers behind a single experience that everyone had shared in; 2016. And in a year where division was rife, the emphasis on communal experience was well-received.

<https://www.spotify.com/uk/>

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Pic's Peanut Butter Content Campaign

Pic's Peanut Butter have a particular aptitude for content, and this is a strength they have taken full advantage of across both social media and their website recipe page.

On their recipe page, Pic's Peanut Butter publishes recipes in which their products feature. The recipes are professionally photographed and very creative. Thus, establishing Pic's Peanut Butter as a unique and authoritative source of content for lovers of baking and cooking.

Their recipe page provides the ideal conversion point for site visitors, as craving becomes a purchase.

What we love about Pic's Peanut Butter's approach to content is that it isn't trying to sell peanut butter, per se. But the limitless recipes that can be made with their peanut butter and other products.

In devising their content strategy, Pic's Peanut Butter recognised the limitation of their product; it only works as part of a wider recipe.

By emphasising the vast number of delicious recipes that can be made with their products, they lean into their strengths and effectively compensate for their weakness.

We challenge you to [visit their recipe](#) page without your mouth watering.

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Smol's Messaging

Smol's laundry detergent sums up its unique selling point in just seven words, which provides us with everything we need to know about how Smol differs from other laundry detergent providers.

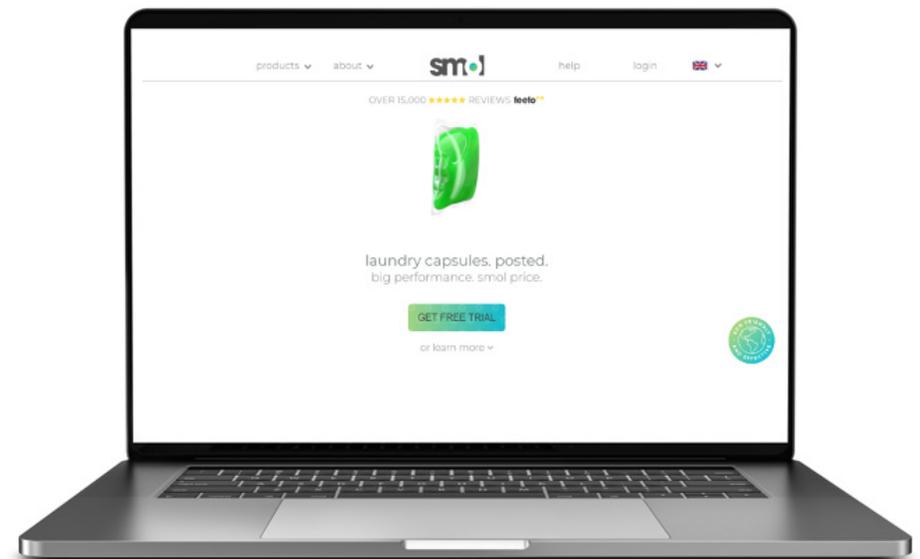
Simple, clean, and effective. Smol does not mince words or attempt to persuade you that their product is anything more than what it is: convenient, powerful, and budget-friendly.

Smol's messaging makes it clear that they know themselves and their audience. Their value proposition is crystal clear and they are boldly taking on massive supermarket chains by cutting out the middleman and delivering straight to the customer's door.

<https://smolproducts.com/>

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laundry capsules. posted.
big performance. smol price.



Ecologi's Gamification

Ecologi is a company that offsets carbon emissions on behalf of its customers, for a small monthly subscription charge. As an individual or business, you can neutralise your impact on the environment. Therefore allowing you to live a fully climate positive lifestyle.

Ecologi gamifies the experience of mitigating your environmental impact by generating a personal, animated forest on your profile page. This forest shows the age and location of the trees they've planted on your behalf across the globe. As the trees get older, they turn from seedlings into full trees.

The Ecologi platform rewards you with badges for your involvement (i.e. "100 trees planted", and "1 year climate positive"). Ecologi also shows you the equivalent of your carbon footprint reduction in terms of number of long-haul flights, metres squared of sea ice saved, and number of miles driven in a car.

Being able to visualise your impact in real terms is really motivating, and you can even benefit from having extra trees added to your forest when you refer someone new.

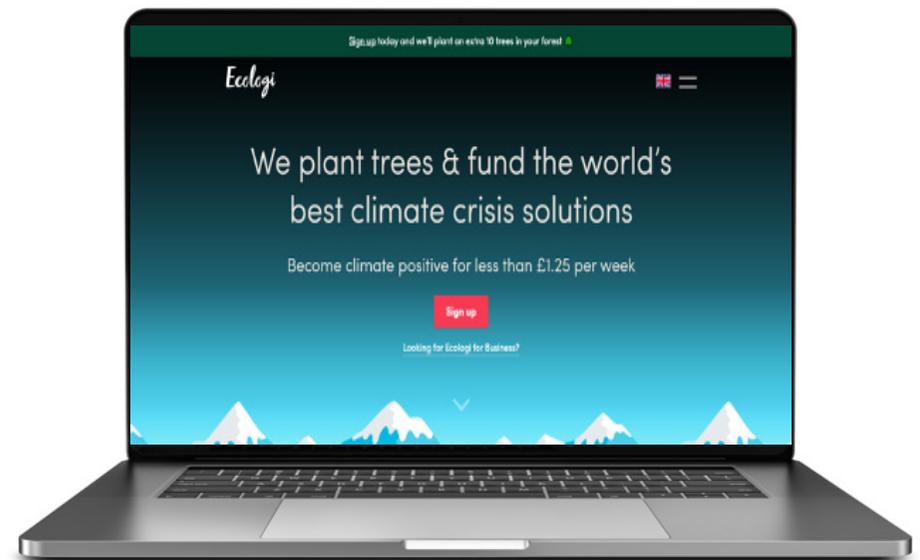
This approach is so effective that when we stumbled across Ecologi, we signed up ourselves!

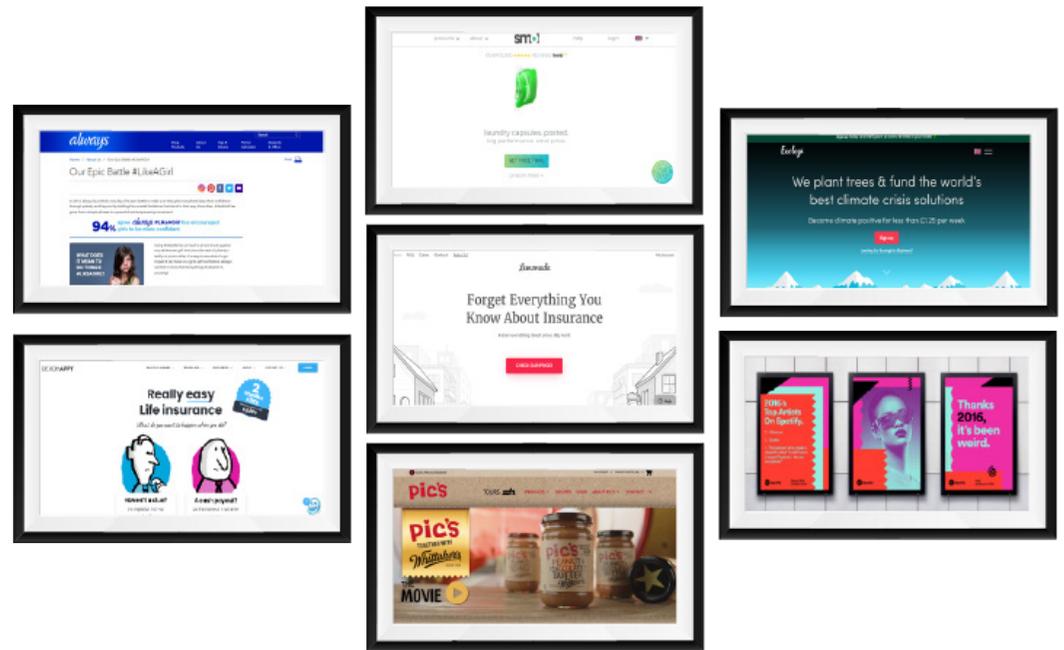
Being able to download our climate positive certificates each month and seeing the details of the projects we've supported gives us a real sense of pride and achievement.

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This gamified approach to giving is an extremely effective marketing initiative that turns parting with your money into a rewarding and high-value experience for businesses and individuals alike.

Check out [our forest](#) to see for yourself.





As these examples demonstrate, great marketing doesn't happen overnight and it isn't dumb luck.

These companies know exactly who they are, what they are trying to achieve and how to cut through the noise of their prospective markets. Their clarity is fundamental to their success.

This clarity, supported by being innovative, data-driven and rooted in an informed understanding of the audience is a great recipe for business success.

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We haven't chosen these companies because they are big and spent a fortune on marketing; we have chosen them because they are bold and trying to break through in a market with established competitors.

They have to be different and, because of this, they have to innovate.

You don't have to be big to be successful. Creating successful initiatives requires experience, expertise, dedication, and a boldness to move against the grain.

The Risks of Poor Marketing

Although even the most experienced of us can stumble from time to time, experience remains the only reliable way to learn, improve and then mitigate the chances of future failures.

In other words, good marketing (and good business) is sometimes more about your ability to roll with the punches, and continuously iterate, than it is about anything else.

Seemingly overnight successes rarely happen overnight, and are usually the result of years spent refining and improving.

The risks of a failed marketing strategy or campaign can be difficult to fully grasp. Particularly if you're a small business new to marketing.

That is why the best marketing strategies are built to be tested and adaptable, so that they can be modified as their context and environment changes.

To demonstrate the impact poor marketing can have on a business, we have put together a list of some of the most notorious failed marketing campaigns.

Please Note: We have not mentioned any small businesses in the following examples, because we don't like to take aim at new businesses as they are building and learning. We punch up, instead.

There is an infinite number of ways to fail at marketing, and each of these ways is a hazard or pitfall ready to trip you up.

- 
-  1. Be clear about who you are
 -  2. Be clear about what you are want to do
 -  3. Know your audience
 -  4. Analyse and predict trends
 -  5. Know your strengths and weaknesses
 -  6. Know the strengths and weaknesses of your competitors
 -  7. Subvert to stand out
 -  8. Be bold
 -  9. Data is key to decision making
 -  10. Context is everything—understand your environment
 -  11. To that end, review and improve
 -  12. Plan for the worst, expect the best

The Risks of Poor Marketing

Peloton's Gender Stereotypes

In 2019, Peloton released a christmas advertisement featuring a husband giving his wife a Peloton exercise bike as a gift. The wife happened to be very slim. Unfortunately for Peloton, many viewers perceived this advertisement as playing into gender stereotypes.

As a time when the female body empowerment movement was gaining more traction, the advert went down very poorly. As a result, Peloton's value went down by \$1.5bn pretty much overnight and shares dropped 9% by the end of the first day alone...and by another 6% by lunchtime the following day.

This advert failed simply because Peloton failed to understand their audience and cultural sensitivities that were especially prevalent at the time of release.



Source of Failure:

Playing into stereotypes

The Impact:

Significant drop in shares and lost customers



<https://youtu.be/ijof8uw4OHs>

The Risks of Poor Marketing

Bloomingdale's Date Rape Advert

In 2015, Bloomingdales launched an advert that featured a man staring at a laughing woman, with the caption reading, "Spike your best friend's eggnog when they're not looking."

Yikes. To say that this was a poor choice of words would be an understatement.

Needless to say, customers were far from happy with this advertisement. Which damaged the company's brand image significantly.



Source of Failure:

Oversight and carelessness

The Impact:

Dissatisfied customers and damaged brand

bloomingdale's

The Risks of Poor Marketing

Pepsi's Kendall Jenner Advert

Having mentioned Pepsi, the famous Kendall Jenner advert launched by Pepsi can't go unmentioned.

This is an example of a marketing blunder that seems to be becoming more common. Or at least is gaining more visibility in the media.

In 2017, Pepsi made a misguided attempt to connect with political activism in their advertisements. In an advert starring Kendall Jenner, Pepsi featured a group of young people protesting in the streets.

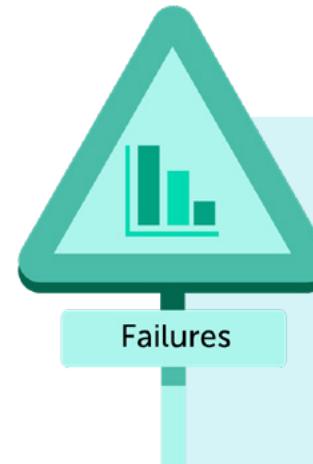
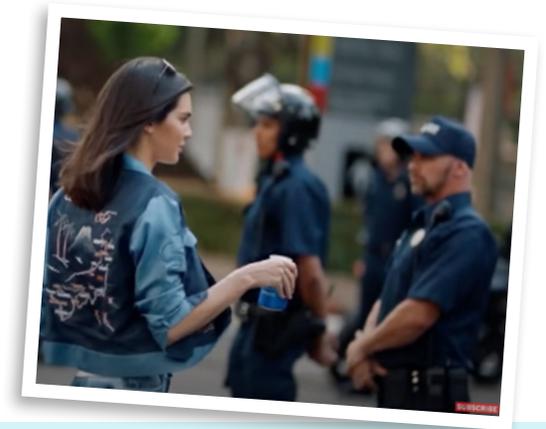
The subject of their protest or rally is ambiguous, with generic picket signs being held up reading "Love" and "Join the Conversation".

Kendall Jenner leaves a photoshoot to join the rally. The advertisement concludes with Kendall Jenner handing a police officer, who is blocking the path of the rally, a can of Pepsi.

This advert attracted a lot of negative attention and anger, as Pepsi was accused of leveraging social justice movements for corporate gain.

With many modern businesses choosing to take political stances on important subjects, it is crucial that these subjects are approached with authenticity and appropriate gravitas.

Using a social movement in an advert designed to sell a product or service is a very dangerous line to walk. In fact, it should be carefully considered and reviewed before it's embarked upon.



Source of Failure:

Approached sensitive subjects carelessly and out of touch with public opinion

The Impact:

Customer outrage, lost customers, and diminished brand



<https://youtu.be/bTivpgMkGKA>

The Risks of Poor Marketing

What Do These Examples Prove?

All of the examples listed above share one thing in common—they were needless.

Although it is inevitable that mistakes will be made from time to time, all of these failures could have been avoided with the right research, analysis, and insight on the part of the marketing teams responsible.

Effective, experienced, and careful marketers can spot a political landmine from a mile off, have taken the time to understand their audience, rely on data insights, and know from experience the level of risk involved with each venture.

We think that the core issue with all of these campaigns is that they fail to address long-term goals, fail to know and connect with their audience, and fail to establish their company identity. When brands try to please everyone,

they end up pleasing no one.

With the right marketing partner, you can mitigate these risks and ensure that every step your business takes is considered, clear and aligned to your long-term goals.



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Chapter 4

Signs You May Want a Marketing Consultant

Hiring a marketing consultant can not only be beneficial to your business, but can define it.

But what are the signs you need a marketing consultant or marketing consultancy?

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Signs You Need a Marketing Consultant



We have listed some of the most common circumstances that businesses find themselves in when they consider marketing consultancy support.

We believe the following to be clear signs that your business needs a marketing consultant or marketing consultancy

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The signs you need a marketing consultant or marketing consultancy likely fall into one of these three categories: planning, substance, and capacity.

Planning

- You are stuck and unsure which direction you should be heading in
- Marketing hasn't contributed much to your business' success thus far
- You need a marketing strategy to help you prioritise your goals
- You're a new business and you don't know where to start

Substance

- Your marketing isn't connecting with your audience
- You don't enjoy marketing, but need to manage it
- Your current marketing initiatives aren't working
- You need an objective perspective

Capacity

- You aren't ready to commit to a full-time, in-house marketing professional
- You need specialist marketing support
- Let's take a look at each of these signs in greater detail.

Planning



You are stuck and unsure which direction you should be heading in.

One of the first signs you might need a marketing consultant or consultancy is being unsure of your direction. Most business leaders we speak with tell us that they need help with their marketing, as standard. Upon closer inspection, we discover that what they often mean is that they've tried numerous marketing strategies in the past, spent a great

deal of money, and find themselves no closer to the answer or results they're looking for.

In our experience, no one contacts a marketing consultant when things are going well for them. They contact us when they're looking for a clear sense of direction. Or when they've grown tired of marketing fads that leave them feeling stranded in a money pit. This is a key sign you need a marketing consultant.

Online marketing advice that claims to guarantee quick-and-easy marketing success is very much like a get-rich-quick scheme. It is geared towards making you feel that there is a simple secret to marketing that is right under your nose; a hidden solution to your problems just waiting to be discovered, whether that's by stuffing keywords into your content or committing your efforts to email marketing.

These "solutions" aren't solutions at all, because they neglect an important truth about the nature of great marketing—it must be tailored to your unique business and your unique audience.

Whether you are trying to increase leads, sales, or both, your marketing strategy must be exactly that; your marketing strategy.

A marketing consultant or marketing consultancy gets under the skin of your business and devises a marketing strategy that is built for you and you alone.

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To date, marketing hasn't played a role in your business' success

If marketing hasn't played a role in your business' success, then your business' long-term growth trajectory and potential is likely limited.

We have found that when a business has seen much of their success come from a single marketing route (i.e., an online or physical marketplace), they reach a sales "ceiling". This ceiling might either be caused by capacity issues, limitations on the marketplace itself, or the competition.



If this is your experience and you are trying to transition your business from a one-trick pony to one that is relationship and brand-oriented, a marketing consultant can help you achieve this. They will support and advise you in devising a plan that is scalable, focused, and doesn't put all your eggs in one basket.

This type of plan is sure to take into account your long-term growth trajectory. Therefore, it will help you achieve more in the future without compromising the successes of your present and past.

Marketing consultants and marketing consultancies can also benefit you by helping revive your trust in marketing. They are more transparent about their processes and data than marketing agencies. As a result, this can help you to understand why they make certain recommendations and what to realistically expect in terms of results.

You need a marketing strategy to help you prioritise.

Many of the business owners we speak to are actually doing a lot of marketing for their business. However, they lack insight into the following:

- Why they are taking a certain approach
- What's working
- What isn't working
- What results they should expect
- How to align their marketing to the direction they want to move in
- How to interpret results and data
- This is where a marketing strategy comes into play.

A marketing strategy enables businesses to really consider what they are trying to achieve. It provides a roadmap of how best to orient their marketing efforts to achieve their goals.

Most importantly, a marketing strategy limits your marketing activities to key areas that maximise the likelihood of success—honing in on the areas that will reap the most rewards for you and your business.

A focused marketing strategy increases return on investment significantly. It strips back the activities that are failing and reroutes your resources into the ones that are showing great potential.

A marketing consultancy or consultant can help you devise a marketing strategy rooted in data and a deep understanding of your business.



You need a marketing plan in a key area

There are key differences between a marketing strategy and a marketing plan. A marketing strategy identifies what you need to do to achieve certain objectives, at a high level. A marketing plan, on the other hand, defines how to execute that strategy.

Marketing plans focus on specific areas, which is where a marketing specialist can provide assistance. For example, if you decide to focus your marketing efforts on social media, enlisting a marketing consultant who specialises in social media is likely to be advantageous.

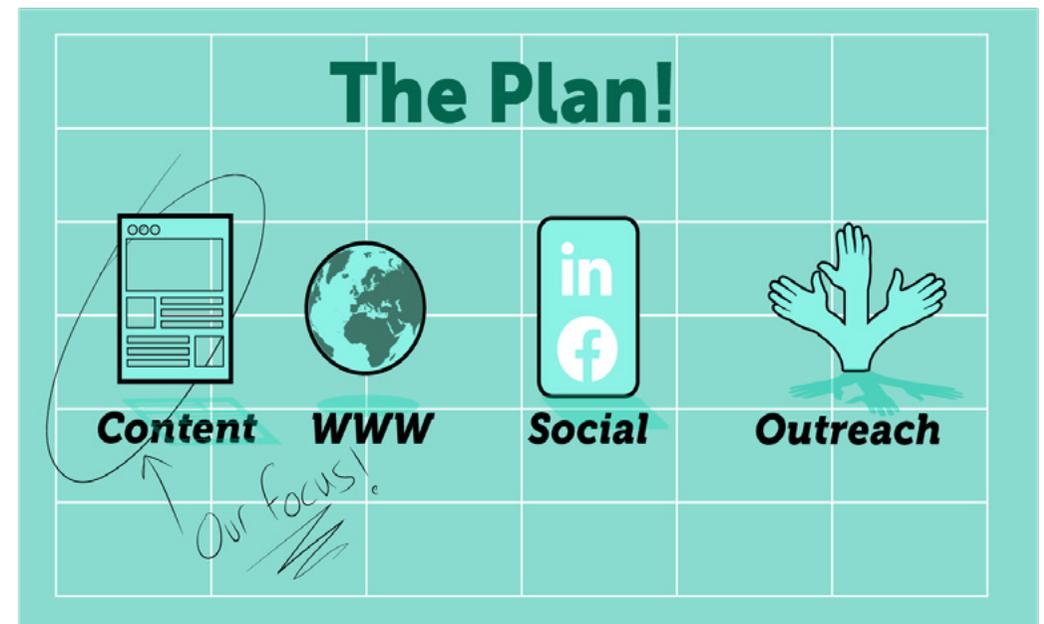
At Murray Dare, for instance, we specialise in content marketing, email, and outreach. We are not experts in TikTok, nor do we ever plan to be.

A great marketing plan allows you to test out ideas and scale accordingly. It provides insights into which areas of your strategy are working and which need improvement.

If you find that your marketing plan is falling short of your expectations, don't be discouraged. This is often par for the course, because great marketing is iterative by nature. The best marketing will use the latest data to improve your strategy and its execution.

If results are less impressive than you'd hoped, a marketing consultancy or consultant will conduct further analysis and help you make improvements.

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You're a new business and you don't know where to start

If you're a new business with a new product or service to bring to market, but are concerned about its viability, a marketing consultant can help you assess what your options are and how best to break through into your market.

Naturally, every new business faces a significant degree of risk. If your product or service misses the mark, your business could fail before it even has a chance to succeed.

A marketing consultant will help you mitigate this risk and determine whether your product or service stands a chance in the marketplace. They will also devise a tailored marketing strategy for your new product or service, setting it up for success.

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Substance

Your marketing isn't connecting

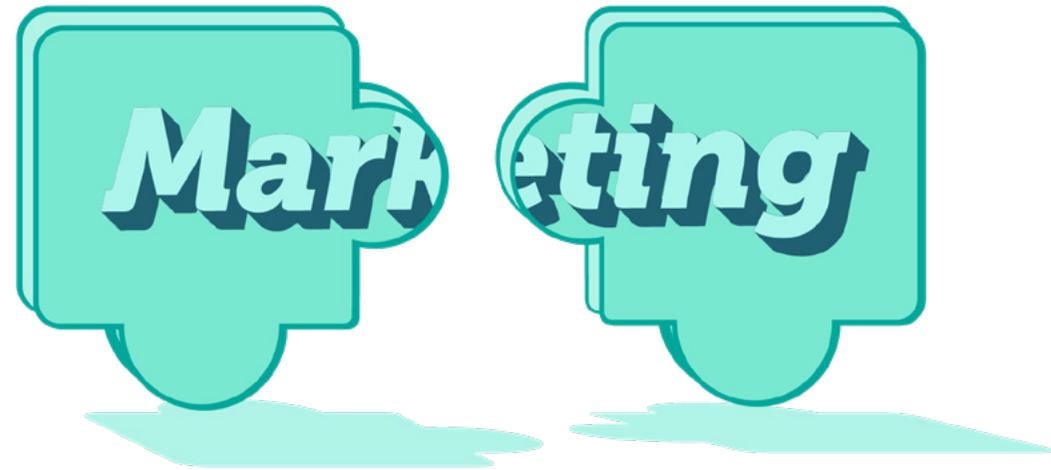
Businesses often create marketing campaigns geared towards satisfying SEO algorithms, rather than the business' actual audience. This type of content fails to connect with real people.

Put simply, if you don't prove that you care about your audience, why should they care about you?

Great marketing creates and deepens connections, which requires you to truly understand who you're speaking to.

Marketing consultants can help you create content that resonates with your audience, and will lead you away from simply mimicking what your competitors are doing. To stand out, your campaign and your content has to be unique; it can't simply be more of the same.

In a market where trustworthiness is becoming increasingly elusive, learning how to connect with your audience is more important than ever.



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You don't enjoy marketing, but need to manage it

Not everything about running a business is enjoyable. However, there is something to be said for the effect passion has on output and quality.

For SMEs, the passion for their service or product is a source of pride and the driving force behind the company. But passion also brings a level of credibility to your business that you wouldn't otherwise have if you were indifferent to your service or product.

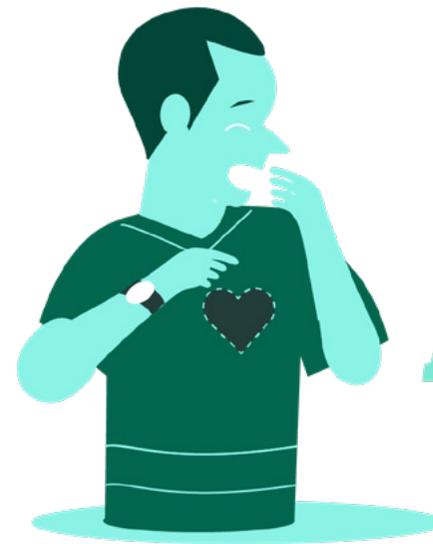
To that end, most businesses are very vocal about their enthusiasm for their product or service, because they understand that most consumers associate enthusiasm with quality, dedication, and diligence. After all, when you care about something, you aren't likely to let it fall apart.

Yet, this passion often falls short when it comes to marketing.

It is hard to translate your passion into a concise and consistent marketing strategy. Especially when there are so many factors and considerations to getting it right.

If you are not a marketer, but need someone to pull out your passion and communicate it to your audience, then a marketing consultant or consultancy can help you achieve just that.

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Marketing

Your current marketing or sales initiatives aren't working

You aren't getting any new leads or sales, or you aren't managing to close on the leads you do get. Your pipeline is dwindling. Perhaps business feels like it has stalled entirely.

An effective marketing consultant or marketing consultancy will identify the root cause of the problem—then, they'll devise a tailored marketing strategy to address it.

When you work with a marketing consultant, you are working with someone who makes understanding your business, and its obstacles to success, a priority. This allows them to implement solutions that are designed to work for not just any business, but your business.

Keep in mind, however, that a marketing consultant or marketing consultancy won't coddle you as many marketing agencies will. If they find that the reason your marketing initiatives aren't working is because your product or service is fundamentally flawed, they will be honest about this.

A great marketing consultant will have no interest in pocketing a quick buck by devising strategies bound for failure. If they think there is something wrong with the core of your business, they will tell you.

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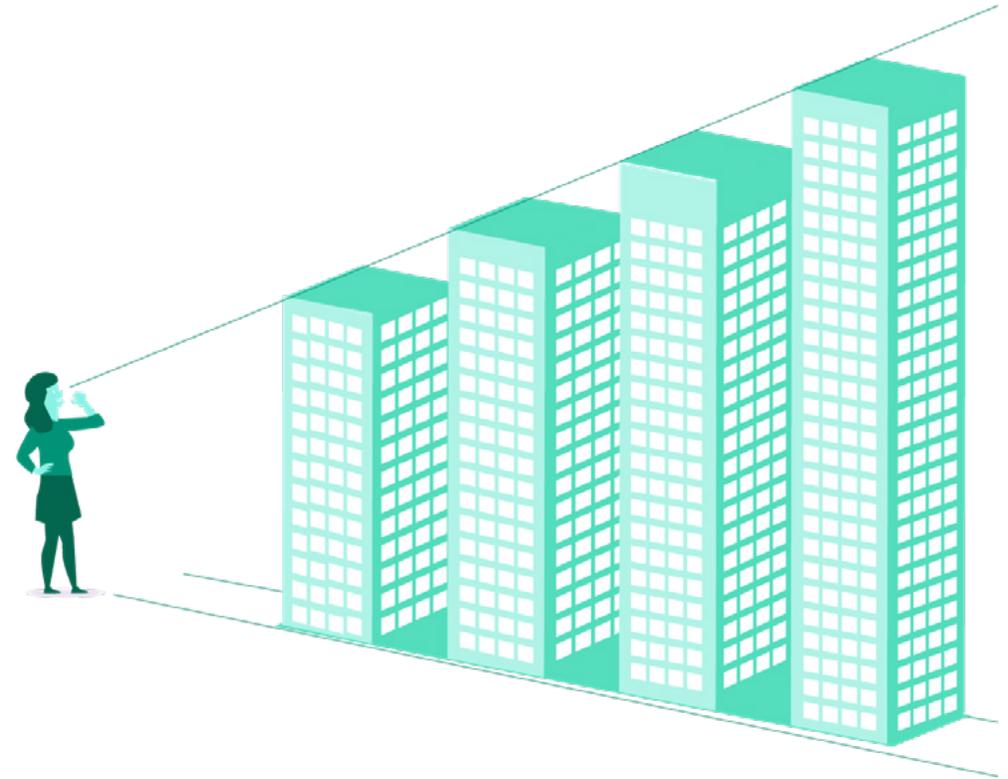
You need an objective perspective

For many business owners, objectivity can be a challenge. They may simply be too close, too involved, and too biased in their opinions. It is all too easy, as a business leader, to get caught up in marketing trends, or to feel sure of a particular route that may not reap results.

Many businesses struggle to see their own weaknesses. And when you've invested so much time, money, and resources into a specific approach, abandoning it may not be a consideration—even if it should be.

Marketing consultants and marketing consultancies can provide an objective, outsider perspective. As an external professional, marketing consultants are unbiased and are often able to see a business' weaknesses more clearly than business owners themselves.

This allows them to provide honest, unfiltered advice



Capacity



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Another of the key signs you need a marketing consultant is capacity. That is, you aren't ready to commit to a full-time, in-house marketing professional.

Many businesses aren't quite ready to pull the trigger on hiring a full-time, in-house marketing professional.

Committing to paying a full-time salary for the foreseeable future might feel like too great a risk. Particularly if you aren't certain what to look for in a marketing professional.

Hiring a marketing consultant on retainer for short periods of time, hourly, or on a per project basis is a great way to test the waters before you choose to hire someone in-house. An experienced consultant will help you devise a solid and targeted marketing plan; an in-house marketing professional can later implement this plan if this is the route you choose to take.

Before choosing a marketing consultant, you should consider what specialist skills you require and how best to hire according to the direction you're intending to scale into.

You need specialist marketing support

Let's say that your business already has an in-house marketing function, but that there's a specialist area of marketing your team doesn't have experience in. This might be conversion optimisation, digital marketing, website analysis, or SEO, for example.

Perhaps you've identified an area of weakness in your team that needs improving upon, but you don't have the time or resources to do so internally. In these cases, it may be time to hire a marketing specialist.

A specialist marketing consultant might specialise in an area of marketing, like marketing strategy or website design. Alternatively, they might specialise in a particular industry—such as healthcare marketing or food marketing.

Hiring a marketing consultant that specialises in your business' area of weakness allows you to supplement your team. It negates the cost, the hassle and the need to hire an additional employee.

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So, Do You Recognise The Signs You Need a Marketing Consultant?

As this chapter has explained, there are numerous signs or reasons why your business might be in need of a marketing consultant's support. Ultimately, whether or not a marketing consultant is right for you will depend on a few things:

- How you like to work
- Your current business' circumstances
- Your business' growth trajectory
- What you're looking for
- Your business' goals
- Still not sure?

The next chapter will outline some of the key benefits of hiring a marketing consultant.



Chapter 5

Benefits of Hiring a Marketing Consultant

Hiring a marketing consultant or marketing consultancy should bring with it a number of advantages. This includes an objective perspective, access to specialist areas of expertise, and more. But what are some of the other benefits of hiring a marketing consultant?

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7 Key Benefits of Hiring a Marketing Expertise Consultant



1. Expertise

Independent marketing consultants work with a lot of different businesses, both at a strategic and tactical level. This puts them in a unique position. It allows them to test and refine their ideas, processes, and execution over time.

Knowledge sharing of this nature also plays a role in marketing agencies. However, agencies typically treat businesses as an account focused on a specific marketing tactic (i.e., Google Ads or conversion optimisation). In other words, they don't tailor their approach and their strategies are often shallow and generic.

Agencies also tend to be resistant to innovation and new ways of working. This is because they like to stick to their set way of doing things. As a result, they stagnate and this is not conducive to the cultivation of enviable expertise.

On the other hand, when you engage with a marketing consultant, you should be gaining access to both a business-minded approach to strategic direction and a marketing-minded approach to planning and implementation. It is this combined knowledge that sets marketing consultants apart from agencies. Which is exactly why expertise is one of the main benefits of hiring a marketing consultant.

7 Key Benefits of Hiring a Marketing Expertise Consultant



2. An Objective Perspective

A good marketing consultant should be able to tell you what you need to hear, not what you want to hear.

Quite often, we find that marketing advice is very self-serving and full of hot air. It is designed to take you down a particular route, even if that route might not be the best one for your business. Just read any marketing article online and it almost always ends in a call to purchase.

When you engage a marketing consultant, you should expect them to approach your business objectively. They should provide recommendations that are right for you, rather than right for them.

7 Key Benefits of Hiring a Marketing Expertise Consultant

3. A Relationship

Your business is personal; your marketing advice should be personal, too.

This piece of advice might specifically relate to how we work at Murray Dare, but it's our experience that SMEs are run by individuals who want to be spoken to as just that—individuals.

We find that by speaking to business leaders on this level, on a one-to-one basis, our strategies are made smarter, our output more concise, and our content far more effective.

Consultants, by nature, are more relationship-oriented than agencies. They don't tend to regard clients as "accounts", but as individual business leaders they are familiar with and have regular contact with. They are able to take this relationship-oriented approach because they usually have fewer clients on their books than agencies at any given time.

In your search for a marketing professional, we strongly advise you not to overlook the value of relationship.



7 Key Benefits of Hiring a Marketing Expertise Consultant



4. Cost-Efficiency

Hiring a marketing consultant can be much more cost-efficient than hiring a full-time, in-house employee with benefits.

You don't have to fork out for sick pay or holiday pay. And marketing consultants are often paid by project or by the hour., Which means you never pay a penny more than what you get.

More importantly, you can hire for what you need, or use a marketing consultant to help you decide which in-house skills you actually do need.

7 Key Benefits of Hiring a Marketing Expertise Consultant

5. Strategic Proficiency

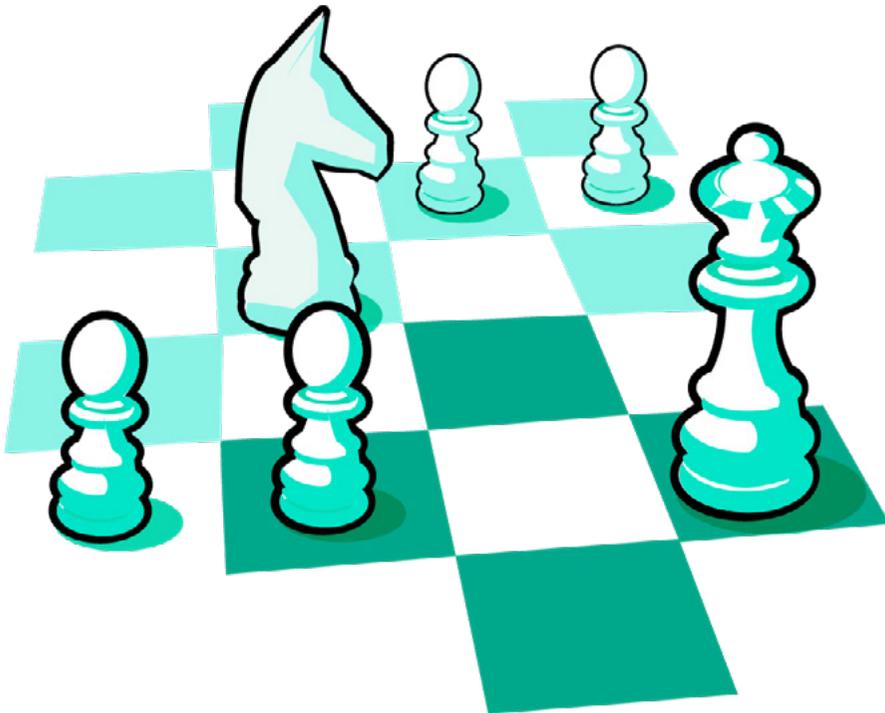
Marketing consultants constantly audit marketing performance, create marketing strategies and advise on potential solutions for growth.

In-house marketing managers, on the other hand, are often asked to write a new strategy every year—which is typically just the former year's strategy plus 5% on their target.

This is unsurprising, given that the context remains unchanged for marketing managers; why would you expect an in-house marketing manager to come up with anything new if what they've been doing is working?

In fact, we would argue that one of the key issues with small businesses is their strategic proficiency. They are stuck in the weeds and fail to see opportunities for improvement and iteration.

By nature of their role, experienced marketing consultants develop impressive strategic proficiency. This can help SMEs take their marketing to a whole new level.



7 Key Benefits of Hiring a Marketing Expertise Consultant



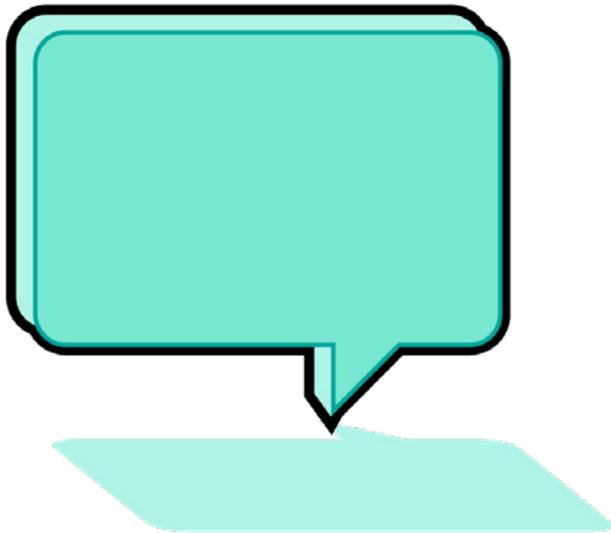
6. Market Connections

Perhaps one of the more under appreciated benefits of hiring a marketing consultancy are their connections and existing market relationships. Experienced marketing consultants often have market connections and relationships that can assist you in implementing your strategy.

For example, they may be able to recommend reliable specialists in particular marketing areas. As they speak to so many businesses, and work so closely with them, they are best-placed to determine who is dependable and who should be avoided.

An active example of this might be marketing consultants who invest in PR and outreach. They will likely have existing relationships with media contacts, editors, journalists, reviewers, and influential industry specialists that would take an individual business much longer to cultivate.

7 Key Benefits of Hiring a Marketing Expertise Consultant



7. Specialist Advice

Over time, a marketing consultant will naturally start to develop specialist knowledge in particular areas.

For example, this guide is an example of our content output.

We've spent hundreds of hours developing and creating content for both ourselves and our clients, which is why we're so proficient at it.

When choosing a marketing consultant, don't be afraid to ask where their specialism lies; anyone worth their salt should be able to tell you.

When Not to Work With a Marketing Consultant

Yes, we understand that as a marketing consultancy it might seem strange that we discourage certain businesses from working with marketing consultants.

But experience has shown us that there are some businesses and business owners that are not suited to working with a marketing consultant—these businesses might be better suited to working with a marketing agency, a freelancer, or hiring in-house marketing support instead.

So, how do you know if you shouldn't work with a marketing consultant?

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When Not to Work With a Marketing Consultant



1. You Don't Want Any Involvement

If you don't want any involvement in the marketing process, then a marketing consultant probably isn't the best choice for your company.

Marketing consultants will take the time to discuss your business with you, so that they have a keen understanding of who you are and your goals before commencing work.

Working with a marketing consultant functions more like partnership than outsourcing. If you are looking to outsource everything so that you never have to think about it again, a marketing agency is a better option.

When Not to Work With a Marketing Consultant

{ Marketing }

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2. You See Marketing As Purely Functional

If your understanding of online marketing doesn't extend past 'I want to be 1st on Google', then a marketing consultant might not be right for you.

We would argue that one of the key reasons businesses fail is because their online marketing doesn't really achieve anything.

Some people say that they care about marketing, but are not really prepared to put time and effort into their content. Cost is key here, and the marketing process is purely about output vs. cost.

We are biased, but we think the best work happens when businesses want to really understand their audience, and all our conversations start and end with them in mind.

If you are looking for functional solutions with much of the thinking removed, then a marketing agency might be perfect as they have fixed cost models based on output.

When Not to Work With a Marketing Consultant



3. You're Set On Your Current Strategy And What You Need To Do

A great marketing consultant or marketing consultancy won't work for you unless they feel confident that they can deliver results.

With this in mind, if you are set on your current strategy and are actually just looking for someone to do the output side of things, then a marketing manager or a project manager on a fixed term contract might be a better solution.

There are plenty of websites that can help you manage and complete a project. The important part is you're looking for a 'doer', not a 'thinker'.

How Can a Marketing Consultant Help You?

As this chapter has explained, a marketing consultant can help your business in a number of ways. For instance, it may provide specialist support and help you extend your marketing function. Or give you access to expertise and assist you in your marketing strategy and delivery.

The way that a marketing consultant or marketing consultancy can help you will depend entirely on your business' current position and its goals.

The benefits that a marketing consultant brings to the table will be determined by you. That is, how you want them to work with you. The best way to maximise your marketing effort is to approach your marketing with an open mind, a willingness to adapt, and trust. The best marketing consultants want to work with you, not for you.

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A blurred background image of a business meeting. In the foreground, a person's hands are visible, holding a pen and pointing at a document with various charts and tables. The document includes a bar chart, a line graph, and a data table. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a warm, golden light source from the left, creating a professional and focused atmosphere.

The Complete Guide to Marketing Consultancy. Part 2. Working with Marketing Consultants.

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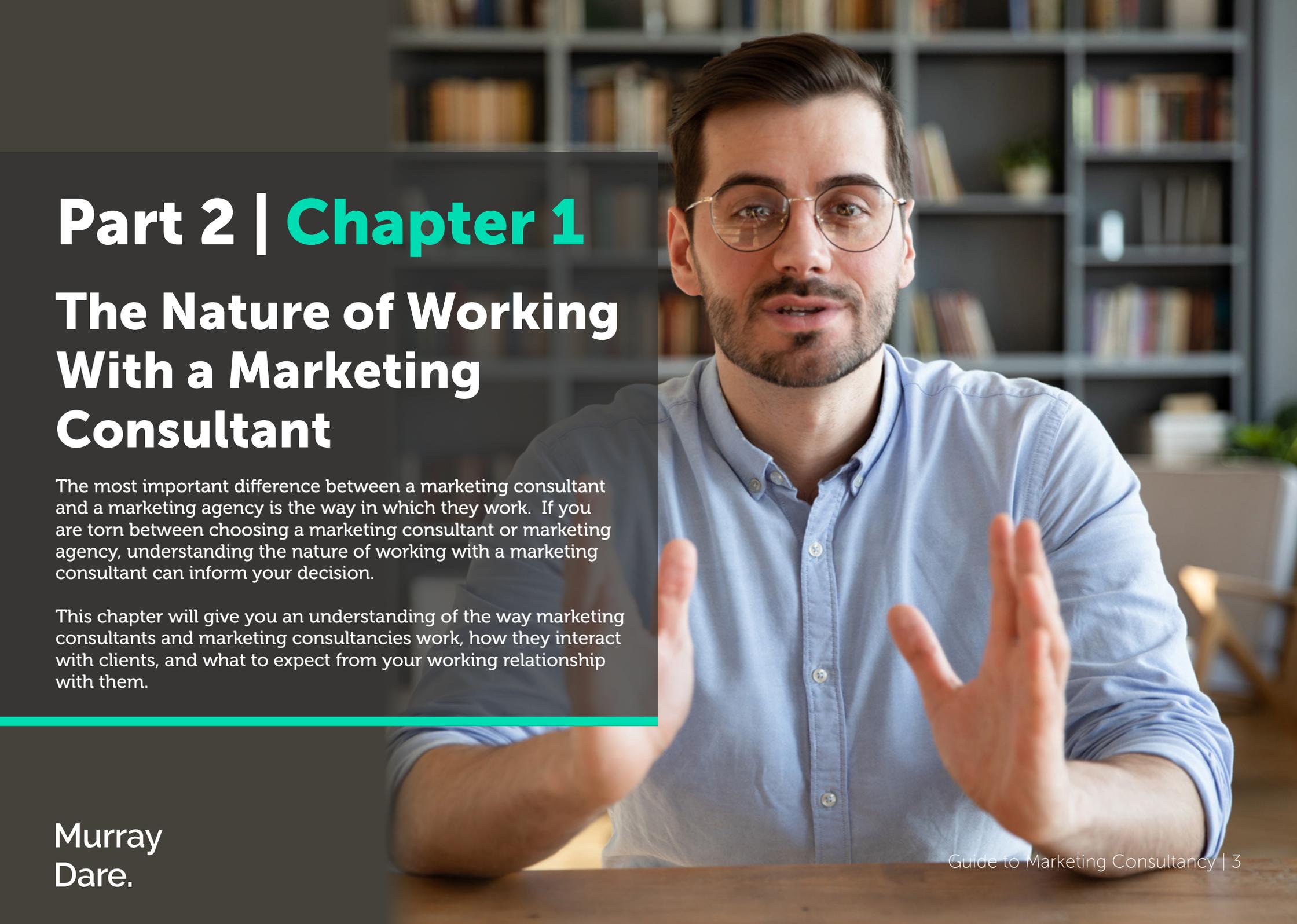
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A man with dark hair, a beard, and glasses is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. He is sitting at a wooden desk and gesturing with his hands as if speaking. Behind him is a large bookshelf filled with books. The lighting is soft and professional.

Part 2 | Chapter 1

The Nature of Working With a Marketing Consultant

The most important difference between a marketing consultant and a marketing agency is the way in which they work. If you are torn between choosing a marketing consultant or marketing agency, understanding the nature of working with a marketing consultant can inform your decision.

This chapter will give you an understanding of the way marketing consultants and marketing consultancies work, how they interact with clients, and what to expect from your working relationship with them.

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It's Not Outsourcing; It's a Partnership



***If a company outsources,
it pays to have part of its
work done by another
company.***

-The Cambridge Dictionary

It's Not Outsourcing; It's a Partnership

The Cambridge Dictionary defines "outsourcing" as follows:

If a company outsources, it pays to have part of its work done by another company.

This is not how a marketing consultant or marketing consultancy should function.

Rather than work for you as an outsourced service, a marketing consultant should be working alongside you. This means you should be more involved in key decisions and should have a better understanding of why they are being made.

With marketing consultancies and agencies, you should expect different levels of engagement.

Instead of taking on board a marketing function that you are currently performing in-house, as an agency would, marketing

consultants should provide specialist support that goes above and beyond the typical remit of marketing.

A good marketing consultant should therefore be able to advise at a business level.

A good marketing consultant should also be able to appreciate lots of different variables, meaning they are likely to recommend different ideas or strategies as the data appears.

This is partly why marketing consultancies are better for smaller SME businesses. They don't have entire departments dedicated to marketing, which means they need their marketing to have a wider business context.

We find that agencies are great for businesses with proven business models, e.g. we want to sell more

of our via Google Ads as the framework and context are set.

Marketing consultancies are better for businesses who are working out what their sales model might be or what a better strategy to sell their product / service might be.

This means that when you enlist the support of a marketing consultant, you are entering into a partnership that requires dedication and time on your part.

Earlier in this guide, we used the analogy of a personal trainer and dietician to explain the role of a marketing consultant; just as you cannot outsource your health and fitness to a personal trainer and dietician, you cannot outsource your marketing to a marketing consultant.

A personal trainer and dietician may help you establish a routine

and implement new habits, but they can't take full responsibility for your success. Similarly, a marketing consultant can help you finetune your business' identity and develop a robust strategy built for success, but they do so in collaboration with business owners.

If you are considering working with a marketing consultant or marketing consultancy, we encourage you to think of your working relationship as a partnership towards your strategy and the implementation of your strategy. The more you give to this partnership, the more you will get from it and the better the strategy and implementation will be.

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What Do We Mean by “Partnership”?

Partnership is a bit of an ambiguous word, because different circumstances apply a different meaning to it. In marketing consultancy terms, we think of partnership as a relationship of trust and respect for one another’s unique insights. For example, we believe that no one will know your business better than you do, and we will lean on you to help us understand exactly who you are and what your goals are.

But to make the most of a partnership with a marketing consultant, you must also recognise their expertise and approach the working relationship with open-mindedness and flexibility.

Businesses that succeed are businesses that are open to change. We won’t lie to you—if you do choose to work with a marketing consultant, they may well advise you to rip up your current marketing strategy and start from scratch. Although it can be hard to let go of plans, especially those we’ve invested so much time in, doing so can be instrumental to your business’ success.

If you are set on seeing your own plan out until the very end, and are unwilling to modify it to reflect a marketing consultant’s insights, then we suggest working with a marketing agency instead. They will do exactly what you tell them to, even if they think there is a better solution available.

But if you want a candid, specialist, expert view on your plan—and if you are willing to upheave it to create something better—then a marketing consultant will be very well suited to you.



Partnerships Require Trust

There's a lot of trust involved with working with a marketing consultant, and this can feel really daunting. What if they scrap your whole marketing plan and the one they create for you doesn't work? What if you invest all that time and effort into them, and they fail to deliver?

These anxieties often sway many business owners into working with marketing agencies instead of marketing consultancies; they feel that though they may not have much control or input in a marketing agency's approach, at least they know exactly what they're getting—whether that's five blogs a week or an optimised website design.

What business owners get from marketing consultants is much less clear cut. Marketing consultants want your business

to be adaptive and agile, which is why they don't offer packaged, off-the-shelf solutions. They will hone your strategy over time, making it responsive to market conditions and competitor activity.

Though this approach promises higher results, it requires trust, investment, and a long-term view of your business' growth.

Marketing agencies promise clear deliverables, but with less control and less flexibility.

Marketing consultants promise an agile solution designed to thrive in a marketplace that is constantly changing—a solution that is results-driven, grounded in expertise, and tailored to your business' unique goals and circumstances. This is why we think marketing consultants are better for SMEs.



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Not All Marketing Consultants Are Created Equal



As with any industry, some providers are better than others. Nurturing collaboration and partnership doesn't come easy, and you will no doubt discover that some marketing consultants will fail in this regard.

If partnership is important to you, and you want a true consultancy relationship with your marketing support provider, then it is crucial that you make the effort to understand how a marketing consultant works before hiring them.

We will explore how you can achieve this in greater detail in the following chapters.

Part 2 | Chapter 2

The Different Types of Marketing Consultants

The previous chapter outlined the nature of working with a marketing consultant. However, it is worth noting that every marketing consultant and marketing consultancy is different.

Each will have a unique character and methodology, which you should be confident of being compatible with before enlisting their services.

This is where choosing a marketing consultant can be difficult. Ultimately, it is for you to find, engage and decide upon the right kind of support for your needs.

This chapter will address some of the most common types of marketing consultants. This includes marketing consultant characters and their methodologies, how to spot them, and how to identify red flags during your search.

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The Most Common Types of Marketing Consultants

Although a marketing consultancy should, by nature of their role, function in partnership with their clients, some consultants achieve this better than others. You may even find that you prefer a less partnered working relationship, depending on your business' needs and your own personal preferences as a business owner.

Given that every marketing consultant works differently, it is crucial that you interrogate how they work before hiring them to ensure that they are a good fit.

In the broadest of terms, the different types of marketing consultants tend to fall into one of eight categories, and we have given them character names to help you identify them.



The Big Boss



The Butler



The Thespian



The Jack



The Odds Man



The Fashionista



The Snake Oil Salesman



The Guide

Here are 8 types of marketing consultants:

While some of these may be suited to certain business owners, others we think should be avoided entirely. After all, avoiding working with a bad marketing consultant—which can waste huge amounts of time and money—is of critical importance to the success of your business.

Types of Marketing Consultants You Should Avoid-

The Thespian - All the Credit, None of the Work

First, let's take a look at the marketing consultant types we think you should avoid.

By nature of their role, the thespians are hard to identify without proper interrogation. The thespian is a marketing consultant who farms out your work to others, despite leading you to believe that they are completing the work themselves.

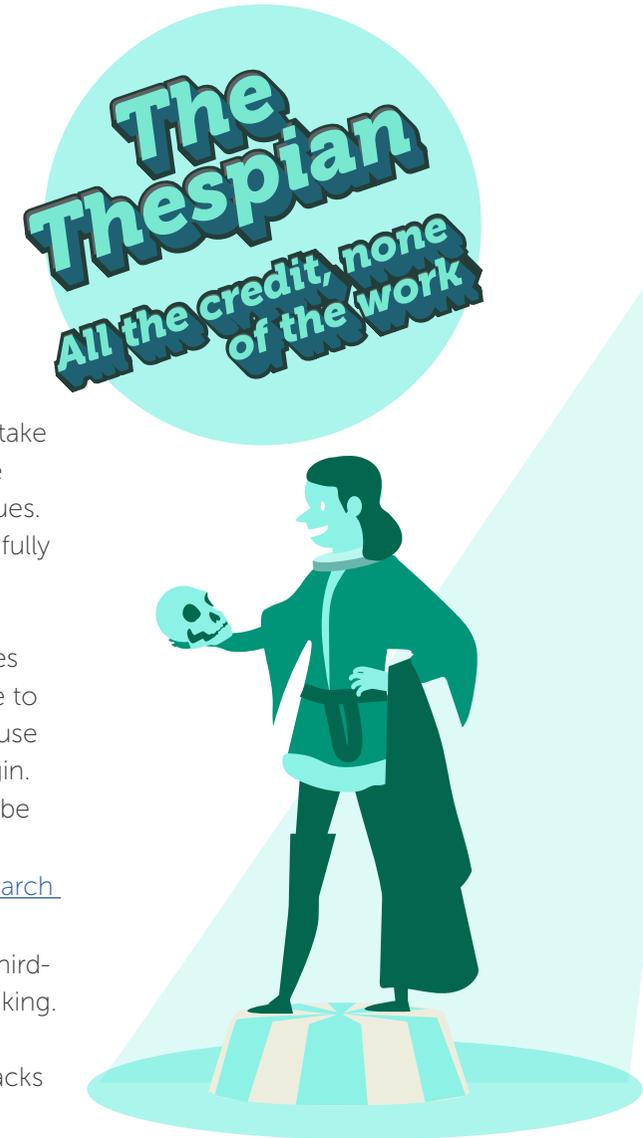
The thespian outsources to contractors with less experience, while they take a nice big slice of the profits.

The problem? You have absolutely no idea who is doing the work you've requested. Marketing consultants who take the thespian approach can be very cagey about the fact that they are outsourcing your work. Though they are unlikely to lie if asked directly, they won't proffer the information willingly. A limited amount of outsourcing may not be cause for concern. Particularly if it is being used to supplement expertise in some small way, improve efficiency, or reduce costs. For example, trustworthy and effective marketing consultants may outsource minimal amounts of work to keep their prices reasonable.

However, if a marketing consultant is outsourcing heavily, this means that you are effectively paying a premium

to a middle-man for sourcing the contractors—so that he or she can take their cut of profit. This is poor value and can create communication issues. Not to mention, you can never be fully certain who you're working with.

This way of working also incentivises marketing consultants to outsource to cheap, unreliable companies, because doing so increases their profit margin. The thespian's way of working can be especially problematic in particular areas of marketing. For instance, [search engine optimisation \(SEO\)](#), where a marketing consultant might pay a third-party to do on-page SEO or backlinking. Outsourced work of this nature is often spammy, short-termist, and lacks direction.



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Types of Marketing Consultants You Should Avoid-

The Thespian - All the credit, none of the work (Cont.)

Is This Type of Consultant Right For You?

As already mentioned, minimal outsourcing isn't necessarily a concern. Heavy outsourcing, on the other hand, can be concerning—especially if you aren't aware that it is happening. Because of this, the thespian isn't particularly well suited to any business.

Identifying This Type of Consultant

In the case of the thespian marketing consultant, you will want to ask questions geared towards revealing red flags, so that you can avoid this type of marketing consultant.

Fortunately, when asked directly, most thespian marketing consultants usually admit whether or not they are outsourcing.

Ask the following questions to discover the extent of their outsourcing:

Are you outsourcing?

The answer to this is likely to be "yes". Most marketing consultants will outsource from time to time to supplement expertise.

How much are you outsourcing?

This is the key question. A thespian marketing consultant is likely to be a bit cagey or evasive in their response. If this is the case, follow up with the question below.

What specific areas are you outsourcing?

If they are vague, this is a red flag. Ask for specifics. For extra accountability, we recommend asking them to send you a written list in the form of an email.

Where relevant, we would also recommend you ask for evidence that the outsourcing isn't going to cause any issues. For example, if they outsource backlinking, then you should ask how it works and request examples of the backlinks they have created for other clients.

What we are trying to do here is gain insight into the following:

1. How much knowledge and experience they have of the process they are outsourcing
2. How much confidence they have in their outsourced support
3. Whether or not this outsourcing process has been tried and tested before
4. How this marketing consultant compares to others (i.e., are they cheaper but outsource more than other marketing consultants). This will give you an understanding of how outsourcing activities impact cost

What in-house staff do you have and what are their areas of expertise?

This question is only relevant if you are speaking to a consultancy or agency, rather than an individual marketing consultant. If the in-house team covers the marketing areas you need support in, then they are unlikely to outsource your work.

As a general rule, the cheaper the cost, the more likely it is that a service is being outsourced abroad. This is especially true for areas such as SEO, website development and Google Ads.



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Types of Marketing Consultants You Should Avoid-

The Snake Oil Salesman - Too good to be true.

The snake oil salesman is not only found in the marketing industry, but across all industries.

This type of marketing consultant is characterised primarily by a lot of front, but a lack of long-term experience.

The snake oil salesman tends to use pushy sales tactics, while making promises that seem a little too good to be true. In these cases, they usually are. Snake oil salesmen gloss over the complexities, give shallow advice, and avoid challenging questions that stand a chance of exposing their lack of expertise.

More often than not, the snake oil salesman marketing consultant will promise quick wins that inevitably fail to deliver the promised results.

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Is This Type of Consultant Right For You?

This approach isn't right for anyone, because it is inauthentic and rife with empty promises. If you're looking for someone you can trust and put stock in, avoid snake oil salesmen like the plague. Of all of the different types of marketing consultants out there, the snake oil salesman should be avoided at all costs.

Identifying This Type of Consultant

Fortunately, snake oil salesmen are reasonably easy to spot—when you know what you're looking for and how to figure them out.

If you find that a marketing consultant you're considering is being vague about the practical elements of their approach, are evading questions or giving shallow answers, then it's likely that they could be the snake oil salesman type.



Types of Marketing Consultants You Should Avoid

The Snake Oil Salesman - Too good to be true (Cont.)

Here are some the questions you can ask to help you identify a snake oil salesman:

Can you explain, in clear terms, how you would approach helping me market my business?

An experienced and effective marketing consultant will be able to explain to you their processes.

You are looking for detail; end-to-end detail without the waffle. You want to be able to understand exactly what the plan is, how it works and why it is relevant to your business.

Can I see some case studies with evidence of your past success?

A legitimate marketing consultant will be able to provide concrete evidence of their success and experience.

If they do provide case studies, it's always worth contacting their previous clients to ask if they would recommend them.

Be sure to also review their online testimonials and remember that reviews on their website may not be entirely reliable.

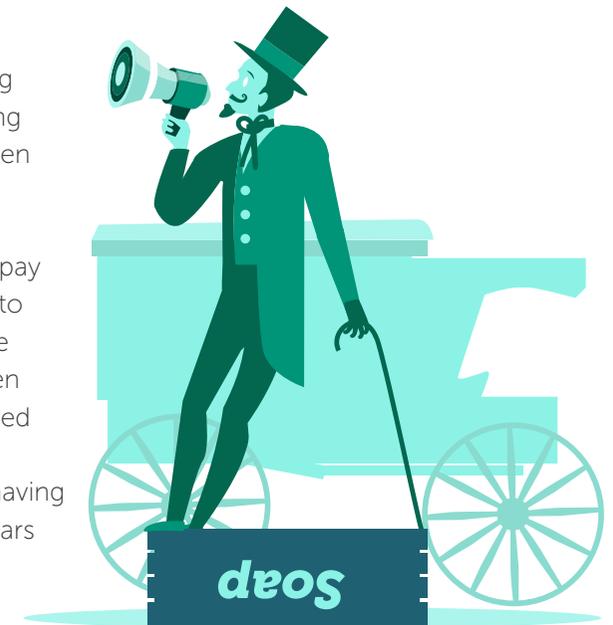
Can you show me where your processes have gone wrong / mistakes you have made?

People and businesses naturally like to focus on the positives, particularly

when they're trying to make a sale. But asking about the negatives is often a more revealing way of gaining an understanding of how a marketing consultant thinks and has developed their thinking over time.

Though it may sound harsh, we always assume that anyone claiming not to have failed in the past is hiding something. We think the failures often reveal more than the successes.

Keep in mind that most businesses pay for experienced marketing support to avoid making costly mistakes. These mistakes are par for the course when you're new to marketing; experienced consultants have adopted the risk associated with these mistakes by having hammered them out in the early years of their business.



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Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You -

The Guide - Two heads are better than one.

Some of the following types of marketing consultants will be completely wrong for you, while others will be far better suited. Let's begin with the guide.

Also known as the collaborative marketing consultant.

Marketing consultants and marketing consultancies that are true to their title should work collaboratively, in partnership.

The collaborative way of working requires a consultant to truly listen to their client. The consultant should have no predetermined ideas about what they are going to do for their client—rather, they will adapt their strategy to suit the business' unique circumstances and goals.

Ultimately, collaborative marketing consultants are there to advise, encourage, and provide expert insights. They should not make decisions unilaterally and the final call will always be yours.

Though honest and forthright, a collaborative marketing consultant will not place undue pressure on you. And they won't pressure you to take a certain route, however convinced of that route they may be. You can expect them to make you aware of the risks of alternative routes, but not to dominate the decision-making process.



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Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You - *The Guide - Two heads are better than one (Cont.)*

Is This Type of Consultant Right For You?

A collaborative marketing consultant is there to guide you and is the most faithful to the definition of consultancy. But that doesn't mean that this is the right type of consultant for you, as a business leader.

There are many other types of marketing consultants that deviate from the strict definition of consultancy. Consultants which do so may be better suited to those who want less involvement in the process or perhaps would prefer not to be advised at all.

The guide marketing consultant will work with you, not for you, and is ideal for clients who want guidance, support—and who are willing to develop a working relationship with their consultant that is strong, long-term, and collaborative by nature.

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Identifying This Type of Consultant

If you believe that the guide approach is best suited to your business, you are faced with the challenge of determining whether or not a marketing consultant works in this way.

Though many claim to be collaborative, in practice some consultancies are unwilling to take the time to understand your business. In fact, the time, sincerity and depth a marketing consultant is willing to provide, especially in the initial stages, is often the smartest way to identify whether you are working with a guide.

It's easy to mistake certain marketing consultants for being a "guide" because they appear to put a lot of thought into their proposed strategies. However, you may want to avoid consultants who are all about the thinking process, but prefer to have very little to do with application and execution.

While this type of marketing consultant can give plenty of clever, often generic advice, they fail when it comes to applying this advice. Especially to non-generic businesses that are completely digitally focused.

Working with a marketing consultant is a significant investment. Which is why we always advise businesses to conduct an interview of sorts before making their choice.

You should also take your time when choosing; remember that time and thoroughness are your friend when making your final choice. A good guide shouldn't be pushing you; they should be working *with* you.



Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You - *The Guide - Two heads are better than one (Cont.)*

Can I see case studies with evidence of the campaigns you've run?

A genuine guide will be able to show you plenty of evidence of their experience in application and execution. This proves that they aren't simply thinkers, but doers. This is crucial, because marketing consultants who are experienced in application have taken on much of the application risks on your behalf by fine tuning their approach over the years.

Tell me about you, your background and your learning?

We think that a good marketing consultant should have a logical end-to-end story of how they developed their current marketing methodology.

You should be able to see a common thread between the steps they've taken, the experiences they've had, and their thinking.

The way they arrived at their current systems and processes should make sense; there shouldn't be any gaps or unexplained changes in their approach.

How often will I hear from you?

Ideally, you should have ongoing contact in the form of email, phone calls, video calls, or face-to-face meetings. The guide marketing consultant will set aside significant amounts of time for these meetings, and they should be scheduled regularly. How much time and how regularly is for you to decide.

How long will it take you to truly understand my business?

In their answer, the guide marketing consultant will probably explain their onboarding process. They may say that they will schedule lengthy meetings in the early stages of your working relationship, or they may ask you to answer lots of questions about your business. An especially astute marketing consultant will constantly challenge your thinking, your marketing and your business.

What happens if I disagree with your advice?

The guide will make it clear that you have the final say in all decisions, but will be candid about the implications and risks associated with any route you decide to take.

Though the answers to these questions will inevitably vary from business to business, it is for you to decide whether they speak to the collaborative nature of the marketing consultant, or otherwise.

How long does an average client stay with you and what have you done with them?

Tenure is good; it shows that they have consistency. You want to pull out their story for each client as it will tell you the extent of their involvement and how the campaign changed overtime.



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Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You -

The Big Boss - My word is rule!

For some, the big boss may feel like exactly what they need.

The big boss is confident, a decision-maker, and dominant—which may seem reassuring. Especially if you're a business owner who feels overwhelmed by the sheer number of marketing routes available to you. The weight of responsibility can be alleviated by a big boss marketing consultant eager to take the decisions out of your hands.

Big bosses are likely to have hard and fast ideas about your path to success and can be very resistant to any adaptations. But in their approach, they overlook your expertise. You know your business better than anyone and you will have unique goals and ideas about your own identity. When you relinquish the decision-making power to a big boss marketing consultant,

you fail to recognise the value and critical nature of your own contribution.

If you're tempted by the notion of someone relieving you of the pressure of marketing decisions, consider this; a collaborative marketing consultant is also able to relieve you of this pressure, but by encouraging you and helping you grow more confident—not by overlooking your contribution.

Is This Type of Consultant Right For You?

If you are looking for someone with conviction who can relieve you of the responsibility of decision-making, then the big boss (especially in comparison to the other types of marketing consultants), may be right for you. They function similarly to a head of department, often making high-level decisions on your behalf.

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Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You - *The Big Boss - My word is rule!-(Cont.)*

However, you should keep in mind that working with this type of marketing consultant requires a lot of trust on your part. And if something goes wrong, your lack of involvement may come back to bite you.

Identifying This Type of Consultant

A key question to ask to help you identify a big boss marketing consultant is:

How much of my time will you need and how involved do I need to be?

A big boss marketing consultant will keep your involvement to a minimum. They will take the lead and are unlikely to schedule long phone calls or meetings. They might send you a weekly or monthly report via email, with updates on their progress and results.

What results have you got in the past?

What you are looking for is trust in the process here. The more evidence you can see of success, the more confident you should feel that you have made a good decision and your business is in the right hands.



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Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You - *The Butler - You say 'jump', I say 'how high'.*

On the other side of the spectrum, we have the butler.

Just as the big boss appeals to some, so does the butler. The butler will follow instructions to the letter and is less forthright than the big boss, but no less un-collaborative. While the big boss usurps decisions, the butler relinquishes all responsibility for them.

The butler approach is common among some marketing agencies and isn't necessarily a bad thing if this is the type of support you're looking for. If you have a clear idea of the direction you'd like to head in, and just need someone to do the legwork, then a marketing agency may well be suited to your business' needs—especially if you already have a marketing strategy in place which is either working, or you are confident it is going to work.

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But if you are looking for a marketing consultancy that can help you create a robust and successful marketing strategy, it's not a butler you need, but a partner. Despite sometimes being called a consultant, the butler does not provide consultancy services. In fact, the butler is better described as a marketing manager hired as a contractor. You will likely pick them up on short-term freelancer websites.

This type of consultant is often hired to supplement existing staff temporarily—but be aware that just because they call themselves "consultants" doesn't necessarily mean they perform a consultancy role.

If you are wanting a decision maker (which we are assuming is the reason you are reading this guide), be on the lookout for providers that seem more interested in following orders than working in partnership with you to define your strategy.



Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You - *The Butler - You say 'jump', I say 'how high' (Cont.)*

Is This Type of Consultant Right For You?

If you are looking for someone to outsource certain marketing tasks to and are not especially interested in developing a strategy, then this could be the right type of consultant for you.

In fact, we at Murray Dare often turn away potential clients simply because their needs are better suited to a marketing agency that is set up for implementation, rather than consultancy. There is nothing wrong with this, if that is what you are looking for.

Identifying This Type of Consultant

If you're looking for a butler, consider asking the following questions:

Can you complete tasks for me as and when needed?

A butler marketing consultant will be able to complete tasks on a reasonably ad hoc basis. If you have specific tasks in mind, you should ask about these.

How much will I hear from you?

A butler will not schedule long meetings or phone calls. Instead, they often collaborate via email to receive their instructions. Because they are set up to follow instructions, rather than advise, the butler requires very little contact in comparison to other types of consultants, such as the guide.

How do we measure success and performance?

If the answer they give to this question is a rundown of tasks and timings, then you will have a marketing consultant with butler tendencies.



Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You -

The Jack - Jack of all trades, master of none.

If an individual marketing consultant claims to be an expert in all areas of marketing, they're probably a Jack of all trades, master of none. They're looking for any and all business, but it's extremely unlikely that they can provide the same level of expertise as a specialist marketing consultant.

It is also highly likely that people who are new to marketing consultancy fall into this bracket. They are essentially generalist marketing managers who are looking to develop their skill set as they work.

As a rule, choose a specialist marketing consultant who can help you tackle the area of marketing you're struggling most with—whether that's SEO, email, or strategy.

Find the marketing consultant who has a relevant background to the problems you are trying to solve. Even a Jack may have specialist areas of expertise, if they have paid particular attention to this area in a previous role.

What if you need someone to help you with all areas of your marketing?

It depends on your situation, but we would argue that no one is amazing at everything, especially those who tell you they are. If you are looking for a company that can assist you with all areas of marketing, we suggest choosing a marketing consultancy with a varied team of specialists.

The best teams are compiled of experts who work together, each with a very specific role to play. They are masters of their trade, they know their strengths, and they know their limitations.

A jack of all trades is learning to cut their teeth, before they work out what they are really good at.

The JACK
Jack of all trades,
master of none.



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Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You - *The Jack - Jack of all trades, master of none (Cont.)*

Is This Type of Consultant Right For You?

A Jack of all trades might be right for you if you aren't looking for specialist support and you'd like to have a single point of contact for all marketing support.

The Jack marketing consultant is often new to consultancy. They may have worked for a consultancy in the past, and have just recently struck out on their own. They are also usually more budget-friendly than other types of marketing consultants.

It is important to note, however, that a Jack of all trades won't be able to support you in specialist areas of marketing, though they may agree to assist in this regard if asked. This can result in low-quality work. So if you are set on working with a Jack, make sure the work you give them is aligned with their level of expertise.

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Identifying This Type of Consultant

The Jack is fairly easy to spot. They will usually be an individual who claims to be able to help with all areas of marketing. To identify a Jack of all trades, ask the following question:

Is there anything you can't do for me?

Whether you're trying to find a Jack marketing consultant or hoping to avoid them, this is a great question to ask. A Jack will offer to conduct almost all marketing work for you, often despite lacking sufficient experience.

What have you got wrong in the past?

History is the best predictor of the future. Experienced marketing consultants will have become experienced by making mistakes. They should be able to own these mistakes and tell you what they have learnt from them.



Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You -

The Odds Man - Playing the numbers game

If you're looking for quantity over quality, then the odds man may be suited to your business. The odds man plays the numbers game, typically by providing as much as possible within a short timeframe.

For example, when conducting outreach and PR, the odds man marketing consultant will send out bulk emails, source numerous irrelevant guest blog opportunities, and quickly land themselves in spam folders. They are likely to disregard the personal touch that makes for great outreach.

Similarly, in content, the odds man will stuff keywords and aim for high word count, instead of high-quality—compromising the likelihood of genuine audience engagement.

Ultimately, the odds man aims to flood the

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marketplace with your business' presence, failing to recognise that quantity must be balanced with quality for true visibility and conversion.

Is This Type of Consultant Right For You?

Unlike many other types of marketing consultants, the odds man focuses on visibility, not engagement. If being as visible as possible as quickly as possible is your priority, then you might consider the odds man approach.

The drawback of the odds man is that the content produced tends to be lower quality. For example, clients of an odds man marketing consultant might wind up with blog or website content that doesn't read well or convert effectively.



Because this type of marketing consultant takes a spammy approach, your IP rating may be damaged, meaning all your emails go to spam. Alternatively, you might be chasing leads that don't really exist.

Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You - *The Odds Man - Playing the numbers game (Cont.)*

Identifying This Type of Consultant

The questions you ask to identify an odds man marketing consultant will vary depending on what the consultant has been hired to do for you. Here are some generic questions you can ask to help you identify whether a marketing consultant plays the numbers game:

How much time will you spend on a specific task? (e.g. creating a blog post)

You should tweak this question to address a specific task you might ask the consultant to complete for you. If you're not sure how long something of high quality should take, do a little research. If they are promising to do it faster, they are likely to be an odds man marketing consultant.

What are the expected results?

An odds man marketing consultant is unlikely to be able to give you a clear idea of what results you should expect (i.e., number of sales). This is because their strategy isn't data-led, which means the results are very difficult to predict.

What is the review process?

The odds man won't put much time or effort into the review process for completed tasks, because their focus is on quantity not quality.

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Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You -

The Fashionista - Big on trends, bad on data

Lastly, we have the fashionista. The fashionista is less interested in data insights or tailored strategies. They follow the latest trends in marketing—of which there are many—falling victim to claims like “email marketing is the *only* way to succeed” and “SEO is *all that matters*”.

The fashionista marketing consultant often lacks a strategic focus, and prefers to lean on current trends and fads.

That being said, they can be great if the route is tried and tested. Especially if they are performing tasks for you that they have had success with for similar clients in the past.

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We find social media experts tend to land in this category, and this approach makes sense within that context as it sometimes requires a less structured approach than other areas of digital marketing.

Context is important here. If social media works for your business and you have found the right person, then go for it.

Is This Type of Consultant Right For You?

Fashionista marketing consultants tend to be very good at specific areas of marketing, particularly within certain industries. For instance, a fashionista preoccupied with the email marketing trend who has had a lot of success while working with a clothing brand might well be able to deliver similar levels of email marketing success for a business in the same sector.



However, fashionista marketing consultants aren't especially adaptable and what works for one business won't necessarily work for another.

Types of Marketing Consultants That Might Be Right For You -

The Fashionista - Big on trends, bad on data (Cont.)

Identifying This Type of Marketing Consultant

To identify the fashionista approach, ask the following question:

Why do you think (insert trend / specific area of marketing) is right for my company?

If they answer that the specific area of marketing works for almost every company, so yours should be no different, they are probably a fashionista marketing consultant.

The Right Type of Marketing Consultant is the One That Works For You

This guide wasn't written to be prescriptive or to lead every reader down the same route. Every business owner reading this guide will have his or her own unique way of working and a specific preference for how their marketing support functions.

What we have found, however, is that many business owners either don't know what options are available to them or don't know how to identify red flags when talking to different types of marketing consultants.

We hope that this chapter has given you some insight into the types of marketing consultants out there, and that it has helped clarify what questions you can ask to suss out who you're dealing with.

But questions of character aren't the only questions business owners should be asking when choosing the right marketing consultant for their needs. Their way of working is another crucial consideration, which we will explore in the next chapter.



Part 2 | Chapter 3

The Different Marketing Consultant Approaches

Every marketing consultant will have their own particular approach to the way they work, but they generally fall into one of the following three categories:

- Task-oriented
- Solution-oriented
- Strategy-oriented

As mentioned in the previous chapter on the different types of marketing consultants, every business is different and is looking for the right support for their needs.

This means that a way of working that works for one business may not work for another.

This chapter will outline what each of the approaches listed above entail and provide insights to help you decide which is right for you and your business.

Different Types of Marketing Consultant Approaches

The title of “marketing consultant” is thrown around a lot. It is a broad, umbrella term that can refer to a range of different marketing approaches, processes, goals, and results. Marketing consultant approaches vary and some approaches may not work for your business at all.

Many businesses, when they go looking for a marketing consultant, aren’t aware of the crucial differences between each consultant type and their approaches—consequently, these businesses end up investing significant sums of money in a consultant that simply isn’t suited to their needs.

The risk of choosing the wrong consultant for your business can be easily avoided if you know the differences between them, the importance of marketing consultant approaches, and what to look for. In the last chapter, we discussed the different characters and methods to look out for when choosing a marketing consultant. The next step is understanding how you’d like your marketing consultant to work (i.e., would you like them to perform tasks, provide a particular solution, or help you strategise?).

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Different Types of Marketing Consultant Approaches-

Task-Oriented

A task-oriented marketing consultant takes a very short-term view of marketing success. They tend to be very reactive and less proactive than solution and strategy-oriented marketing consultants.

Task-oriented marketing consultants work on a task-by-task basis. They ask what the problem is and implement short-term solutions to those problems.

For example, if you were struggling to rank your website on Google, a task-oriented marketing consultant might suggest injecting keywords into your content—often without real consideration of the bigger picture when it comes to SEO, competitor analysis, and the value of the content being produced.

Unlike a strategy or solution-oriented marketing consultant, a task-oriented marketing consultant won't necessarily consider how their activities contribute to a wider marketing strategy. Their actions are not strategic, but are designed to solve individual problems without addressing their root cause.

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Different Types of Marketing Consultant Approaches- *Task-Oriented (Cont.)*

This type of marketing consultant is a doer not a thinker. As a result, they function very much like a marketing agency or marketing manager, rather than a consultant. Instead of providing long-term solutions and helping you devise a viable marketing strategy, task-oriented marketing consultants are better suited to solving individual issues.

Marketing consultants who are task-oriented may be suited to you and your business if you are certain of your current marketing efforts and your existing strategy. You may prefer a task-oriented marketing consultant if you are not looking for advice, but simply

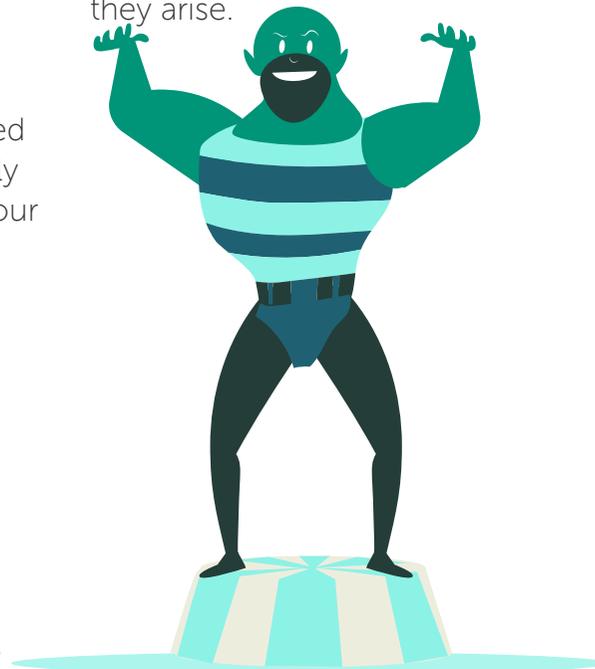
want someone to outsource ad hoc work to.

However, if it is the long-term growth trajectory of your business that you are concerned with, a task-oriented marketing consultant is unlikely to be a good fit for you and your business.

As mentioned earlier, the title of “marketing consultant” is thrown around a lot. Many professionals claiming to be marketing consultants do not actually specialise in providing consultancy services.

Marketing consultants that are

true to their title are there to be consulted, not simply resolve individual issues as and when they arise.



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Different Types of Marketing Consultant Approaches- Solution-Oriented

Solution-Oriented

A solution-oriented marketing consultant usually specialises in a specific area of marketing (i.e., email marketing) and relies heavily or even exclusively on that area to deliver marketing success for their clients.

If you have already decided that a particular area of marketing will be your priority going forward, then a solution-oriented marketing consultant who focuses on this area may be ideal for your business.

However, it is worth keeping in mind that solution-oriented marketing consultants do tend to paint all businesses with the same brush. Even if you are not decided on their particular solution, they are likely to recommend it as they do for all their clients.

While their solution *could* work for your business, what works for one business does not necessarily work for another. Marketing consultant approaches will and do differ for each business. More importantly, you might be missing an opportunity for originality when you are simply cut and pasting someone else's strategy.

Here's an example of how a solution-oriented marketing consultant might work for some, but not for others:

Let's assume that you run an IT training business and you are considering a solution-oriented marketing consultant who specialises in social media marketing.



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Different Types of Marketing Consultant Approaches- *Solution-Oriented (Cont.)*

As you expected, they have recommended a social media marketing solution to improve your business' revenue and sales. As a business that is reasonably well suited to social media, you can probably expect good results.

Now let's suppose that you run a refurbished IT equipment company instead, and you go to the same solution-oriented marketing consultant. As with the IT training business, they recommend social media marketing.

The cold truth is that social media marketing isn't likely to be nearly as effective for an IT equipment refurbishment company as it is for an IT training company. After all, who gets excited by seeing pictures of old computers as they scroll through their Instagram?

While social media might play a role in this second type of business, it probably isn't going to be the main strategy that increases their sales.

In fact, investing heavily in a solution-oriented marketing consultant that hasn't considered your business' unique position and needs can ultimately break a business.

Plus, we find that a lot of marketing agencies tend to tie businesses up for 6/12 months pursuing one strategy. Only to work out in month three that this route is not going to work; but you are still fixed within a contract that isn't working for you. This happens more often than you would think.



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Different Types of Marketing Consultant Approaches- *Strategy-Oriented*

A strategy-oriented marketing consultant takes a more long-term, tailored approach to each client. They have no set position, which means that they are able to create bespoke strategies.

Provided the marketing consultant is experienced and has sufficient expertise, these bespoke strategies are far more likely to deliver success than the deliverables provided by task and solution-oriented consultants. Strategy-oriented marketing consultants have a greater focus on the consultancy aspect of their role. They understand that every business they work with has



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Different Types of Marketing Consultant Approaches- *Strategy-Oriented (Cont.)*

different needs, strengths, and weaknesses.

The marketing strategy they will help you devise will take all of these factors into account, as well as considering your business' competition, its audience, and the state of its industry.

Each of these components will contribute to your strategy.

Strategy-oriented marketing consultants are thinkers. They understand that there is no quick-fix solution that promises success. If there were, every business would be successful.

Instead, they take a big picture view of your business' individual circumstances and environment to create a marketing strategy that is targeted, actionable, and offers the best chance of success.

If you aren't sure what path to take with your marketing initiatives, or you feel that your marketing lacks a clear plan, then a strategy-oriented marketing consultant is the ideal choice for you.

Sometimes we find that businesses are thinking of adopting the right strategy from the get go. But more often we find that businesses have tried a few methods that haven't worked or

scaled how they expected, and so they are trying to work out why and how they can change.



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Considering a Marketing Consultant: Questions to Ask

Now you just need to figure out what type of marketing consultant you're talking to when you begin your search. As with determining their approach, the key is to ask lots of questions. Here's some that we recommend in order to determine the right marketing consultant approaches for you:

Can you pick up ad hoc tasks for me?

If they say yes, this doesn't necessarily mean that they are strictly a task-oriented consultant, as marketing consultants of all types might be willing to pick up the occasional ad hoc tasks. If they say no, however, they are likely to be a strategy-oriented consultant who focuses on strategy over implementation.

Do you have a particular solution in mind for my business?

This question will help you determine whether or not they are solution-oriented. If they say yes, follow up with the question below.

If so, why do you think this solution is suited to my business?

A solution-oriented marketing consultant will talk about the success this particular solution has brought for other businesses. They are unlikely to be able to explain exactly why this solution works for your business in particular, but will discuss the solution's success more generally.

Is this the same solution you apply to all businesses?

A solution-oriented marketing consultant will apply the same solution to most, if not all businesses. A strategy-oriented marketing consultant, on the other hand, will apply different solutions to different businesses, based on their individual circumstances and needs.

How does this fit within a broader marketing strategy?

A strategy-oriented marketing consultant will be able to tell you how they will go about devising their strategy. As well as the key things they need to understand or milestones they want to reach. Their answer should focus on learning your business, analysing competitors, and they should mention tools and data they intend to leverage as they try to work out what the best solution is.

Can I see case studies?

Ask for several case studies. These will show you whether the marketing consultant in question has a pattern of performing tasks, implementing one particular solution, or strategising.

Ask how they got to that point and whether the plans changed. Based on their response, you should be able to see exactly the type of approach to expect from them.

Which is Right For You?

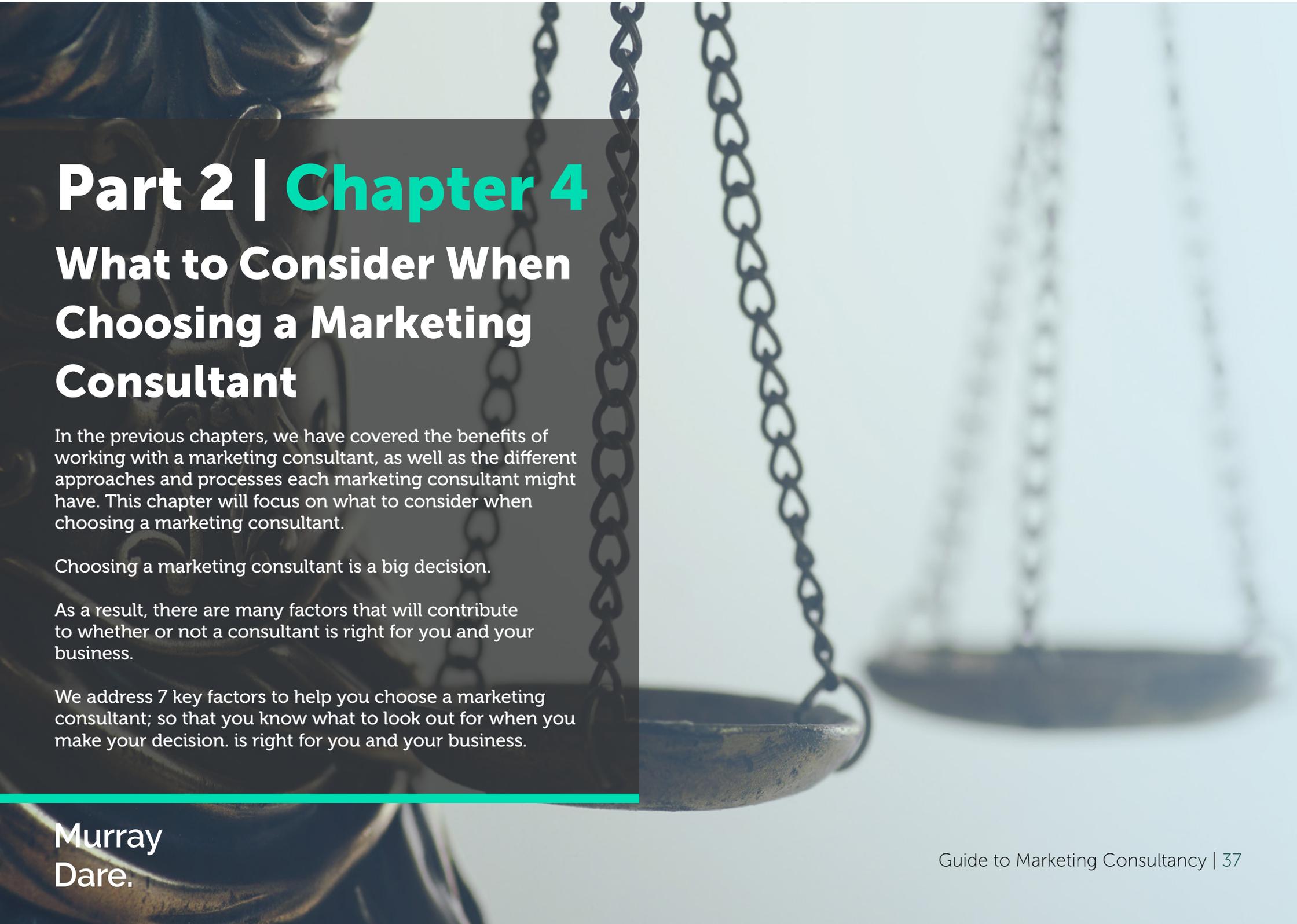
Ultimately, the marketing consultant approach that's right for you will depend entirely on what role you would like your marketing consultant to play in your business. Like businesses, marketing consultant approaches are unique.

If you're looking for someone to pick up tasks and solve specific problems as and when necessary, a task-oriented consultant might be a good choice for you.

If you have a certain solution in mind (like email marketing) and you're set on this solution, a solution-oriented consultant who specialises in this area will be able to bring plenty of targeted experience to the table.

But if you're looking for someone to help give your business a clear sense of direction—who can tailor a strategy to your strengths, weaknesses, and goals—then a strategy-oriented consultant or consultancy is exactly what you need.





Part 2 | Chapter 4

What to Consider When Choosing a Marketing Consultant

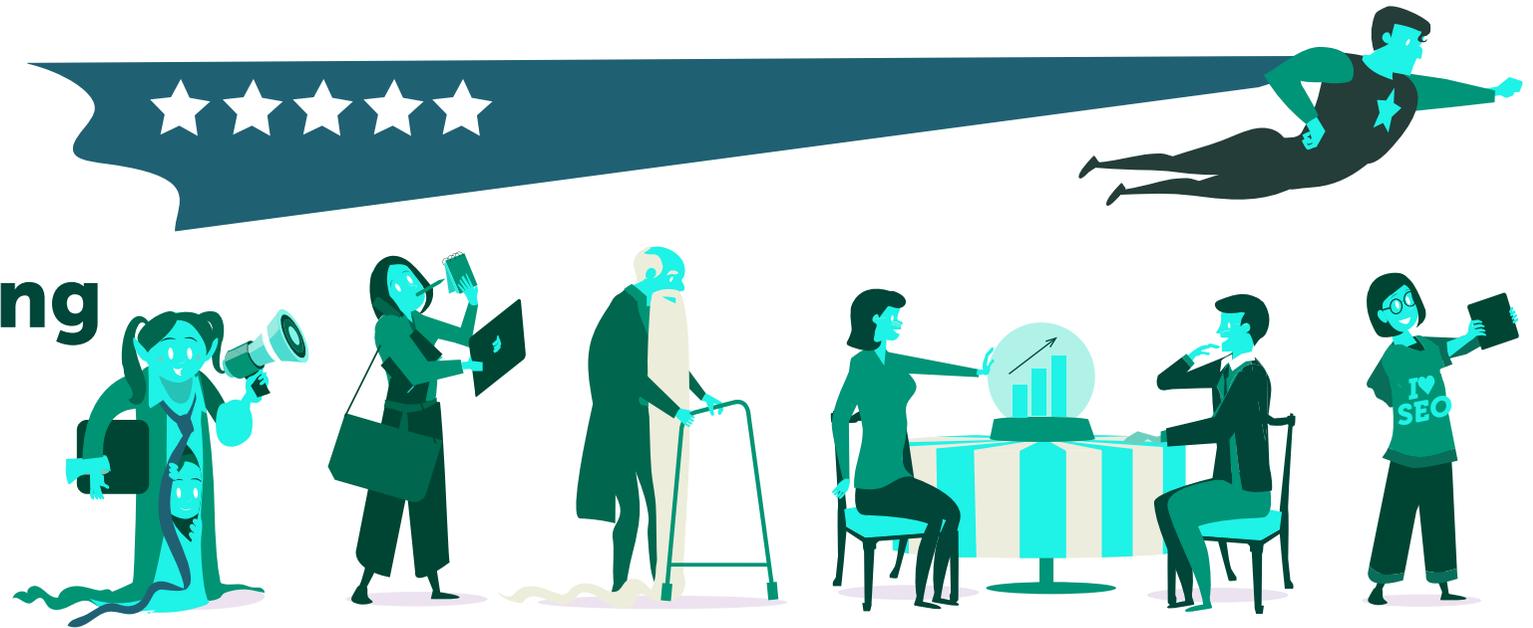
In the previous chapters, we have covered the benefits of working with a marketing consultant, as well as the different approaches and processes each marketing consultant might have. This chapter will focus on what to consider when choosing a marketing consultant.

Choosing a marketing consultant is a big decision.

As a result, there are many factors that will contribute to whether or not a consultant is right for you and your business.

We address 7 key factors to help you choose a marketing consultant; so that you know what to look out for when you make your decision. is right for you and your business.

Factors to Consider When Choosing a Marketing Consultant



By this point in the guide, you should have an understanding of what approach you'd like your marketing consultant to take, in addition to your desired process type. Maybe you're looking for a guide type marketing consultant who is strategy-oriented.

Whatever conclusion you've come to, you'll now need to whittle down your shortlist of consultants by considering the following:

What's their reputation like?

1. What experience do they have with your type of business?
2. How busy are they?
3. How long have they been in business?
4. Have they communicated expected results to you?
5. Are they passionate about what they do?
6. How much do they charge and what is their pricing model?

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1. What's their reputation like?

What's their Reputation like?



Even the most experienced marketing consultants and marketing consultancies can have a lousy reputation. Maybe their interpersonal or communication skills are shoddy. Perhaps they are defensive or careless.

There are countless reasons why even a seemingly reliable consultant might turn out to be untrustworthy. Unfortunately, many of these reasons won't become apparent until after you've enlisted their services.

While there are no surefire ways of avoiding a less than satisfying experience with a marketing consultant, there are some things you can do and look for to reduce the chances of being disappointed:

Check reviews

This might seem like an obvious one, but it's surprising how many businesses overlook reviews, or take reviews on a company's website at face value.

Keep in mind that reviews on a company's website are next to impossible to verify, even if they have been imported from a third-party, like TrustPilot.

While we're not suggesting that reviews on a company website are necessarily inauthentic, they should always be taken with a pinch of salt. At Murray Dare, for example, we include testimonials from happy customers on our website because we're proud to show them off!

We also have verified Google reviews and we're more than happy to connect you with some

of our previous clients (with their permission, of course) if you'd like to hear about us from the horse's mouth.

The key point is that when choosing a marketing consultant, you should check reviews from multiple sources; this should include the marketing consultants' websites, their facebook page reviews (if they have any), TrustPilot, Google reviews, and any other sources that might have information available.

We would also recommend asking a consultant about some of their work and specific recommendations they have received. The more a marketing consultant is able or willing to talk about a specific area, the more likely it is that they are reliable.

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1. What's their reputation like? (Cont.)

Ask for case studies

Having great reviews doesn't necessarily mean that a consultant has worked with your particular problem or type of business before. Case studies will give you some insight into whether or not they are experienced in the specific area you're looking for.

Reviewing a marketing consultant's case studies can also help you gain an idea of how much experience a consultant has, how varied that experience is, and how consistently they've been able to deliver satisfactory results.

Ask to be put in touch with previous clients

There's no guarantee that a marketing consultant will say yes to this, as they may not want to bother previous clients with a request of this nature.

However, it is always worth asking.

If a consultant or consultancy is able to put you in touch with previous clients, this is a good sign that they have strong, long-lasting relationships with their clients—enough to ask a favour of them.

If you are put in touch with previous clients, ask them questions regarding how the marketing consultant in question works, whether they were satisfied with them, and if they have any qualms about recommending them to other businesses.



2. What experience do they have with your type of business?

Many of the businesses we speak to have worked with very experienced marketing agencies in the past, but have found them unable to help them with their specific situation.

Finding out how much experience a marketing consultant has with your type of business, and your particular problems, is a crucial step in choosing the right marketing consultant or marketing consultancy.

However, we would argue that relevant marketing experience is more important than industry experience. We say this because experience has shown us that industry-led marketers tend to roll out the same solution for

each company. For example, a marketing consultant with experience helping fashion brands won't necessarily have the answer to your fashion brand's particular problem; relevant experience, however, allows for the application of different methods across different industries.

But it is worth noting that this is completely subject to the context of the problem or problems you are trying to solve. If you want to launch Facebook advertising or Google Ads, for example, then it would make sense to enlist someone who specialises in that area; this will ensure that the ground you want to cover is well-trodden.

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***Have they
worked with
your industry
before?***

3. How busy are they?

Even the best, most experienced marketing consultants are bound to do a shoddy job if they've bitten off more than they can chew.

If you're convinced by a marketing consultant's ability to support your company, the next question you should be asking is how busy they are. More specifically, how much time they can give to each of their clients.

Ideally, they should be able to tell you how many clients they have, how many more clients they intend to take on simultaneously, and how big their in-house team is. This should give you some insight into how much availability they will have for you.

As an example, if they have a team of three but have fifteen clients, they're either outsourcing heavily or overloading themselves with work. If this is the case, they're unlikely to be able to give you the attention you deserve.

Always ask for deadlines for completion when submitting work; this should give you the best estimate of how busy they are.

Are they too busy?



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4. How long have they been in business?

An experienced marketing consultant might decide to launch a marketing consultancy, hiring a team to support their work.

While working with a consultancy over a single consultant can certainly have its benefits, it is worth asking how long the consultancy has been in business.

If they have only been in business for a limited period of time and or all their employees are brand new, there are likely to be some potential teething problems with their processes as they will effectively be testing their ideas and services on you.

New businesses typically take at least a few years, if not more, to start functioning like a well-oiled machine. Much like you get things wrong, marketing agencies and consultancies do too. Getting things wrong is actually fundamentally important to getting things consistently right in the end.

Working with an older marketing consultant, however, will ensure that you are not the guinea pig. They will have had time to perfect their ideas and processes under different circumstances.

How long have they been in business?



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5. Have they communicated expected results to you?

How a marketing consultant or marketing consultancy communicates and reports on its results is almost as important as the actual results they are getting.

A clear system of communication establishes greater accountability, giving marketing consultants very little freedom to pull the wool over your eyes.

When you start work with a marketing consultant, they should be able to give you a ballpark idea of results you might expect. Though these aren't necessarily a guarantee, they will then be expected to provide valid reasons for why these results haven't been achieved (if it comes to that).

Marketing consultants who don't communicate expected results are much better placed to string you along

with reassurances that "you'll get results eventually" and "you just have to be patient".

Of course patience is important, but it is also the sleazy marketing consultant's weapon. It can be a tactic to keep you hooked into their services with false hopes of success that may never be realised.

A lot of marketing agencies work on year-long contracts because of this; that way, even when things do go wrong, you can't do anything about it until the contract is complete.

An authentic and reliable marketing consultant will base their estimation of expected results on their previous work. They will be able to show you data, but will manage expectations by reminding you that every business is different and success isn't guaranteed. They won't overpromise, only to underdeliver, but arm you with the facts before taking you on as a client.

Have they given you expected results?



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5. Have they communicated expected results to you? (Cont.)

Any marketing consultant that guarantees you massive success is lying to you and is likely to be reckless with your investment. Don't be fooled. A marketing consultant who understands the fickle nature of the market and manages expectations is a careful, data-driven marketer who stands the best chance of maximising your investment.

In terms of reporting on results, your marketing consultant should have a process for keeping you informed. They might email you a PDF report of the latest results for your campaign, for example, at the beginning of each month. Or they might schedule a weekly phone call with you to catch up and explain your results.

Before enlisting a marketing consultant, we recommend asking them how they will report on results. If it is important to you that results are thoroughly explained, you might want to choose a consultant who reports on results over the phone. This will give you the chance to ask any questions you might have.

Have they given you expected results?



6. Are they passionate about what they do?

Passionate marketing consultants are able to apply that passion to your business, which will reap the highest rewards. Passion breeds understanding, and understanding allows them to tailor their marketing strategy to your individual needs.

We all know how hard it is to stay motivated when we don't enjoy something. The same is true of marketing consultants.

There are a few things you can do to determine whether or not a marketing consultant you are considering is passionate about what they do; you can ask them, for example, how they got into marketing in the first place.

Was it something they stumbled into by chance or something they aspired to do?

Although there are a few questions you can ask to suss out passion, discerning exactly how passionate they are comes down to pure instinct. Trust your gut. If they sound enthusiastic about marketing your business, that's a great sign.



Are they marketing nerds that love what they do?

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7. How much do they charge?

As with all industries, you get what you pay for and the right price for you isn't necessarily the lowest price. There is a massive difference between cost and value.

The cost of a marketing consultant or consultancy can vary wildly, from £150 per day to upwards of £2,000 per day. Overall, the consultancy's size, reputation, experience and location will determine the cost.

Of course, the cost that is right for you will depend on a number of factors, including your budget and the scope of the work you want completed. To discern whether a price you have been given is good value, we would

recommend getting quotes from at least three different consultants or consultancies.

When you are reviewing your quotes, remember that the lowest price won't necessarily be the best price. You are likely to find that consultants and consultancies with higher rates are well worth the difference you'll be paying, because they more than make up for it in value delivered.

The key to making the right decision is to thoroughly interrogate each quote, so that you're clear on what you will be getting from your consultant should you decide to hire them.

The next chapter will dive into cost and value assessment in greater detail, giving you insights into how you should balance risk with cost savings.



Making the Right Decision & Choosing the Marketing Consultant That's Right For You

There is no definitive “right” answer when it comes to price. The answer to this question varies between businesses, and it depends on how much you want to spend, how much you can afford to spend, and how convinced you are by a marketing consultant’s ability to get you where you want to go.

Buy cheap, buy twice does of course spring to mind, but focusing purely on price as your key benchmark is likely to be an error.

As this chapter has outlined, there are plenty of considerations to take into account when choosing a marketing consultant for your business. Before signing any contracts, be sure to ask the right questions and suss out any red flags.



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Part 2 | Chapter 5

Assessing Cost and Value

Figuring out how much a service provider should be charging isn't easy. Cost and value, though many would have you believe are aligned, often couldn't be more different. High cost doesn't necessarily mean high value, but there is something to be said for getting what you pay for.

Striking the right balance between cost and value involves carefully considering a marketing consultant's justification for their prices.

How many years of experience do they have? How relevant is their experience? What's their reputation like? Where are they located and how do their prices compare to their competitors? The answers to these questions will help you determine whether a marketing consultant is pricing themselves fairly and reasonably, or otherwise.

In this chapter, we will give you some ballpark figures for how much marketing consultants might charge and reveal what you should expect from these different price ranges. We will also discuss the different pricing models, as well as their comparative advantages and disadvantages.

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For Marketing Consultant Prices & What To Expect

Assuming the marketing consultants you are considering use a per day pricing model (which is reasonably common) here is an idea of what you should expect from the following price ranges:

£150 to £250 per day

For this amount, you should expect a recent graduate with at least a year of experience. This type of marketing consultant is better suited to the daily grind and specific tasks than marketing strategy.

You might expect them to update your website, proofread your blog content, and perform other basic tasks of this nature.

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£300 to £450 per day

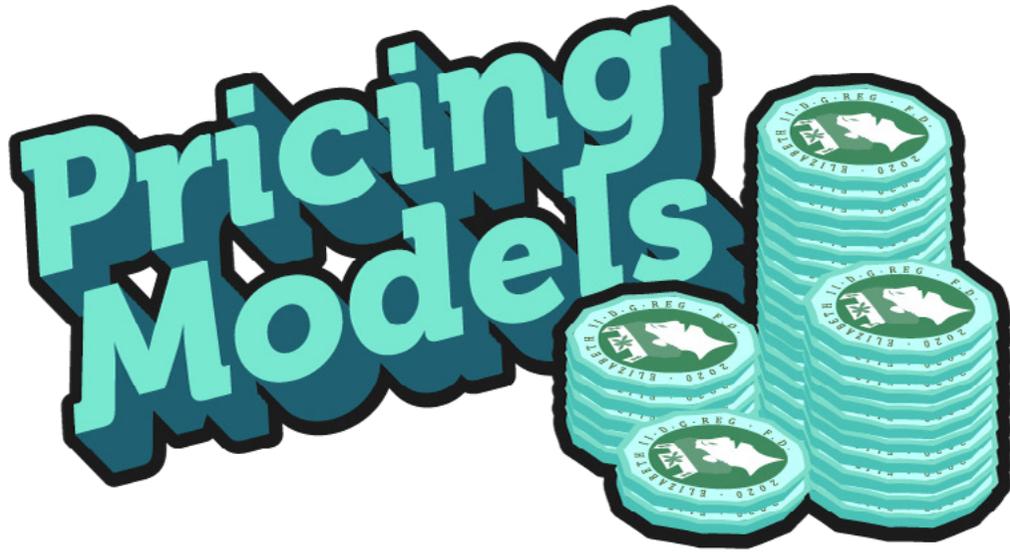
Marketing consultants or consultancies that charge these prices are typically project managers and action planners, usually with a marketing head.

They should have at least five years of experience and proven experience of creating integrated execution plans.

£500 to £1,500 per day

Marketing consultants and consultancies charging upwards of £500 per day should have more than a decade of experience, a reputation for success, and a history of working with some notable brands.

They will also have worked with clients with significant marketing budgets in the past, demonstrating their ability to manage large-scale campaigns.



There are also other pricing models to consider besides the day rate pricing model. Some marketing consultants or marketing consultancies will, for example, charge by the hour or by the project.

Consider these options carefully before making your decision, as some may sound cheaper at face value but turn out to be significantly more expensive in the long term.

For example, the hourly rate model can quickly spiral out of control unless you have established clear expectations and limits with your marketing consultant.

If they ever plan to put in more hours than they initially communicated to you, you should be given reasonable notice of this and should expect to be told why the project is taking longer than expected.

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You should also pay attention to any suggestions of retainers or contracts. Are you enlisting the marketing consultant's services on a month to month basis, or are you contracted to stay with them for a full year?

It is important to ask these questions, ensure that any contract clauses are clear, and that exit terms are fair and transparent. Below are some of the pricing models you can expect to see in your search for the right marketing consultant.

Time & Resource-Based Models

Time & Resource-Based Models

Pros:

-  Value is determined by time-spent
-  Clear, logical pricing

Cons:

-  Easy for consultant to mislead on time-spent
-  Can be an excuse to work slower
-  Clients pay for delays and mistakes

Time & Resource-Based Models (Cont.)

With this type of model, you should expect to be charged for the exact amount of time worked, in addition to any material expenses. There are a number of pros and cons to time and resource-based models, which have been outlined below.

Pros

- It is easier to confirm value, because you can interrogate how long has been spent on each task
- Pricing is clear and logical

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What was the deadline for this again?



Cons

- Trust is essential, because a consultant could mislead you regarding how much time has gone into a task
- This model gives your consultant an excuse to work slowly
- If there are any delays or mistakes made, you could end up paying for them

The time and resource-based models are usually suited to project-based work, rather than service-based work.

Fixed Fee Model

The fixed fee model is a popular alternative to variable time-based models. If your marketing consultant leverages this model, you should expect to be charged a pre-agreed upon fixed fee for your project—no more and no less.

For example, if you have asked your marketing consultant to create content for your website, they would give you a price for delivering the full project to completion.

There are two types of fixed fee pricing models: cost plus and value-based.

There are some key differences between these two models, and each has a unique set of advantages and disadvantages.

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The marketing consultant or marketing consultancy you work with may not be transparent about which of these models they use to calculate your fixed fee, so be sure to ask outright if you feel that the answer could inform your decision.



Cost Plus Fixed Fee

Cost Plus Fixed Fee

Pros:



Fixed expectations



Firm deadline

Cons:



Errors may add extra time/cost



Cost not based on effort



Possible under-delivery of work

Cost Plus Fixed Fee (Cont.)

This is the most common type of fixed fee model. It involves the marketing consultant estimating, as accurately as they can, how long the project will take them to complete and how much effort will be required.

They then apply their markup and quote you for a fixed fee.

Pros

- You will know exactly what to expect in terms of costs
- You will usually have a firm deadline, so you are aware of when to expect project completion

Cons

- If something goes wrong or the consultant has miscalculated the effort and resources required, they may ask you to pay more and this could cause disagreements
- Cost is not determined by effort, which means the consultant has less incentive to deliver their best work
- You can't be certain that their time estimates are fair and they may overestimate to bump up the price

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Value-Based Fixed Fee

Value-Based Fixed Fee

Pros:



All costs expected



Firm deadline



Business focused outcomes



Greater performance incentive

Cons:



Errors may add extra time/cost



Cost not based on effort



Possible under-delivery of work



High mark-up costs

Value-Based Fixed Fee (Cont.)

Value-based fixed fee models involve applying a profit margin based on how valuable the engagement and deliverables is to the client. Effectively, a marketing consultant using this model determines their price by how much value the solution provides and provides a fixed fee quote based on this.

Pros

- You will know exactly what to expect in terms of costs
- You will usually have a firm deadline, so you are aware of when to expect project completion
- Greater focus on business outcomes
- May provide a greater performance incentive

Cons

- If something goes wrong or the consultant has miscalculated the effort and resources required, they may ask you to pay more and this could cause disagreements
- Cost is not determined by effort, which means the consultant has less incentive to deliver their best work
- You can't be certain that their time estimates are fair and they may overestimate to bump up the price
- Value-based pricing often incurs a higher markup than cost plus pricing

Like the time and resource-based models, the fixed fee model (both cost plus and value-based) is better suited to project-based work than service-based work.

Risk/Reward Model

Risk/Reward Model

Pros:



Shared risk demonstrates confidence



Incentive to drive performance

Cons:



Less straightforward



Harder to understand



Lots of monitoring involved



Disagreements over "value" may occur

Risk/Reward Model (cont.)

With the risk/reward pricing model, you agree to pay a base fee, in addition to a risk/reward fee that should be aligned with the outcomes of the campaign or project.

The risk/reward element of the fee can either be variable or fixed and is likely to be based on time, scope, cost, risk, benefits, quality, or a combination.

Most consultancies don't apply the risk/reward model, although there are a lot of benefits for you as the client.

Pros

- This model demonstrates confidence and is usually evidence of "skin in the game" because risk is shared with the client
- A great incentive for your marketing consultant or consultancy to drive performance

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Cons

- Less straightforward than other models
- Most businesses won't fully understand the risk/reward model and its implications
- Requires robust monitoring and measurement processes
- It is possible that you may disagree with your consultant regarding the value of what has been delivered

Retainer Model

Retainer Model

Pros:



Develops strong relationships



Costs stay the same



Functions like payment plan

Cons:



Not great for first timers



Consultant may prioritise other clients

Retainer Model (cont.)

Lastly, we have the retainer model. This involves paying a recurring fee (often monthly) to retain a marketing consultant's services. For example, you might pay £2,000 per month for 15 hours of input from your marketing consultant. The retainer model is usually used when the nature of the work you require is recurring.

Pros

- This model demonstrates confidence and is usually evidence of "skin in the game" because risk is shared with the client
- A great incentive for your marketing consultant or consultancy to drive performance

Cons

- Less straightforward than other models
- Most businesses won't fully understand the risk/reward model and its implications
- Requires robust monitoring and measurement processes
- It is possible that you may disagree with your consultant regarding the value of what has been delivered

Which Model Is Right For You?

There is no “right” answer to this question. The model that is right for you will depend on how you prefer to maintain relationships with service providers, your budget, your cash flow, the nature of the work you need completed, and how trustworthy you believe your chosen marketing consultant is.

In our experience, the model that works best for each client is largely a matter of preference—and you may not get it right the first time around.

You might think you’d value the consistency of a retainer model, but find that you prefer the seemingly more direct relationship between cost and value associated with an hourly or day rate model.

It is also worth noting that pricing model isn’t the be all and end all of choosing a great marketing consultant. If you stumble across a marketing consultant who really wows you, don’t let their pricing model get in the way.

We would recommend testing their ability by giving them a small, low-risk project. If they meet expectations, balancing cost and value effectively, the type of pricing model they are using will feel increasingly irrelevant.