

What You're Probably Missing In Your Marketing Plan (And It's Costing You Thousands)

Follow these four steps to transform your marketing team through highly-skilled freelancers.



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Freelancers may be what's missing from your marketing team.

The usual business mandate is this: Once you [grow your revenue](#) to the size where you can afford a full-time staff, you should do so. This is true for the most part, with one key exception: [your marketing staff](#).

Marketing is an extremely [multi-faceted business area](#) and one that requires a team with very different - and often opposing - skill sets. This is where freelancers come in.

If you're a typical B2C business, your marketing activities will likely cover at least a few of the following areas: partnerships, SEO, Google AdWords, content marketing, advertising, PR, [email marketing](#), sales, and social media. However, if you break down the skill sets needed for the various different marketing activities, you will quickly find that there's little to no overlap in the type of personality and experience you need for each of these functions.

So, for example, an [awesome content marketer](#) (aka writer) will have a keen attention to detail, well-honed communication skills, and the ability to articulate complex topics with ease. An effective ad designer will usually have a creative, free-spirited mind and be someone who can visualize what's needed and design the right look and feel - but that same person won't necessarily be the right one to proofread a blog post.

And frankly, when was the last time an awesome SEO strategist was also excellent at PR? Never.

Marketing is vast, and talent is king. While it's both impractical and unprofitable to hire multiple marketing rock stars for each area, the rise of the gig economy has made it that much easier to find high-quality freelancers who specialize in each field.

Convinced? Follow these principles, and your marketing will be transformed through effective use of freelance talent.

You need a stellar marketing strategist to oversee your freelancers.

Before I proceed, it's key to note that you do need at least one in-house individual who oversees the marketing end-to-end and manages the team of freelancers. This individual will be responsible for the marketing strategy and, in addition, needs to be excellent at execution, project management, and team management. They will oversee the budget and the calendar, ensure the right freelancers are staffed depending on needs, and, overall, take the marketing strategy and ensure it gets executed. If your business is of the size to warrant a full-time marketing manager, that is an ideal choice. If it is not, then ensure you assign one member of your team to undertake these duties until you can hire someone full time.

Before you hire any freelancers, you MUST have a brand book.

This is a step that many small-business owners skip, and this lack of structure and clarity will mean thousands of wasted dollars, at best, and a completely disjointed brand at worst.

A brand book outlines what your brand stands for, who your target audience is, the tone and messaging you use, and all the visual guidelines associated with your brand.

Having a robust brand book is key to successful marketing campaigns. Without a brand book that communicates who you are and who your customers are, you are essentially throwing spaghetti at the wall and seeing what sticks.

It's also critical that your freelancers are all singing from the same hymn sheet. With a brand book, they are set up for success from the start.

Next, you need to cultivate a roster of freelancers before you need them.

Develop your marketing freelancer roster the way you would go about building a talent map for your full-time team. Think through the different skill sets you need before you need them, like when you are putting together your marketing plan for the year. This way, you can map out what type of freelance help you need and ID key players beforehand.

In my experience, marketing agencies aren't worth the extra money spent for small businesses. Often, you are paying for a large overhead while only working with the team's more junior team members. Solopreneurs and small teams can usually be more focused and get to know your brand better, and you'll often be working directly with the talent.

Good marketing freelancers are an investment - they may be pricey.

Listen, I know that on Upwork you can find people willing to write blog posts for \$1/post. However, you'll get what you pay for.

Marketing is an art, and a really good marketer can mean the difference between a 10 percent open rate on your email and a 1 percent, or having Google rank your brand as #10 or on Page 10.

My suggestion: Invest in marketing, and don't let the lure of cheap labor detract you from the real mission: excellent work. You will be saving money by spending on this talent only when you need it (i.e., versus having a full-time staff of marketers), which will enable you to invest in high-quality staffing that is specialized for your business's needs.

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