

optify

From one-off projects to long-term retainers in 6 easy steps



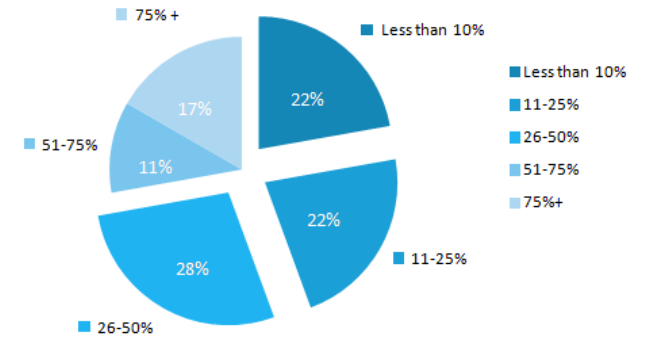
If your agency offers digital marketing services like SEO, PPC, social media and email marketing—chances are you're in high demand. AdAge reports that digital is the fastest growing business area for agencies of all types and that digital pure play shops grew faster than any other agency segment in 2011. This of course is a good thing.

So if the demand for the digital services your agency offers is so high how come you're spending so much time writing proposals and chasing new business?

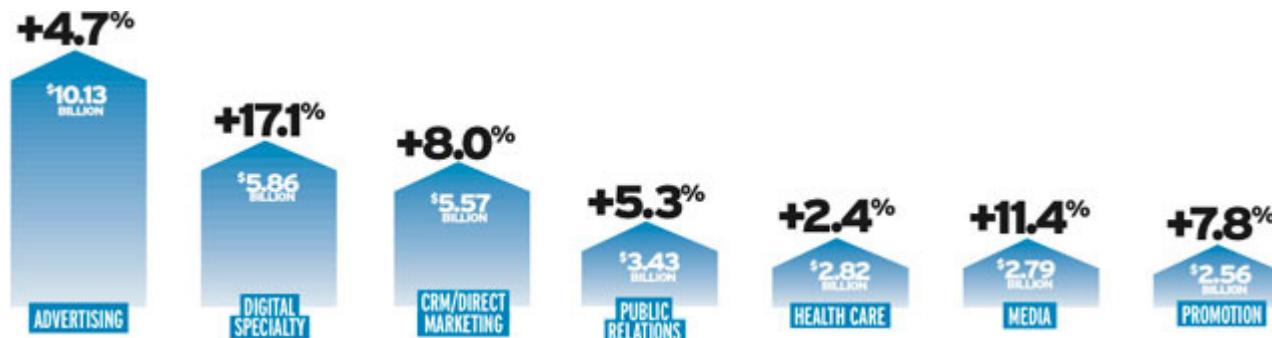
The answer is probably that you (like many other agencies) are doing a lot of one-off projects—website redesigns, demos, ad hoc social or email campaigns.

In fact when Optify polled agency executives at a recent webinar, 72% reported less than 50% of their current revenue was coming from retained services agreements.

What percentage of your current revenue is from retainers?



Digital specialty agencies lead the pack in terms of growth from 2010 to 2011



Source AdAge Datacenter

Why are digital specialty agencies in such high demand?

The simple answer—in-house marketers are overwhelmed. Here's why:

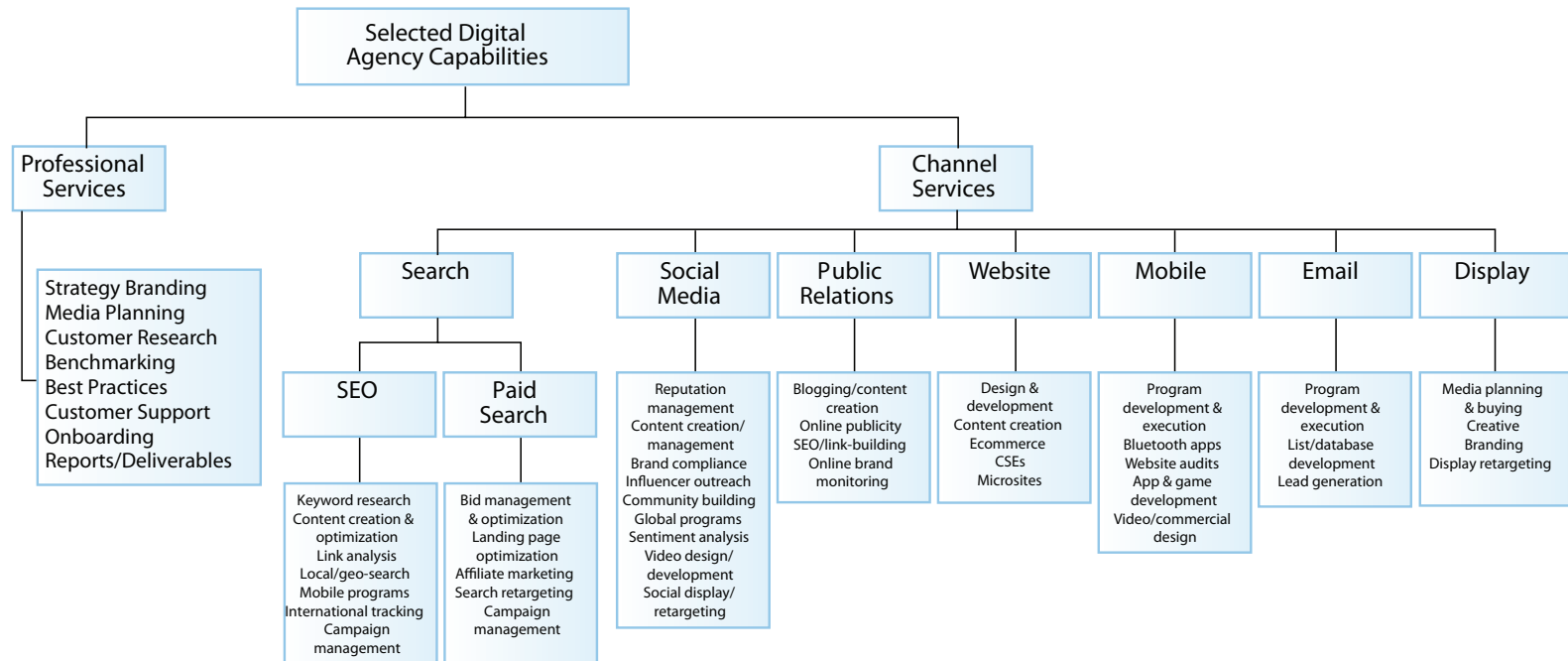
- » Consumers and businesses are increasingly going online at each stage of their buyer's journey.
- » The digital landscape these buyers encounter has become incredibly dynamic and complex.
 - New social media platforms pop up seemingly overnight.
 - Ad serving and digital tracking technologies are constantly evolving.
 - Mobile devices have revolutionized how and when buyers consume information.
- » In-house marketers often lack the skills and bandwidth to navigate this rapidly changing digital world.

Enter the digital marketing agency. Clients that hire digital specialty agencies get a timeshare of experts in each digital channel, creative staff to bring campaigns to life and experienced account managers that can pull together a cohesive digital strategy.



Which digital capabilities does your agency provide?

Table 1: Selected Digital Agency Capabilities



Source: Third Door Media

Digital marketing has become multi-faceted and complex as the chart above from Third Door Media's "Digital Advertising Agencies 2013: A Buyer's Guide" clearly shows. Overwhelmed in-house marketers are increasingly turning to digital marketing agencies to help them navigate a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Many digital services such as SEO, social media and content marketing are great candidates for retainers—requiring time, ongoing attention and expertise to be successful.

Retainers can be a win for you and for your clients, as the graphic below shows.



So read on to learn the 6 practical steps you can take to win more retained business—unless of course you like doing pitches and writing proposals.

Step 1 – Elevate your discussion—talk business goals not deliverables

A prospective client comes to you for a project proposal—for example a website redesign. Sure you could dive into the nitty gritty of the project deliverables, number of pages, fonts, colors, forms etc.—but how about taking a step back and asking them about their business goals?



Maybe they have an aggressive revenue growth goal for the coming financial year, need to acquire customers in a new vertical or have a new product to launch. Once you understand their business goals, you can:

- » Ensure that any proposal you write for the current project on the table helps them meet those goals.
- » Propose additional services from your portfolio that will help them be successful. For example, propose content, SEO and social media services to promote their new website.
- » By taking a consultative approach you will demonstrate your agency's knowledge and breadth of service offerings. You may not close retained business right away, but you will have sown the seeds for a longer-term commitment further down the road.

Elevate the discussion with questions like these:

- » How does this project support your company's business goals for this quarter / fiscal year?
- » What are the success metrics for this project and how do you plan to capture them?
- » Who is your target audience for this initiative?
- » How does this project fit into your overall marketing strategy / plan for the coming year?

Step 2 – Offer tailored integrated service packages to meet your clients' needs

Once you've elevated conversations with clients from deliverables to business goals, you will start to see additional areas where they need help. Trouble is your agency doesn't offer services in those areas—not yet that is! As we saw in the chart on page 6, the digital landscape is complex, but it's also highly integrated. There is tremendous synergy between channels such as SEO, PPC and social media. All campaigns require content, which someone has to create along with the microsites that convert visitors to leads—and everything needs to be measured and reported on to prove ROI. Wouldn't you like to get some of that revenue instead of handing it off to another vendor?



The more services your agency has in its bag, the more you will be able to tailor retained service packages that meet your clients' needs. They'll appreciate the extra value that you deliver and be more than happy to have fewer vendors to deal with.

“That sounds great, but it's not so easy to expand into other areas?” I hear you say. “Doesn't that mean hiring expensive talent, and a juggling even more tools to manage the business?”

The great news is that integrated marketing suites like Optify allow you to execute and measure all of your digital campaigns in one place. Look for solutions designed with ease-of-use in mind, so that even junior staff can do day-to-day campaign management and provide consistent, great-looking reports.

Ideas for packaging retained services

Blended 'whole agency' integrated services

One idea that's gaining popularity with digital marketing agencies is to offer retainers than span the breadth of their services offerings. If your agency specializes in inbound marketing your retainers might look something like the table below.

You've done your homework and chosen different service and pricing levels that meet the needs of you target market. Publishing price points lets your prospects know if your agency's fee structure is a good fit for their budget so there are no big surprises later on in the sales process. If you're not comfortable publishing pricing you can still show the different retained agreements that you offer and save the pricing discussion for later.

Of course many clients will want to customize their retainer and that's okay. Let them know that you can tailor a package to meet their needs. You may not close many deals for exact packages you have published, but it's a great way to show the breadth of your offerings and start the retainer conversation.

	SILVER \$5-7K / MONTH	GOLD \$7-9K / MONTH	PLATINUM \$10K / MONTH
Content development	X units / hours	X units / hours	X units / hours
Social media campaigns	✓	✓	✓
SEO	✓	✓	✓
Landing pages & call to action graphics	✓	✓	✓
Lead nurturing	✗	✓	✓
CRM integration	✗	✓	✓
Sales enablement & alerts	✓	✓	✓
Meetings	Monthly	2 / Month	Weekly
	CONTACT US »	CONTACT US »	CONTACT US »

If your agency offers inbound marketing, here's what your retained service offerings might look like.

Discrete services or service bundles

Discrete services like SEO, PPC and social media are great candidates for retainers in their own right, but package synergistic services together and you can increase both the amount of your retainer and the value to your clients.



Content development retainer or...



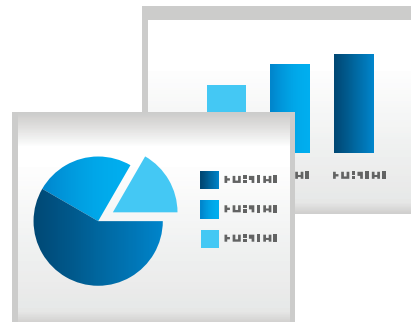
Content development / promo bundle

Includes content development, SEO, social media promotion, supporting elements like promotional email and graphical assets.

Step 3 – Show the results of your work

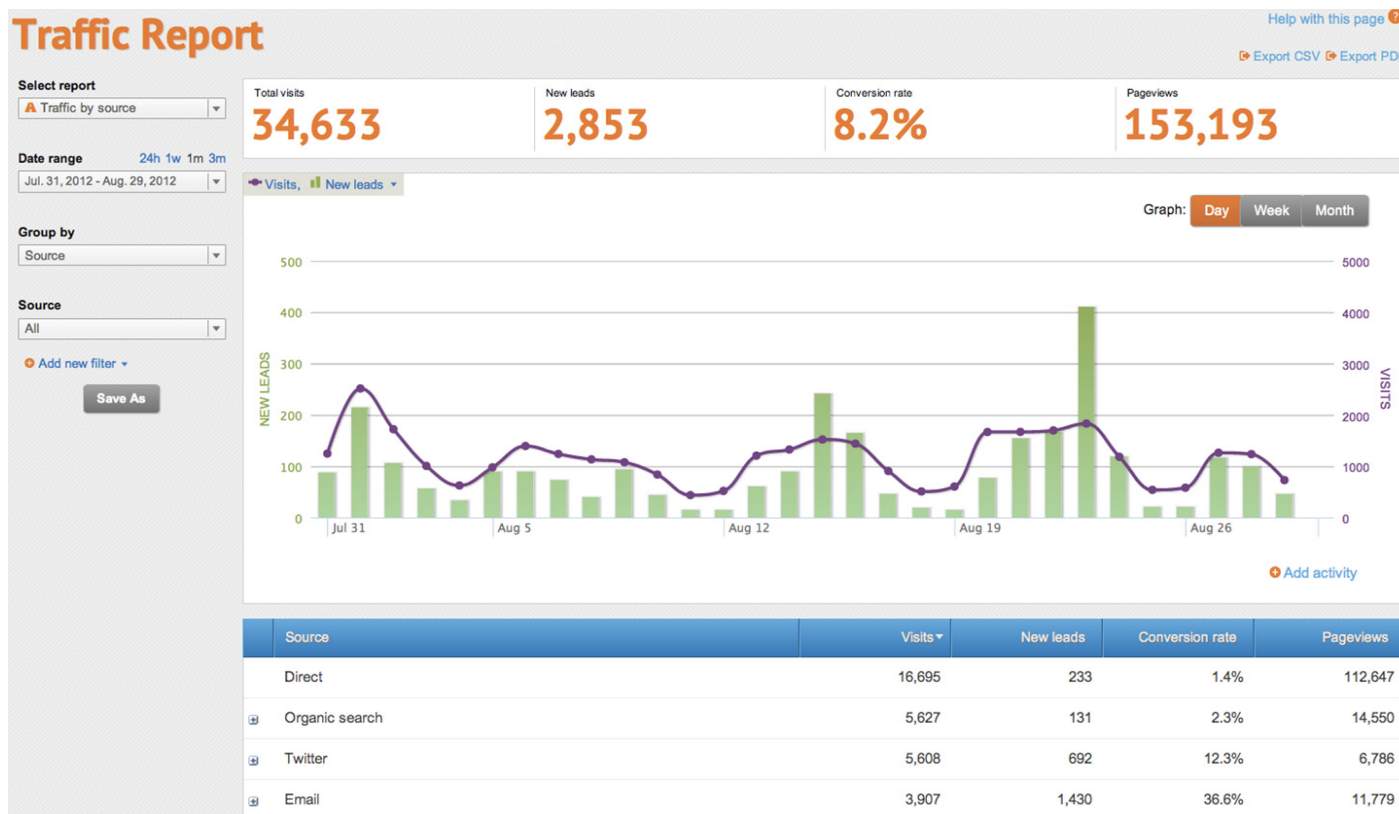
Whether you're working on a project or have landed a retained services contract, you need to prove that you are delivering value. That means providing regular, consistent reporting on a set of metrics that you can you client have agreed upon. Here are some tips on how to best show the fruits of your labor:

- » **Always start with a baseline**—take the time as you're planning and developing your campaigns to measure where your client is before you get into execution mode. Make sure the tracking and analytics solution you deploy can capture baseline data as well as measure any new tactics and campaigns that you plan to deploy.
- » **Have a regular review meetings**—set aside a time, usually every week or month to review key metrics either by phone or face-to-face, instead of just emailing over a report. Whether the meeting lasts 10 minutes or 2 hours, it's a great time to check your account barometer and find out what's happening with your client's business.



- » **Add real value by giving your insights on the data**—take the time upfront to analyze what the data is telling you before your client meeting. Have answers for anomalies that you see and explanations for trends or events that may raise eyebrows. This level of service shows that you're truly vested in their success and elevates your agency's status from vendor to long-term partner.
- » **Give your clients real-time access to the numbers**—use a tool like Optify to let your clients see how their campaigns are doing at any time. Provide them with a customized dashboard to view visits and lead data in aggregate or by specific campaign. This level of transparency is another way to add real value and reduce the reporting burden on your team.

- » **Keep your reports consistent**—you can't accurately track progress if the metrics, or way you present the metrics keep changing. Use a tool like Optify that allows even junior account staff to create and pull reports that are consistent and easy to interpret.



Here's an example of a standard Optify traffic report that anyone in your agency can run. This data can be exported to PDF or .CSV and sent to your client on a regular basis.

optify		Inbound Marketing ROI Calculator		
[insert your logo above]				
STEP 2 - Review the results with your client.				
		INBOUND	OUTBOUND	ALL PROGRAMS
	Visits needed	5,556	3,968	9,524
		5%	15%	9%
	Leads needed	278	595	873
Inbound leads are higher quality		15%	7%	10%
	Opportunities needed	42	42	83
		20%	20%	20%
	Sales wins needed	8	8	17
	Revenue	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000
Inbound leads cost less	Budget needed	\$6,111	\$26,190	\$32,302
	ROI	718%	91%	210%
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We've designed a nifty Excel tool for you to use with prospects or clients to calculate the relative ROI of inbound and outbound programs. Start with a monthly revenue goal and the calculator will tell you how many visits and leads you need to drive to meet that goal. Use our benchmark conversion rate and cost per lead data, or plug in your own.

[Download your own copy of the calculator](#)

Step 4 – Work efficiently and deliver great value

Your clients turn to you because they lack the expertise and bandwidth they need to succeed in today's digital landscape. Their decision to hire and retain your agency should also pencil out for them and their CFO—and that depends on your ability to run your business efficiently.

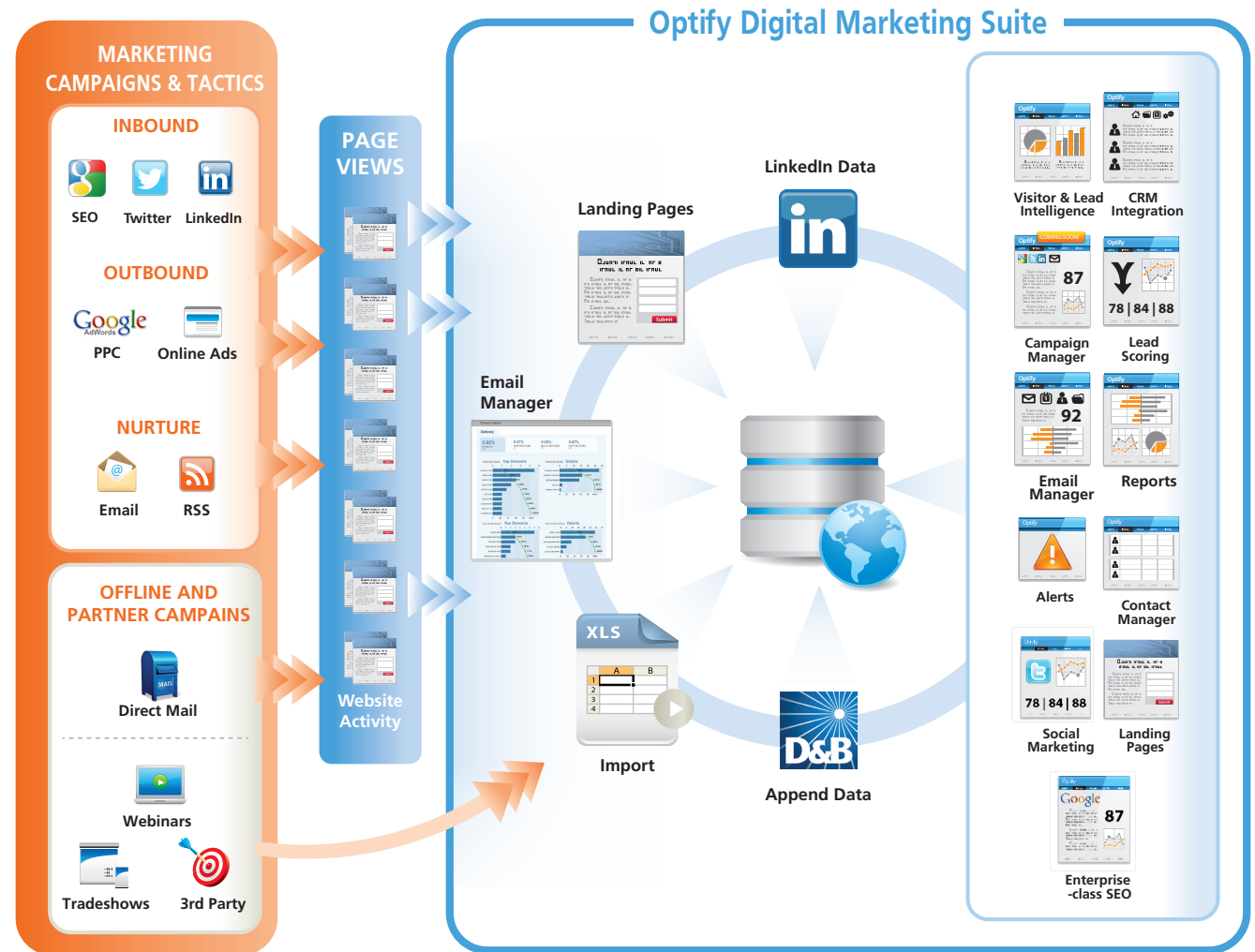


The great news is that the platforms like Optify make it easy and cost-effective for digital marketing agencies to scale up their business and drive operational efficiencies in one fell swoop. Here's what you need to look out for in a marketing solution:

- » **It should streamline delivery and lower cost**—look for integrated platforms that can be used for enterprise-class SEO, social media, lead nurturing, visitor and lead intelligence, web analytics and CRM integration. Your staff will be more efficient and you'll save on license fees. It's easy to end up with a ton of point solutions, and those can add up to a high price tag in a hurry —one that you either have to eat or pass on in higher fees to your clients.
- » **It has to be easy to use**—you need a solution that anyone in your agency can use, from your SEO and PPC gurus to the most junior account coordinator. Team members come and go; they switch roles and get assigned to new accounts all the time. Give them an integrated solution that they can use across clients and digital marketing channels and they won't waste time getting up to speed with different point solutions—or worse still deliver inconsistent or sub-par results for your clients.
- » **It should support multiple clients, cost-effectively with one contract**—choose an integrated digital marketing platform like Optify that supports multiple clients at a cost-effective price. You'll get economies of scale and you'll also get out of the business of selling software. This is in stark contrast to some vendors that require a direct buying relationship with your client—which can be a sticking point that you don't need when it comes to closing new business.

If you choose the right digital marketing platform, you'll enjoy both lower license fees and the operational efficiencies that come from deploying one integrated solution that's easy to use. You can pass on the cost-savings to your client, making your business more competitive and the job of justifying your retained fees much easier.

When your services span digital channels, your clients get a time slice of talent in many fields for a cost-effective price—helping you win new retained contracts and keep them.



Manage all of your digital and offline marketing with Optify

Step 5 - Deliver great results and maintain positive relationships

If you've carried out steps 1 to 4, chances are you're delivering great results for your clients. Your consultative approach and tailored services offerings are helping them meet their business goals. And thanks to your choice of an integrated digital marketing solution, you're able to clearly demonstrate the results of the work that you do. Regular client meetings, consistent reporting, a cost-effective fee structure—all factors that should keep you firmly planted with your client and viewed as a valuable partner and extension of their team.



But sometimes despite your best efforts, engagements may end. This may be due to a change of key personnel at your client, budget cuts or a shift in priorities. Whatever the reason, it's important to always maintain good relationships with all client contacts, past and present. Keep in touch, keep it positive and help out where you can. Do this and you'll maximize the chance of referrals and be the agency that your contacts will call when budget reappears or they move to a new company that needs digital marketing expertise.

Step 6 - Spread the word about the breadth of your services

Ever heard the saying “physician heal thyself”? How about “the cobbler’s children have no shoes”? Marketing agencies can be the worst at marketing themselves. We’re so busy running campaigns, producing new websites and writing content for our clients that we neglect to update our own materials and tell the world what we’ve been up to. Here are some reminders of things you can do to market your marketing business:

- » **Update your website**—regardless of how a prospect hears about you, they’re going to end up on your website at some point (and probably several times) in their buyer’s journey. Are you putting your best foot forward? You’ve expanded your service offerings to include content marketing, social media and landing pages—but there’s no mention of them on your site. Really? No joke, this happens more than you think. Make sure your site reflects your current service offerings, and the different fee models that you offer.



- » **Update your social profiles**—especially your LinkedIn profile. Ask customers to endorse your new skills, write recommendations, and create a page for your company. Post your new content on your profiles and make sure you use it to spread the word about the new services you are offering.
- » **Practice what you preach**—you coach your customers on the importance of blogging and content marketing, but your last blog post was on the demise of MySpace. Put the same diligence and hard work behind planning and executing your marketing campaigns as you would for your customer—and that includes tracking everything. No time? Hire it out if that’s what it takes.

- » **Make sure both clients and prospects know what you're up to**—how many of your current clients know about your new service offerings? Sometimes we're better at nurturing our prospects than our clients. Make sure both clients and prospects get regular content from you—newsletters, success stories or best practices type content—anything that demonstrates the breadth of your service offerings and keeps your agency top of mind. Also spend a few moments in your regular client meetings to share a case study or new creative that you've done—even if they don't need that kind of help today, you may have planted the seeds for a future engagement.
- » **Become an industry expert**—your team has a lot of knowledge, be sure you share it. Look for in-person or webinar speaking opportunities where you can share your expertise (and brand) with prospects. Offer to do a 'lunch and learn' session for local businesses, or get a speaking gig at a local trade association event if your agency serves a particular vertical or profession. Writing articles for trade pubs or even regional business journals is another great way for your agency to become a trusted advisor.

About Optify

Optify provides a Digital Marketing Software Suite to help marketing agencies develop, execute and report on digital marketing initiatives for their clients and generate business for their firm.

Optify offers a unique agency solution that fits your need and budget with Agency Pro (15 sites) and Agency Unlimited (unlimited sites!). With Optify, you can stop selling software and focus on selling your services, offer more value to your current and future clients and have cost effective software to standardize your service and take the pain out of your reporting. [Request a demo](#) today to learn more about our Agency Partner Program.

THE OPTIFY DIGITAL MARKETING SUITE



INBOUND DEMAND

Create a flow of high quality leads into your marketing funnel with enterprise-class SEO and social marketing.



EMAIL NURTURING

Nurture your house list with email campaigns and get detailed intelligence about what every lead does after they receive your emails.



SALES ENABLEMENT

Help sales reach prospects and engage with them early in the sales process with visitor intelligence and prospect alerts.



TRACKING & ANALYTICS

Get full insight into what influences your buyers and the path they take to find and evaluate you during their research process.

ADDITIONAL AGENCY RESOURCES

- Excel tool: Optify's Inbound Marketing ROI Calculator for Agencies
- Guide: How to Sell Your Agency's Inbound Marketing Services
- Guide: 5 Ways to Grow Your Agency with Inbound Marketing
- Webinar: Leverage Digital Marketing to Grow Your Agency's Retainer-based Business

NEXT STEPS

- Learn more about Optify's Digital Marketing Software for agencies
- Contact us for demo or our agency solution