

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT MARKETING EXPERT

By Karen Hope

Over the years I have met many people who call themselves **MARKETING CONSULTANTS, MARKETING SPECIALISTS, COACHES, ADVISORS and MENTORS** who in reality are not qualified to call themselves anything other than a **“SALESPERSON.”**

Marketing is an art and a science. It takes education, intuition, experience and special skills to actually impact a company's marketing performance. Yet these days anyone can print a business card and call themselves a **MARKETING EXPERT** without strong credentials to back it up.

There are many self-proclaimed Marketers who are able to convince people they have what it takes to create marketing results. Unfortunately it's not until it's too late, the results are non-existent and you have paid, that you realize you have been oversold.

If you need marketing help, don't be afraid to bring it on, just make sure you pick the right person or company for the job. You do not want to fall prey to those people who will not have the experience and skills that it takes to deliver results through marketing.

There are two primary options to explore when looking for marketing help:

1. **THE MARKETING, ADVERTISING COMPANY/AGENCY**

Mid-sized to large agencies have a team of people offering expertise in different areas ranging from marketing plans and copywriting to graphic design.

However the agency way is to put an “Account Manager” in charge of the client who will get the information required for the “others” who will create the actual strategies and creative works.



It is possible that your vision and passion for your business **DO NOT GET PROPERLY CONVEYED** to the “others” who will be pivotal to the success of your campaign. The others may be the key strategists and creative team.

Most often, the agency team on your account will not even meet you or visit your place of business. Consequently your chances of creating the best marketing materials could be compromised.

Often an agency will promote their **STAR MARKETING TALENT** in their own marketing materials but in the end you could deal with a junior account executive who is a new graduate. Supposedly they are accessing the higher talent within the agency to develop your marketing strategies.

But one would never know for sure: You could be paying \$150 per hour for the services performed by someone who is being paid \$20 per hour by the agency.

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CHARGE LIKE LAWYERS

Another important consideration is agency fees. Agencies usually charge like lawyers. Fees are high and everything is billable from emails to faxes.

You are also paying for every hand that touches your account: there's the Account Manager, Creative Director, Copywriter, Production Assistant, Secretary, Accounts Payable and so on.

Depending on an agency's size, fees for services can vary over 300% from one company to another. I remember soliciting three agencies for a logo quote where prices ranged from \$1500 to \$5,000. How does one determine whether the smaller agency charging \$1500 or the larger agency charging \$5,000 will produce the best logo?

Both agencies likely use one graphic designer, however there could be more than the designer involved with coming up with the concepts. Is it possible that the person or agency charging \$1500 might produce a logo as good as the one that is \$5,000. The answer is "YES". However you need to review their past work and determine who offers the most potential to deliver what you want. Shop around and ask questions.

CONSIDER THESE POINTS:

- Often the best dressed executive visits the client and makes the pitch. Determine who the master-mind is for developing your strategies. Check them out. I personally like to work directly with the master minds not the well dressed sales person or account manager.
- Quote around. Fees range drastically from one agency to the next. The higher priced quotes are not always the best.
- Agencies do not always produce the best work. Consider hiring individuals who work from home. Get the best talent at the best prices and develop your own one on one relationships.

2. THE MARKETING EXPERT, COACH OR CONSULTANT

There are many people out there who call themselves expert, coach or consultant, but are they really? When you look at the definition of an "EXPERT" the dictionary says:

"Somebody skilled or knowledgeable: somebody with a great deal of knowledge about, or skill, training, or experience."

Use this definition as your guide: find someone with the skills, knowledge, training and experience in marketing. They don't have to be authors or famous speaker: those people are often looking for the big buck or they offer cookie cutter processes that can be sold to the masses. You do not need a plan for the masses you need a plan customized for your business.

There are three typical types of people out there who promote themselves as EXPERTS but are they?

#1 FRANCHISE MARKETERS

People can buy into franchised networks that offer quick training and a "process" to sell to prospects. This person who goes out under the franchise banner did not spend 20 years becoming an expert, they bought into a franchise process. If you check their work history, they likely spent 10 or more years doing something else like accounting. Their background knowledge and experience in marketing could be virtually non-existent. They won't talk about their experience and successes; they talk about what their process can do for your company. It is my opinion that these processes are over-priced and often ineffective.

#2 EX-MEDIA SALES MARKETERS

People who have spent their career selling advertising often break out and become marketing specialists, experts etc. Some feel that because they sold advertising, they now are marketing experts. If they have not been trained in marketing their marketing abilities can be limited.

Ex-media people tend to know more about the one media they sold than how to creatively use the whole range of options out there. I am not saying they are unknowledgeable, just be aware and check out their history for producing successful programs.

#3 **CAN'T-GET-A-JOB CONSULTANTS**

These are people with an education in marketing or communications who have been employed for less than 5 years, lose their job, and then become a consultant.

They could still be good however their rates are often up there with the real tried and true experts. Would you not prefer to pay for someone who has the most knowledge, skills and experience?

HOW TO IDENTIFY A TRUE MARKETING EXPERT

So what is a "Marketing Expert" exactly and how do you know one when you meet one? Whether they work for a company or operate independently, here are the 5 key characteristics I recommend you look for:

1. **EDUCATION - Training in PR, Communications or Marketing**

An education shows a marketer has learned the text book side of marketing and that they have developed some level of writing and analytical skills. I also feel they are in marketing because they loved it from day one (or is that just me?)

2. **SKILLS – Strong Creative Writer**

Writing is a critical tangible skill. Your marketer should be able to communicate at a high level through the written word. Examine how they market themselves through their own website and brochures. If they cannot market themselves, can they market your company?

3. **EXPERIENCE – Strong Employment/Consulting History**

Experience demonstrates that a person has been exposed to what works and what does not. No one wants to pay for 'trial and error': a process practiced by the inexperienced marketer. Look for a strong employment and/or consulting history backed up with success stories.

4. **KNOWLEDGE –Able to Demonstrate Marketing Intelligence**

How do you know whether someone is really knowledgeable or not? It's challenging to measure someone's know-how when it's intangible and hidden within the depths of their brains. That said, an expert Marketer finds a way: they will be able to demonstrate their know-how through their own self-promotion (websites, brochures, sales pitches etc). If the sum total of their self-promotion does not convince you they are knowledgeable, then maybe they are not.

5. **RESULTS - Able To Cite Tried & True Results**

Look for a list of results from past projects from your marketer. The past is the best way to predict the future. You need to know that a Marketer knows HOW TO SUCCEED. Have they got a proven track record that demonstrates their ability to create results?

The bottom line is to make any self-proclaimed expert explain WHY THEY ARE AN EXPERT!

Review their resume, website and past projects and evaluate whether they are the right Marketing Expert for your company.

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