

# Agency of the Future eBook

## 8 ANIMAL TRAITS YOU NEED TO FUTURE-PROOF YOUR AGENCY



# How to Flourish as an Agency of the Future

## INTRODUCTION

This book evolved from a request from Magnet Global for us to paint the picture of “The Agency of the Future” at one of their conferences.

While it could seem daunting to peer several years into the future of an industry undergoing incredible evolution, RSW/US is particularly well primed for it. Uniquely positioned in the advertising industry as an outsourced agency new business development group, we are deeply engaged with both agencies and marketers.

***For nearly ten years, we have conducted surveys with both agencies and marketers.***

These produce tremendous insight from key executives on both “sides” about trends that impact how brands go to market and the way agencies and marketers work together.



## INTRODUCTION

Our Magnet Global talk identified eight traits that agencies need to possess to “future-proof” their business and thrive as our changing industry tosses up new challenges and serves up tremendous opportunities. These traits are:

- **Nimble & Agile**
- **Student of Technology**
- **Curator & Contractor**
- **Real Timer**
- **Content Creator**
- **Selectively Specialized**
- **Savvier Competitor**
- **Partner, Not Player**

**Of course, not EVERY individual in your firm needs to possess these traits.** However, your culture needs to foster them.

Across your organization, these characteristics need to be strong and continuously nurtured.

With this eBook and accompanying agency new business resources, RSW/US has literally “painted the picture” of The Agency of the Future.



# ABOUT RSW/US



**We Help Marketing Services  
Firms Find & Win New Business**

RSW/US is a full service, outsourced agency business development group that helps marketing service firms (of all types and sizes) get closer to close. We are in the business of finding qualified leads, setting meetings for our clients, better positioning them in the market, and helping them move closer to close.

We only work with marketing service firms, so we know better than most what works and doesn't work when trying to break through to marketing and other decision makers. We give you the manpower of an entire team at your disposal, including list development, marketing support, and strategic oversight.

# Preface:

## The Traits of the Agency of the Future

Preparing your agency for the future is serious business. The traits necessary for success have been described to us directly by industry executives.

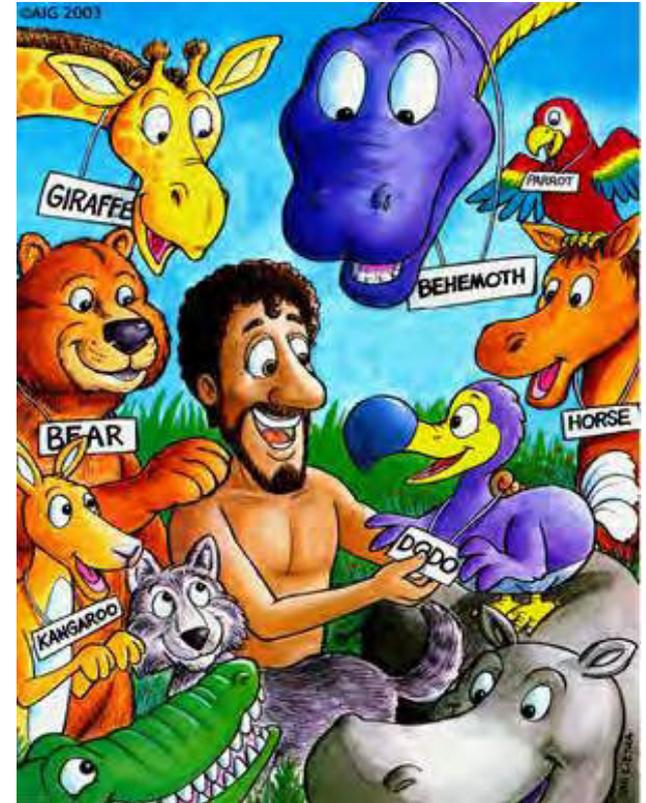
The importance of adapting and preparing for the evolution unfolding in the industry calls for making this information memorable.

In describing the traits, we've enlisted animals we see as possessing them to the benefit of their own survival. But the animals we picked may not be the sole representatives of the traits needed to future-proof your Agency.

We'd love to hear your thoughts. As you read this book, if a trait speaks to you of another creature, we're eager to hear your thoughts and perspective.

Please email us at: [lee@rswus.com](mailto:lee@rswus.com)

We'd be happy to include your ideas in a dialogue about preparing for a successful future.





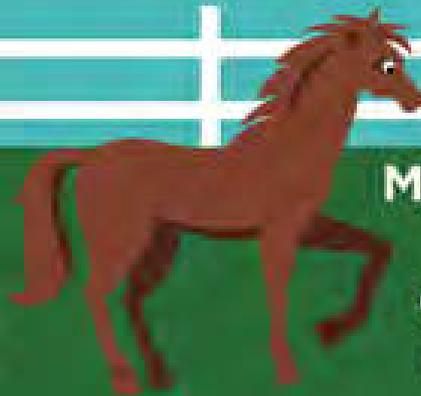
# 8 ANIMAL TRAITS YOU NEED TO FUTURE-PROOF YOUR AGENCY



Marketers are seeking strong, proactive, strategic partners. This section discusses five important partnership traits for the Agency of the Future.

# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like a Horse

**HORSE**  
PARTNER NOT PLAYER



MARKETERS RATE AGENCIES

AT ONLY **6.2** ON A **10**  
POINT SCALE

In being able to rely on them to do  
an excellent job

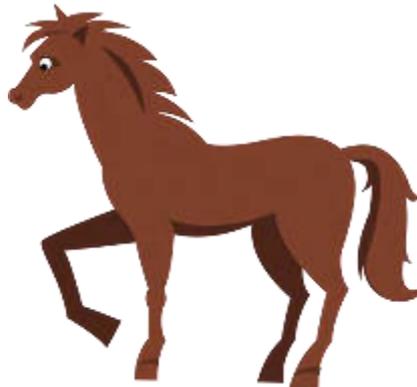
# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like a Horse

A survey that we run continuously with Marketers individually establishes benchmarks on how their current agency is performing.

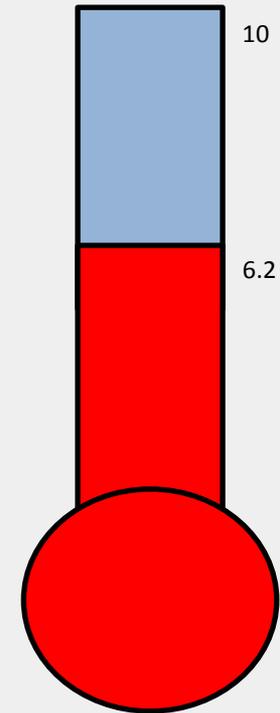
One of the questions asks Marketers to rate how reliable their agency is in consistently doing an excellent job on a 10-point scale.

This goes beyond creative, media planning and buying; it includes the agency's ability to discern business developments that will impact their client's business months in the future.

With 10 being "excellent", the aggregated rating across Marketers surveyed is 6.2.



On a 10-point scale, how consistent is your agency in doing an excellent job?  
(10 = Excellent)



# Be Like a Horse (cont.)

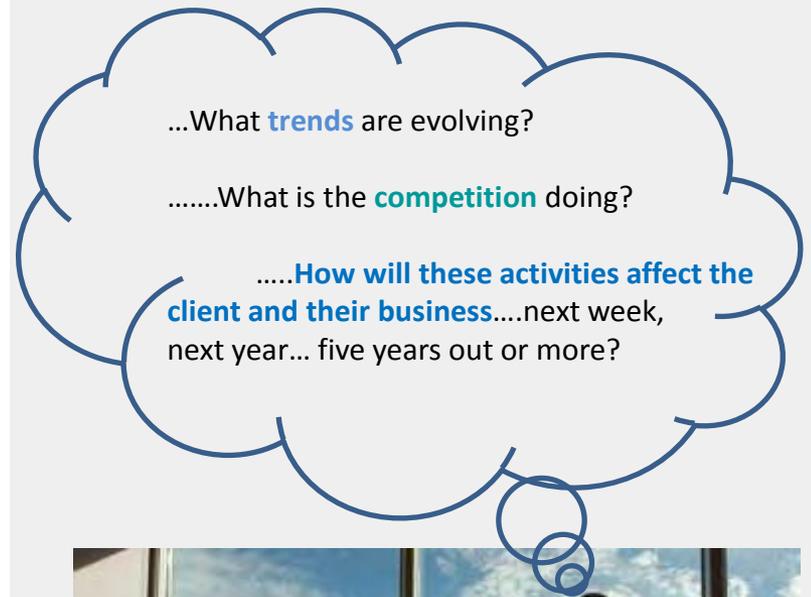
Marketers tell us they need agency partners who are:

- Emotionally and intellectually vested in their brands
- Strategic team leaders and members
- NOT simply “order fillers” or a “creative powerhouse”

Amongst the characteristics highlighted in our Infographic, [8 Animal Traits You Need to Future-Proof your Agency](#), are the partnership traits of the horse.

Horses are excellent partners. They became domesticated about 6,000 years ago, and have united with humans on the battlefield, in hunting, as transportation, on the farm and more.

From the marketer’s perspective, a **strong agency partner will devote time to studying industry developments**, certainly in marketing and advertising, but also importantly, in the client’s industry.



## Be Like a Horse (cont.)



To future-proof your agency, ensure that your team develops understanding and vision that can guide the client in leveraging industry changes to their advantage.

Proactively bring your clients insights your team generates about developments in their industry and the challenges and opportunities they present.

Encourage your group to “own” the brands they work on every bit as much as your clients do.

Emotional and intellectual investment in your clients’ brands will position your firm as a partner that can be relied upon to do an excellent job consistently.

**BE THE HORSE!**

# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like a Badger

REAL  
**84%**  
OF CONSUMERS



TIMER  
USE A  
*mobile/tablet*  
AS A 2ND SCREEN WHEN  
WATCHING TV

**BADGER**

# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like a Badger



Tenacious. Competitive.

It's fairly obvious these are traits an Agency needs to possess for success.

But yet another trait of the Badger is very relevant in this time of rapid evolution of marketing technology and proliferation of media: **being a “real-timer”**.



*Just what does that mean?*



# Be Like a Badger (cont.)

Through our surveys of Marketing executives, we hear their growing need for their agencies to act in “real time”.



Just a couple factors contributing to this need are:

- The rapid growth in “second screens” through smartphones and tablets:
  - Nielsen reports 84% of consumers use a tablet or their smartphone as a “second screen” when watching TV.
- Programmatic technology means **ad placement decisions occur in milliseconds**:
  - [eMarketer sees Programmatic ad spending reaching at least \\$20 Billion by 2016](#), a **+100%** increase over 2014 levels.



# Be Like a Badger (cont.)

Badgers are “real-timers”. Their tenacity and competitiveness certainly enable this.

What’s more, **badgers also prepare for the future**, enabling them to be acting in **real time** as seasons change, and as years pass.

This trait is apparent in the way badgers build their setts (or “dens”). Badger setts contain multiple chambers that serve specific purposes. Setts may reach nearly 1,000 feet in length and generations of badgers may use them.

Badgers are always ready – always in “real time”.

Being an agency that is *tenacious, competitive AND able to operate in “real time”* helps your clients succeed in *increasingly fragmenting, complex and competitive markets*.

Future-proof your agency, and **be a real-timer**.



**BE THE BADGER!**



Chambers in badger setts may serve specific purposes. This one apparently houses HDTV.



## HONEY BEES SELECTIVELY SPECIALIZED

**88%** OF  
MARKETERS

*feel*

IT IS IMPORTANT  
that the agency  
they hire

*specializes*

in their industry



# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like a Honey Bee

If an outside observer remarked that your agency team appear “as busy as bees”, that could be a good thing.

Particularly, if they are busy on the right things – things that matter for moving your clients and your own firm forward.

However, that’s not what is most important about the Honey Bee when it comes to future-proofing your agency.

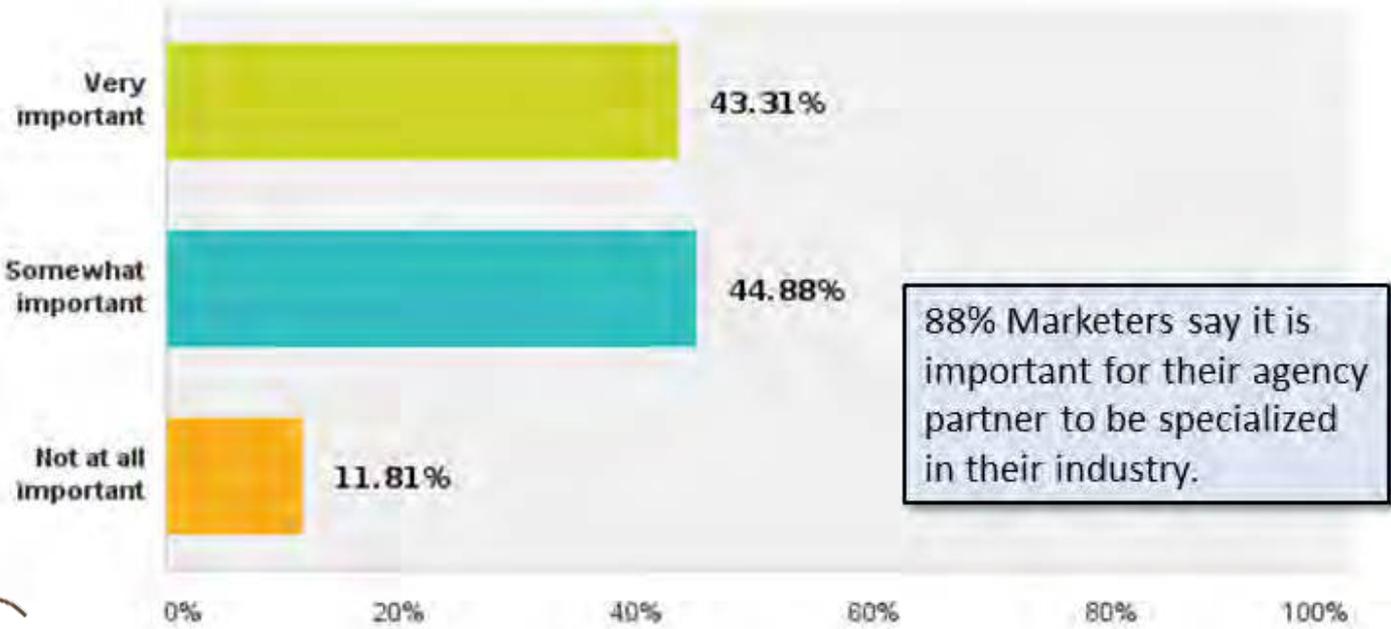
Our Infographic, **8 Animal Traits You Need to Future Proof your Agency**, calls out this important fact:

**88% of Marketers say it is important for their agency partner to have strong expertise in their industry.**



# Be Like a Honey Bee (cont.)

How important is it to you that the marketing agency you hire specializes in your industry?



# Be Like a Honey Bee (cont.)

The trait of the Honey Bee that is REALLY important to the Agency of the Future is all about specialization. Those “busy bees” are not all out foraging, collecting pollen and nectar.

Only worker bees have that responsibility. Other bees are drones. Queen bees are rare, usually only one in a healthy hive.



THAT's specialization!

Is your agency **THAT** focused?

Actually, as important as deep experience in their industry is to marketers, they tell us exclusive specialization is *not* a requirement.

To be considered “specialized”...

**...45% of marketers say that agencies doing over half of their work in their industry would have the needed expertise.**



# Be Like a Honey Bee (cont.)

Another important aspect around agency specialization is **ARTICULATING** it.

*Marketers do not want to hear agencies say they “can do anything”.*

Know your strengths and expertise. Continuously develop your area of specialization.

Promote your strengths, specialization and expertise to differentiate yourself.

For future-proofing your agency, remember:

- “Busy” may be good, but **SPECIALIZED** is critical.
- Exclusivity is not mandatory.
- Actively express and promote your specialized expertise.

Be specialized.

**BE THE HONEY BEE!**



## MOUNTAIN GOAT

ONLY  
**47%** FEEL THEIR AGENCIES ARE  
AGILE AND NIMBLE  
AHEAD OF  
THE DIGITAL *Curve*

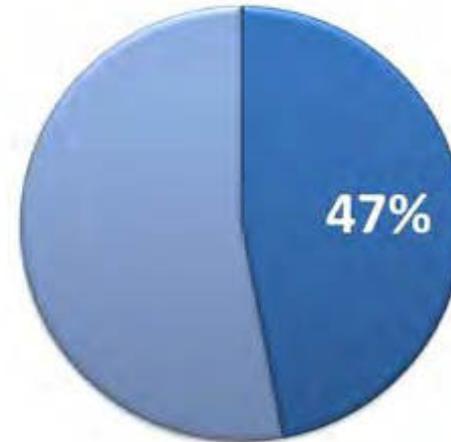


# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like a Mountain Goat



## Marketers Saying their Agencies are Ahead of the "Digital Curve"

■ Ahead of the Curve ■ Lagging



On a regular basis, we survey Marketers individually for input that establishes benchmarks on how their current agency is performing.

One of the questions asks Marketers to assess the ability their agency exhibits in keeping pace with the evolution of digital marketing. With only 47% of Marketers saying their agency is ahead of the “digital curve”, a lot of agencies are not keeping up.

# Be Like a Mountain Goat (cont.)

We hear it all the time from Marketers: they want their agencies to be “nimble and agile”. It’s a commonly expressed desire that arches over a lot of marketing ground, including but not limited to:

- Technology
- Communication strategy
- Ever evolving and emerging media
- Analytics

So why is being “like a mountain goat” important to future-proofing your agency?

Our Infographic, **8 Animal Traits You Need to Future-Proof your Agency**, recognizes Mountain Goats for being agile and nimble.

They can often be seen scaling seemingly vertical walls.

Of course this is physical agility...

... in our world it’s the intellectual, creative and even emotional agility that’s critical.



# Be Like a Mountain Goat (cont.)



Just a few ways to keep intellectual and technical muscle in your firm nimble are:

- engaging with industry thought leaders.
- reading material from within and outside the industry.
- taking classes and workshops.

And staying creatively and emotionally nimble? Again, reading, classes, workshops. Also important: supporting your team in healthy habits. Great nutrition, regular exercise and adequate sleep are keys to staying at the top of the game.

Just like the habitat of the Mountain Goat, our industry often seems to present one vertical wall after another.

Scale those walls by future-proofing your agency.

Be agile. Be nimble.



**BE THE MOUNTAIN GOAT!**

# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like an Ant.

**ANT** CURATOR  
CONTRACTOR

**70+** % OF MARKETERS  
**ARE OPEN** to agencies  
using outside  
**PARTNERSHIPS**

# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like an Ant.

It's like returning to the Ant Farms of our childhood as we turn to the fifth important animal trait for future-proofing your agency.



One reason ants are interesting is their characteristic of working in a highly coordinated fashion.

They modify their habitat and adapt to environmental changes; they utilize available resources and deploy division of labor to do so.

Our Infographic, **8 Animal Traits You Need to Future Proof your Agency**, recognizes ants as Curators and Contractors.

## Be Like an Ant (cont.)

In their work, ants “curate”, collecting materials they need from their surroundings to build their nests.

They also “contract” by dividing the labor of colony building into tasks with groups of ants assigned to specific functions.

These are abilities the successful Agencies of the Future will embody. As an industry, advertising is truly undergoing massive environmental changes.

Instead of nest building as ants do, we build brands, and the “materials” to accomplish this are changing and expanding rapidly.



These changes call for expertise that may not always be in-house.

Fortunately, bringing in strategic partners who provide the specialized know-how your client needs is acceptable to Marketers.

# Be Like an Ant (cont.)



In our recent survey, 70% of Marketers say they are agreeable to their agencies using outside resources to support their brand strategy, particularly if doing so:

- Provides true expertise the agency itself does not have in-house.
- Generates stronger ROI, through a combination of cost management and higher revenues.

Remember though:

**The key to “exploiting resources” as an agency relies on strong strategic partnerships that are *genuine, substantive and proven.***

Make sure your partnerships add value.

Be a curator as well as a contractor of resources that will benefit your clients as you work.

**BE THE ANT!**



# 8 ANIMAL TRAITS YOU NEED TO FUTURE-PROOF YOUR AGENCY

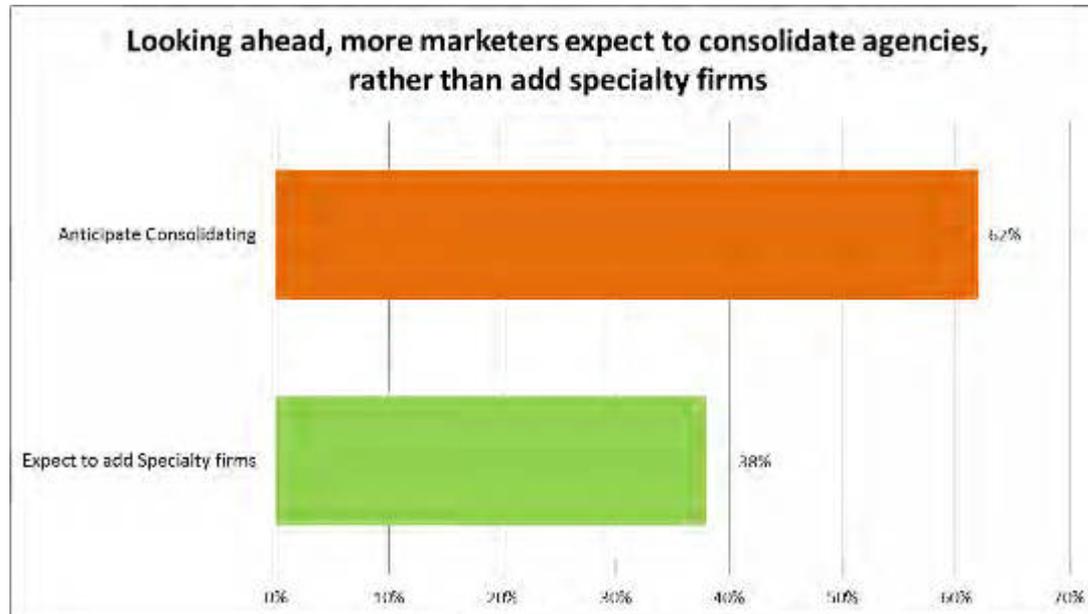


To flourish, Agencies of the Future need to be strong, healthy competitors. This section explains the dynamics behind increasing industry competition, and the traits firms will need to thrive.

# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Sharpen Your Competitive Traits.

The numbers are enough to make you howl. Our recent survey shows:

- 59% of Marketers told us they have been consolidating agencies recently.
- 63% indicated they expected this trend to continue.



# Competition is intensifying....

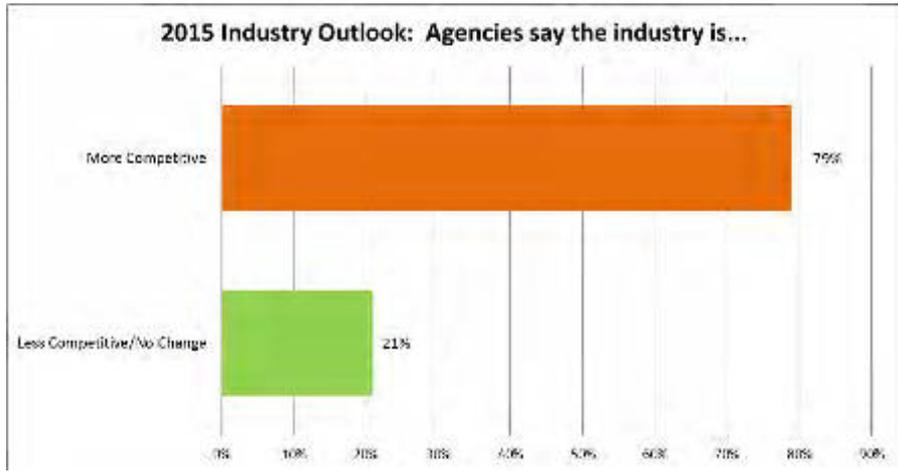
At the same time:

- 88% of agencies say they are getting more aggressive with new business strategies.

Approach to new business will be "Somewhat or "Much More" Aggressive:			
2015	----	88%	
2014	----	86%	
2013	----	82%	
2012	----	82%	
2011	----	77%	

Accordingly,

- 79% of Agencies indicate the industry has become more competitive over the past 3-4 years.



# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like the Gray Wolf.



## GRAY WOLF SAVVIER COMPETITOR

**88%** OF AGENCIES say they will get more aggressive on new business strategies...

because...

**62%** OF MARKETERS ANTICIPATE CONSOLIDATING AGENCIES IN THE FUTURE

# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like the Gray Wolf.

Consolidation of opportunities for new business combined with agencies pressing harder for those opportunities: it's a recipe that demands future-proofing your agency!

In addition to traits inherent to stronger partners, the Agency of the Future needs to possess several strong competitive traits as well.

One is **savviness**, and the Gray Wolf is an excellent example of a savvy competitor.

Gray Wolves are outstanding hunters. They have a highly organized social structure that fosters cooperation when hunting.

**Key to their success is communication within the pack.**

Hunting alone, a Gray Wolf is capable of catching and killing a deer. But, collaborating with the pack, wolves can prey on much larger animals such as elk and moose.



# Be Like a Gray Wolf<sub>(cont.)</sub>

In agency new business, the hunt is about communication, process and collaboration.

**Make sure your “pack” is primed to bring in the BIG game.** Just a few recommendations include:

- **Be deliberate in your communications.**
- **Establish a strong-point-of-difference and articulate it clearly.**
- **Develop thought leading content and publish it.**
- **Establish a disciplined process for agency new business.**
- **Identify targets and accurate contact information.**
- **Insist on persistence and consistency in contacting prospects.**
- **Use the strengths of your “pack” to maximize collaboration.**
- **Identify decision makers in target companies.**
- **Establish responsibility for consistent outreach and follow-up to make connections and develop relationships.**
- **Send in your strongest hunters for the close.**



It's not too early to be future-proofing your agency as we make the turn toward the new year. Competition is sure to continue intensifying.

Be aggressive. Be Savvy.

**BE THE GRAY WOLF!**



# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like the Chimpanzee.

CHIMPANZEE



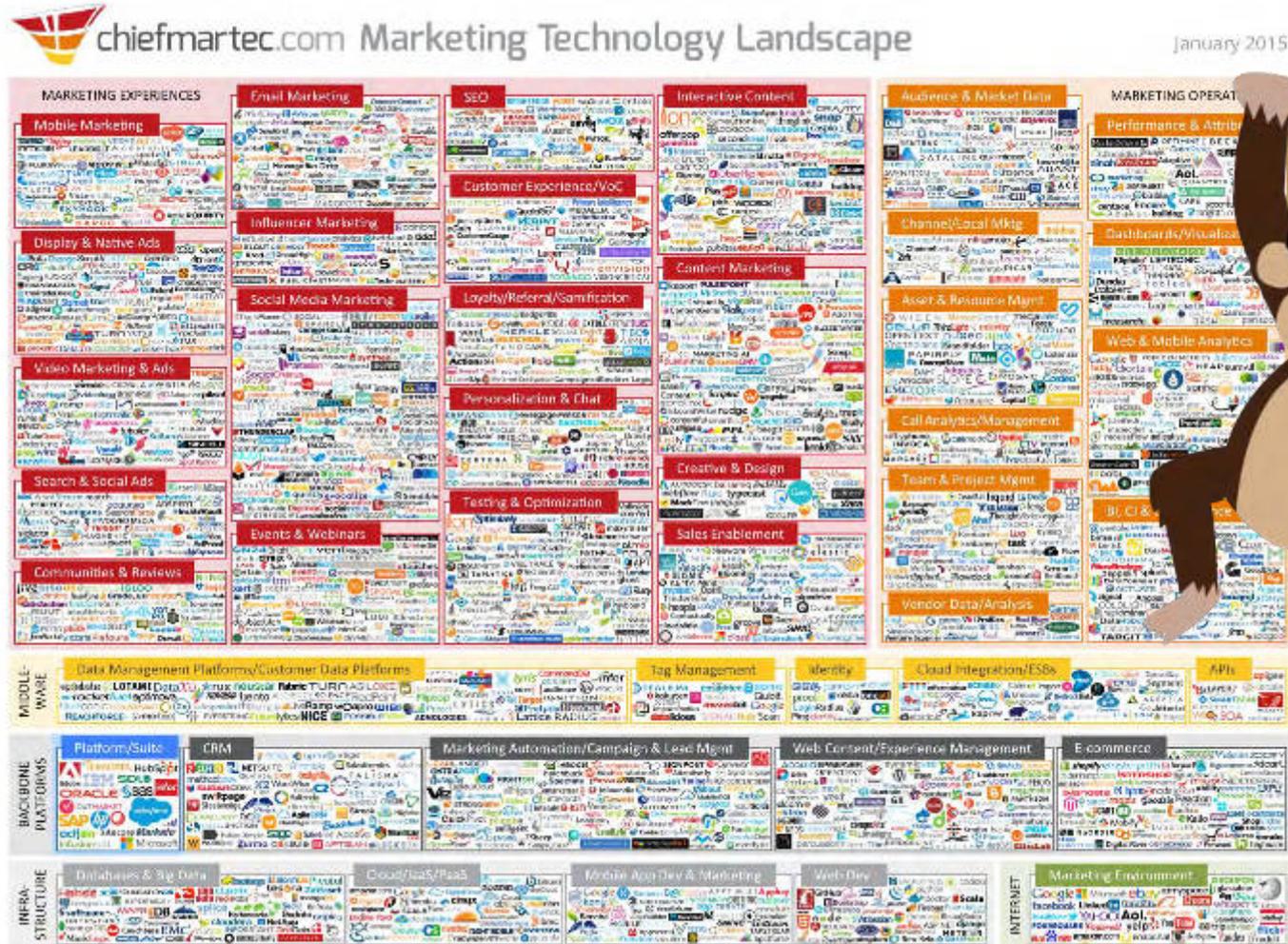
## STUDENT OF TECHNOLOGY

the number of marketing technology firms has GROWN from **100** in 2011 TO **1,896** in 2015

# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like the Chimpanzee.

This chart probably makes the point best:

Marketing Technology has EXPLODED over the past five years.



by Scott Brinker @chiefmartec: <http://chiefmartec.com>

# Be Like the Chimpanzee(cont.)



In 2011, the Chief Marketing Technologist Blog identified 100 Marketing Technology firms. As of January 2015, that number approached 1900. Little doubt it will soon pass the 2000 mark and beyond.

So what does this mean for future-proofing your agency?

**It means your firm needs to be like a Chimpanzee in order to thrive in an increasingly competitive and complex industry.**

The Chimpanzee is a creature with a strong ability to learn. Chimpanzees can even devise ways to use tools.

In terms of your agency and the pace of marketing technology development...

**... your firm needs to be proactive in continuously studying, learning and applying new tools and technology to build both YOUR business and YOUR CLIENTS' business.**

# Be Like the Chimpanzee (cont.)

This is not to say you have to go out and study up on all 1,876 marketing technology offerings that the Chief Marketing Technologist identified in January 2015.

Rather, consider animal traits we have already presented:

The Honey Bee:

- Be selectively specialized. Understand which marketing technologies support your specialization and acquire them.



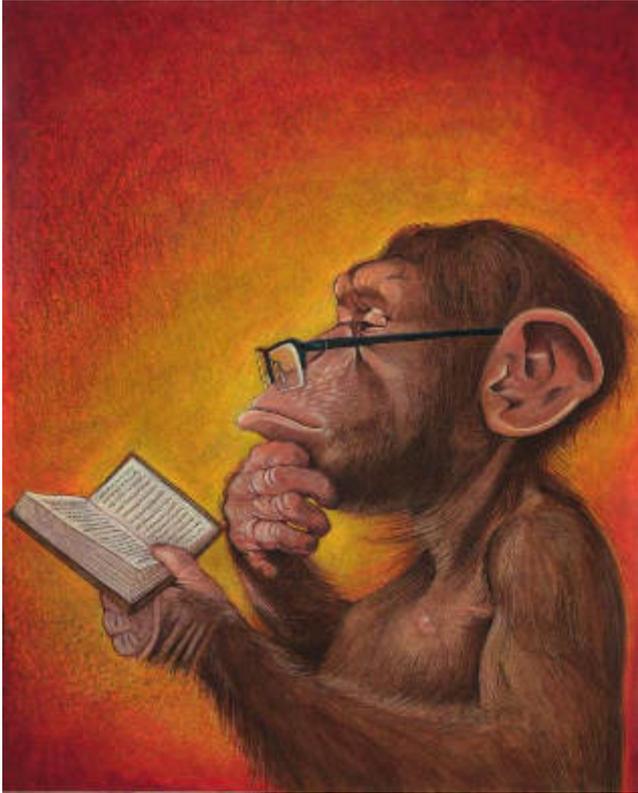
The Ant:

- Curate and contract.
  - How many marketing technologies apply within your area of specialization?
  - Do you need them all NOW?
  - Do you need the expertise with them in-house, or can you strategically align with a firm that possesses the expertise in the technologies that will benefit your business or your clients' businesses?



# Be Like the Chimpanzee<sup>(cont.)</sup>

Chimpanzees are very good students. It turns out they are teachers as well.



Encourage your team to be proactive students of marketing technology. As they learn, empower them to share the knowledge they've developed with others in your organization.

Even if the entire staff does not need to use new technologies hands-on, it's important that they understand the implications of evolving marketing technology.

Our industry has entered a phase of continuous and increasingly rapid change.

One thing is certain for future-proofing your agency: you need to be an active student.

Always be learning.



**BE THE CHIMPANZEE!**

# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like the Beaver.

## BEAVER CONTENT CREATOR



**89%** OF MARKETERS  
*read agency  
blog posts*

# To Future-Proof Your Agency...Be Like the Beaver.

Your new business prospects are looking for something to sink their teeth into.



Marketers are consolidating agencies while agencies are intensifying their agency new business efforts.

Amid these dynamics, marketers report:

- receiving information from hundreds of agencies
- agencies sound a lot alike in their new business communications

The marketers' observations do not come as a surprise.

As we collaborate with agencies on their new business communication strategy, an early exercise is to hear their “elevator speech”.

They basically come back all the same at the beginning: “strategic, great partner, extra mile, fun to work with”.

***HOW'S A MARKETER TO CHOOSE?***

# Be Like the Beaver(cont.)

Our Agency of the Future infographic recognizes the Beaver as a “content creator”.

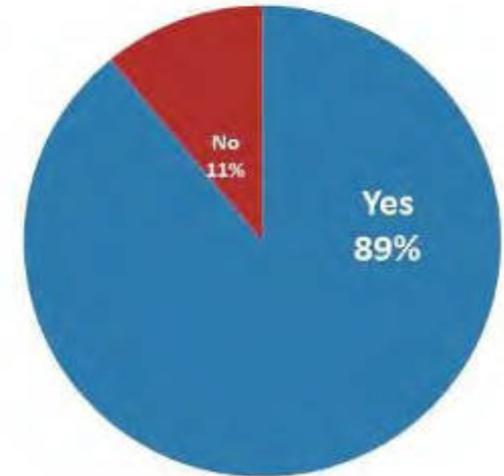
In addition to **differentiation**, future-proofing your agency requires **strategic content development** that showcases your expertise and thought leadership.

And those factors are still only two in the equation for sustained success as an Agency of the Future.

The remaining factor is **proactive outreach**, connecting your content with your contacts with regular frequency.

With **89% of Marketers reading agency blog posts**, it’s highly important to differentiate and actively broadcast value-added content.

Marketers: Do You Read Agency Blogs?



# Be Like the Beaver<sup>(cont.)</sup>

And if you think further about Beaver behavior, they are truly “ecosystem engineers”.

Intent and purpose are behind everything they create. They put available resources to use to create, modify and maintain their habitat.

In the marketing and advertising world, this is exactly what agencies need to do to stand out to their marketing prospects!

To “engineer YOUR ecosystem”:

- **Create your point of difference.**
- **Develop thought leader perspective around your areas of expertise.**
- **Diligently showcase your expertise through strong content.**
- **Proactively reach out to your prospects.**
- **Make sure your message connects with targets.**

Intentionally engineer your “ecosystem”. Be a content creator – and broadcaster.

**BE THE BEAVER!**

**Must...**

- **Differentiate my colony\*.**
- **Create value-added content.**
- **Reach out proactively with content.**



\*Beaver term for firm or agency.<sup>13</sup>



# Supplemental Video Series

Somewhat in the style of Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure, we created a video series as part of the agency of the future campaign. We ARE serious about the subject matter, but ourselves? Not so much.

Click on the banners below to view the videos.



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PARTNER NOT PLAYER

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*in being able to rely on them to do an excellent job.*



**ANT** CURATOR CONTRACTOR

**70+** % OF MARKETERS ARE OPEN TO AGENCIES USING OUTSIDE PARTNERSHIPS



REAL **84%** OF CONSUMERS USE A **BADGER** TIMER AS A 2ND SCREEN WHEN WATCHING TV

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**CHIMPANZEE** | STUDENT OF TECHNOLOGY |

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**BEAVER** CONTENT CREATOR

**89%** OF MARKETERS *need agency help* *period.*