

2017

THOUGHT LEADER REPORT

RSW/US
Agency-Client Relationship Experts

RSW/US OWNER & PRESIDENT MARK SNEIDER

This is our fourth annual Agency New Business Thought Leader Survey Report. Because we at RSW/US are always generating questions for our surveys, we thought it would be useful to agencies to get perspective from some of the industry's leading agency new business Thought Leaders.

We asked each of them to submit questions they believed would prove helpful to agencies across the country.

We will be conducting interviews with each of them to gather their perspective on the responses to their questions. These interviews will be released via our Agency New Business newsletter and our agency insights [blog](#).

We would like to thank the following Thought Leaders for including questions in this survey.

JODY SUTTER **TIM WILLIAMS**
DAVID C. BAKER **LAURIE MIKES**
MICHAEL GASS **DREW MCLELLAN**



MARK SNEIDER

The 2017 Agency New Business Thought Leader Survey was completed by 164 Agencies from across the United States during July 2017 and commissioned by RSW/US.

RSW/US is a full service, outsourced agency lead generation and new business development firm that helps marketing service companies (exclusively) find and win new business. We help Agencies find qualified leads and set meetings with them. We assist Agencies in improving their positioning in the market and move them closer to closing new business.

This report provides an overall summary of findings as well as perspective from RSW/US.

In addition, each Thought Leader has offered Agency New Business advice that is provided in the report.

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PLEASE NOTE: ALL PERSPECTIVE IS THAT OF RSW/US. SEPARATE INTERVIEWS AND GUEST BLOG POSTS WILL SERVE AS PLATFORMS FOR OUR THOUGHT LEADERS' PERSPECTIVE AND INSIGHTS.



The background features a complex network of intersecting lines in various shades of blue and light blue. Some lines are thicker and more prominent, while others are thinner and more subtle. There are also several circular nodes of varying sizes and colors (blue, light blue, grey) scattered throughout the composition, some of which appear to be connected to the lines, suggesting a network or molecular structure.

CHAPTER 1

DAVID C. BAKER
ASKS...

CHAPTER 1 DAVID C. BAKER ASKS...

The first set of questions comes from David C. Baker. David is an author, speaker, and advisor to expert marketing firms, helping them make better business decisions. He's worked directly with 900+ firms and hundreds of thousands have been through his seminars or read his books for principals.



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DAVID BEGINS WITH

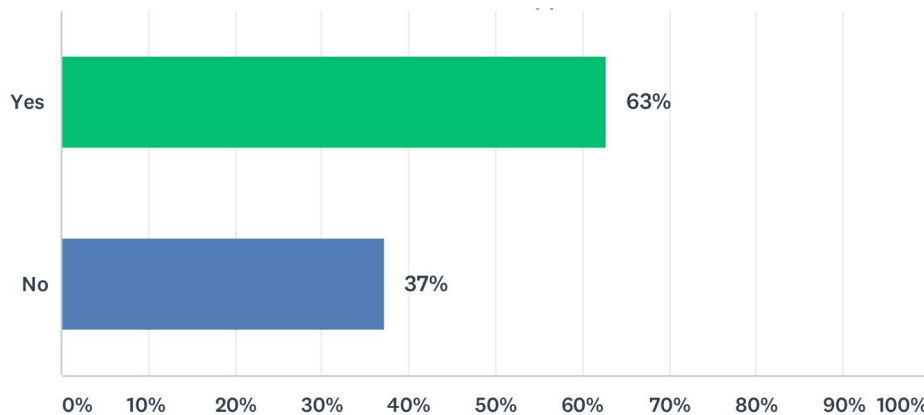
QUESTION 1

DOES THE PERSON PRIMARILY CHARGED WITH NEW BUSINESS ALSO MANAGE SOME CLIENT ACCOUNTS?

63% of respondents said “yes” to this question, which frankly is not too terribly surprising. Like many small businesses, agencies try and do as much as they can with the resources they have, but when it comes to new business, the character and personality of a “farmer” (your account person) is very different from the character and personality of the “hunter” (your new business person).

In the 12 years we’ve served agencies as their outsourced new business development firm, we have witnessed first-hand how difficult it can be for one person to do both jobs.

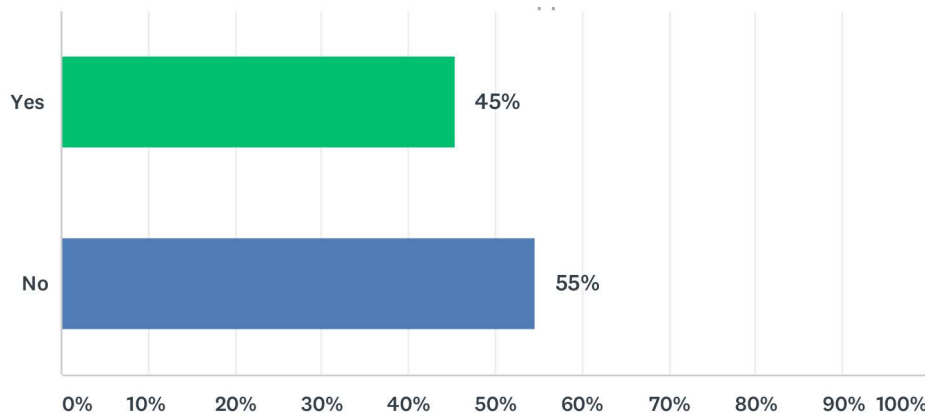
New business prospecting requires focus, focus, focus. And even when new business directors in agencies are exclusively dedicated to prospecting, their tenure too often isn’t super long. In a 2014 article written by Adweek based off of our own surveys, the team at [Adweek](#) identified the new business function as the most “dangerous job at an agency”. The business of prospecting is tough business. Expecting account folks to manage their accounts and source new business is likely a very challenging task.



DAVID C. BAKER ASKS...

QUESTION 2

DO YOU HAVE AN ACTUAL CHECKLIST THAT YOU USE INTERNALLY TO DETERMINE WHETHER A NEW PROSPECTIVE OPPORTUNITY CHECKS ALL THE BOXES?



I'm personally happy to see that 45% of respondents say that they actually do have a checklist they use when evaluating the value of a prospect. I'm somewhat surprised it's that high.

In the business of agency new business, it's critically important to take an objective look at who you are going after when putting together a new business program. The first step is building lists that make sense for your agency. And then make sure you're doing the best you can to unearth as much as you can about that prospect as you work your way through the prospecting effort.

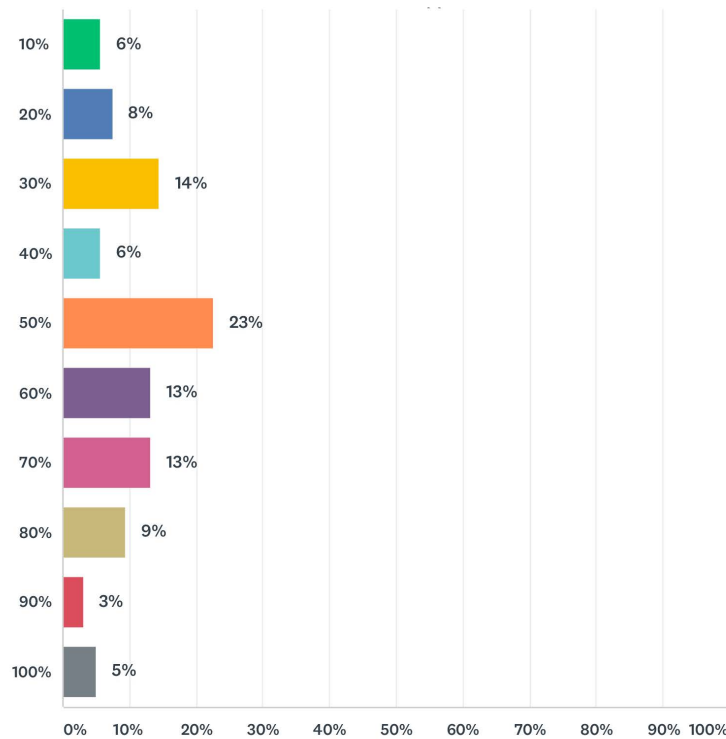
Even if you don't have a literal checklist, make sure you understand things like the stability of the senior marketing staff, their budget, their approach to working with agencies. Learn a little bit about why they are looking for and what their history with agencies is.

If you do the proper homework upfront, you'll be better aligned with the prospect and more likely to avoid bumps in the road that could lead to an erosion of the relationship.

DAVID C. BAKER ASKS

QUESTION 3

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE TIME DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE PROSPECT'S BUDGET IS?



Marketing prospects usually aren't very forthcoming with their spending levels and that fact is certainly reflected here in these numbers. Only 5% of agencies state that they get a prospect's budget 100% of the time. And less than half of all agencies get their arms wrapped around a marketer's spend over half of the time.

It certainly doesn't give agencies a lot to work with.

While you can and should use platforms like Kantar to get a look at a marketer's measured media activity, usually this only tells part of the story. Particularly if you're going after marketers that carry a lot of below the line spend. And if you're like many of our clients, you know there's plenty of money out there in other, non-measured work, so finding out budgets during the intro call or meeting is important.

QUESTION 3

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE TIME DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE PROSPECT'S BUDGET IS? (CONT.)

If you can't get the prospect to reveal his/her spending levels by directly asking them, you can go about it a couple of other ways. You can ask them to tell you what kinds of things they normally do to support their business. If you don't get the sense they're doing a lot, probably a good sign they're not big spenders. Or another approach we've seen work is giving prospects a number and asking "are you spending more than \$x". This gives the prospect more room and they might be willing to reveal enough to help you make the call.

And if you're involved in a formal agency search, you should have visibility of the marketer's spend, as this is information the search consultant should have in-hand - if the search consultant is worth their weight. I always find it amazing on the [RSW/AgencySearch](#) side of our business, how willing marketers are to share spending levels with us when they are generally not so willing to do the same with an agency. Of course I get why...but I just find it interesting.

WHEN ASKED FOR HIS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE FOR AGENCIES REGARDING AGENCY NEW BUSINESS

DAVID C. BAKER COUNSELS

The most confident, well-run firms publish basic client criteria on their website so that prospects who aren't a great fit can self-select themselves out of the running before you get a chance to compromise.

You've demonstrated, over and over again, that you cannot be trusted to determine prospect fit. When you need the work, you talk yourself into the belief that you can turn a bad client into a good one.

After all, the thinking goes, it's better to keep the people busy with unprofitable work rather than have them sitting around with nothing to do. And so it goes: you feed the machine instead of making the business your \$%&@.*

The background features a complex network of thin, light blue lines connecting various circular nodes. Some nodes are solid blue, some are light blue, and some are grey. The lines and nodes create a sense of interconnectedness and structure. The text is overlaid on this network.

CHAPTER 2

MICHAEL GASS

ASKS...

CHAPTER 2 MICHAEL GASS ASKS...

Questions in this section come from Michael Gass.

The questions in this section come from Michael Gass. Michael was the first advertising agency consultant to embrace social media for business development.

He's been an active participant and innovator since creating his blog, Fuel Lines, back in 2007. It has ranked among the top 100 global marketing blogs in the world according to Ad Age's Power 150. His Fuel Lines' newsletter has over 33,000 subscribers. He's also amassed a Twitter following of over 106,000 people.

Michael's built an international consultancy using the inbound and content marketing strategies and tactics that he recommends to advertising agencies and professional service firms.

He's conducted over 270+ social media workshops in the U.S., Canada and the UK as well as global training events for international advertising and marketing associations.



MICHAEL@MICHAELGASS.COM

MICHAEL GASS ASKS

QUESTION 1

WHAT ARE THE TOP 3 SKILLS NEEDED FOR NEW BUSINESS SUCCESS?

Hiring great new business director talent is no easy task. We go through hundreds of resumes to find the two or three that we think are simply worth talking with. It's only then that we take the candidate through a fairly lengthy and organized process to make sure we get the best and the brightest in the bunch at RSW/US.

It's just not good enough to be a great sales person or to know the marketing industry or to have experience in the advertising space. It takes all three of those things – and more.

It's the tougher aspects to unearth that are often what sets good new business directors apart from great ones. It takes a passion for wanting to see your agency succeed, it takes thoughtfulness and consideration. It takes an ability to be creative in how you bust through and how you get your prospects to engage and share and want to work with you.

We see all of this play out in the word cloud on the following page. Asked what the top three skills for new business are and agency's play back things like:

- Understanding
- Listening
- Persistence
- Consistency
- Organization
- Curiosity
- Strategic

So as you hunt for your next hunter, don't get enamored by the guy that seems to only bring a ton of energy, or the person with medical device sales experience because you want to build up your medical business, or the woman with the rolodex (that she's probably used in her past 4 agencies). Dig deep, ask questions to help you see the real person behind that interview get up. You as a principal knows what it takes because more than likely, you've done it. So think a bit about your profile and what made you succeed, and start to look for the same in your next new business hire.

MICHAEL GASS ASKS

QUESTION 1

WHAT ARE THE THREE TOP SKILLS NEEDED FOR NEW SUCCESS?

Prospects Marketing Tenacity Passion Empathy Expertise
Relationship Consistency Skills Business
Understanding Sales Listening
Confidence Ability Curiosity Strategic Networking
Persistence Perseverance Determination
Intelligence
Communication Fit Focus Sense Consistency Insight
Understanding Generation Persistence
Relationship Building Client Value Ability
Energy Listening Imagination Skills Patience
Prospect Able Empathy Marketing Presentation
Presentation
Skills Knowing Value Sales Persistence
Leadership Service Genuine Follow Chutzpah
Prospects Thick Skin Listening
Confidence Ability Honesty Organization
Patience Curiosity Salesmanship Tenacity Likeability
Understanding

MICHAEL GASS ASKS...

QUESTION 2

WHAT ARE THE AREAS/TASKS THAT YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT PURSUING NEW BUSINESS?

Creative Content Getting Selling Pitch Excited
Challenges Talking Client Hunt Business
chase Prospect Thinking Learning
Conversations Problem Researching Winning
Strategy Finding Ideas Relationship Building Vision
Listening

What I find most interesting in these results is the fact that words like “challenges”, “learning” and “problem” all surfaced to the top.

Sure “winning” and “pitching” and “prospecting” are the more significant “events” in the new business process, but it’s what gets you there and/or what you during those big moments that make a difference.

The most successful new business directors at RSW/US are those that see the big picture, love learning, are problem solvers, and enjoy the challenges that the job presents.

So the next time you interview a candidate, ask them “Why do you like new business development?” If they only talk about the thrill of the pitch, you might not have the right guy. But if they also talk about the thrill of learning and the thrill of solving problems and the thrill of facing a great challenge, then you just might have the right person for your firm.

MICHAEL GASS ASKS

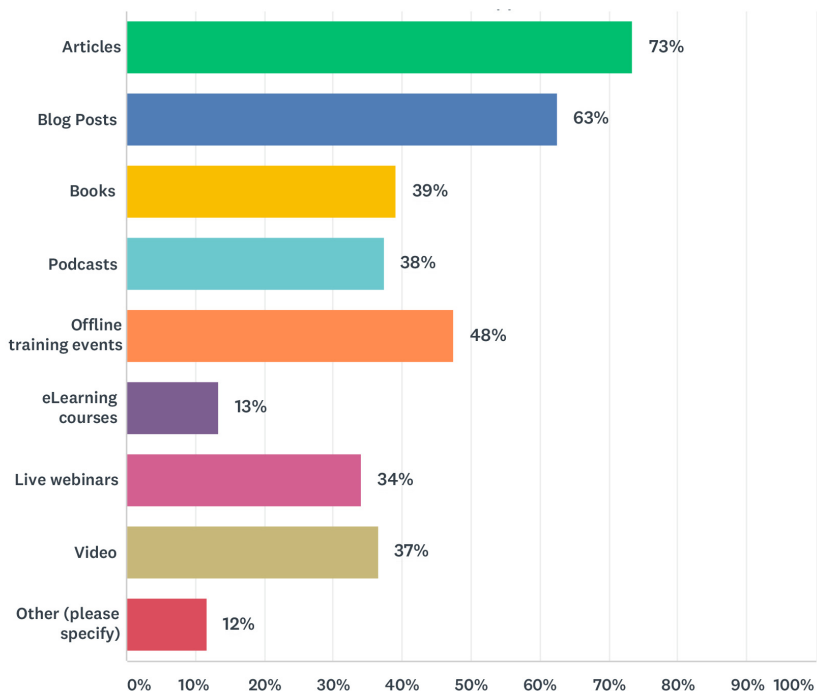
QUESTION 3

WHAT ARE YOUR MOST PREFERRED AREAS FOR GAINING ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS INTO IMPROVING YOUR NEW BUSINESS SKILLS/PROGRAM?

Seems like agency folks are turning to lots of different resources for insights to help them improve the manner in which they go to market and prospect.

There are certainly enough of us out there telling you (the agency) what to do and how to think. This industry is definitely not short on resources. If you aren't tapping into any of these resources, like any of our Thought Leaders' blog or a blog like ours...and if you aren't doing it with some measure of frequency, you need to get on it.

Knowledge is powerful in the world we live in here. And keeping yourself current is even more important given the rapid nature by which the world of advertising and prospecting is changing. Learning from others is the best way to improve your efforts. We not only do it by learning from others outside our organization, but we do it by sharing experiences internally across new business directors that work on our different agency new business accounts. So in your world...as you sit alone as the new business person, get out...go to a conference, rub elbows with fellow new business people so you too can exchange ideas, successes and failures to better your own new business approach.



IN RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST FOR A PIECE OF AGENCY NEW BUSINESS ADVICE FOR YOU,

MICHAEL GASS COACHES...

According to a press release by RSW/US, 85% of agencies continue to hire new-business development personnel internally hoping that “this hire will be the right hire.” Yet, the vast majority of them fail.

Before hiring someone for your agency’s new business efforts, in addition to understanding their traditional new business expertise, you should also explore what they really know about:

- How to build a community of online prospects.
- How to use social media and inbound marketing to create a niche for new business and provide a direct connection to your agency’s brand leader.

The background features a network of interconnected lines and nodes. A prominent blue line runs diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. Other lines in various shades of blue and light blue crisscross the frame. Several circular nodes are scattered throughout, some in light blue and others in light grey, connected by thin lines.

CHAPTER 3

**DREW MCLELLAN
ASKS...**

CHAPTER 3 DREW MCLELLAN ASKS...

The questions in this section come from Drew McLellan.

Drew has worked in advertising for 25+ years and started his own agency, McLellan Marketing Group in 1995 after a five-year stint at Y&R and still actively runs the agency.

He also owns and runs Agency Management Institute (www.agencymanagementinstitute.com), which serves 250+ agencies small to mid-sized agencies (advertising, digital, marketing, media and PR) every year, so they can increase their AGI, attract better clients and employees and scale their business.

Drew often appears in publications like Forbes, Entrepreneur Magazine, New York Times, Washington Post, Agency Post, AdAge, CNN, BusinessWeek, and many others. The Wall Street Journal calls him "one of 10 bloggers every entrepreneur should read."

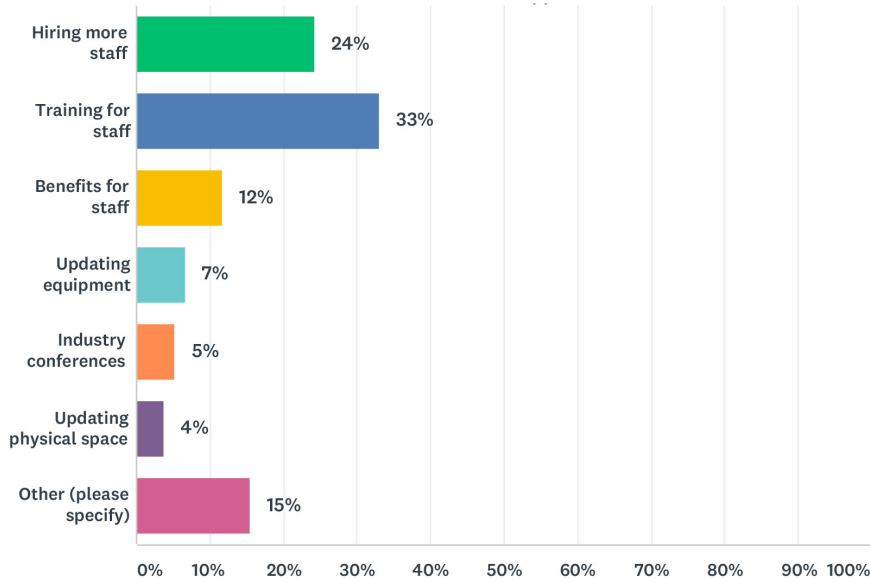


DREW MCLELLAN

DREW MCLELLAN ASKS

QUESTION 1

WHAT IS YOUR FIRST PRIORITY IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO RE-INVEST INTO YOUR AGENCY?



Many of us often find ourselves running incessantly on that proverbial marketing agency hamster wheel.

We're all moving so fast at times and trying to balance capacity and client demands that it's tough to take a step back and better the team you have.

So it's nice to see that about a third of the agencies responding think first about training and another third think about giving out additional benefits for their employees if there's extra cash floating around the agency.

Just like we talked in response to the Michael Gass question about where agencies go for insights, it's also important to keep your staff current and ahead of the curve as it relates to all things digital, social, and analytical. The top reason why marketers come to us on the RSW/AgencySearch side of our business is they feel their agency has gotten tired and isn't bringing them anything new and/or simply not keeping them ahead of the curve.

Don't let your agency become the agency your client is replacing. Train your team. Make them smarter than the next agency down the street.

I know from our own experiences with training and educating, it not only has the benefit of advancing the knowledge and skills of your agency, but it can also prove a motivator and morale booster for the team.

Note: The 15% "other" were primarily responses tied to "New Business Development".

===== DREW MCLELLAN ASKS...

QUESTION 2

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE YOU'LL BE OFFERING CLIENTS IN 12-18 MONTHS THAT YOU ARE NOT OFFERING THEM TODAY?

Below is a summary of the major themes pulled from the 160 responses to this question.

Extensive technology driving content engagement
eCommerce design and development.
A strong offering in nurturing/marketing automation
In-house programmatic buying
Shopper marketing
More digital
In-house video production, media buying
Classes (IRL & Online) and workshops on:
Design thinking / Innovation, DIY Media Production, Social Engagement Strategies, Value Story Development, etc. We offer this but I see the demand growing rapidly.
Expanded analytics.
Public Relations Services
Geo-fencing and geo-targeting of conferences and trade shows
IP address targeting
Retargeting and physical mail follow up
More robust predictive analytics.
AR-based apps.
VR Video
More technology, Products we have developed
Multi-dimensional experiences vs. just 2D
Multicultural perspectives that lead the total market conversation.
More sophisticated CRM solutions and data analytics
More sales support help.
Additional consulting and one-on-one staff training
Inbound marketing
A/I chatbot authoring.

===== DREW MCLELLAN ASKS...

QUESTION 2 (CONT.)

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE YOU'LL BE OFFERING CLIENTS IN 12-18 MONTHS THAT YOU ARE NOT OFFERING THEM TODAY?

One thing is certain here in these responses...there is a lot going on in our industry! Some of the offerings listed could go the way of "bright shiny object" and be hot today and an old shoe tomorrow.

Others, like IP address targeting and enhanced use of tools for targeting, could prove all the rage.

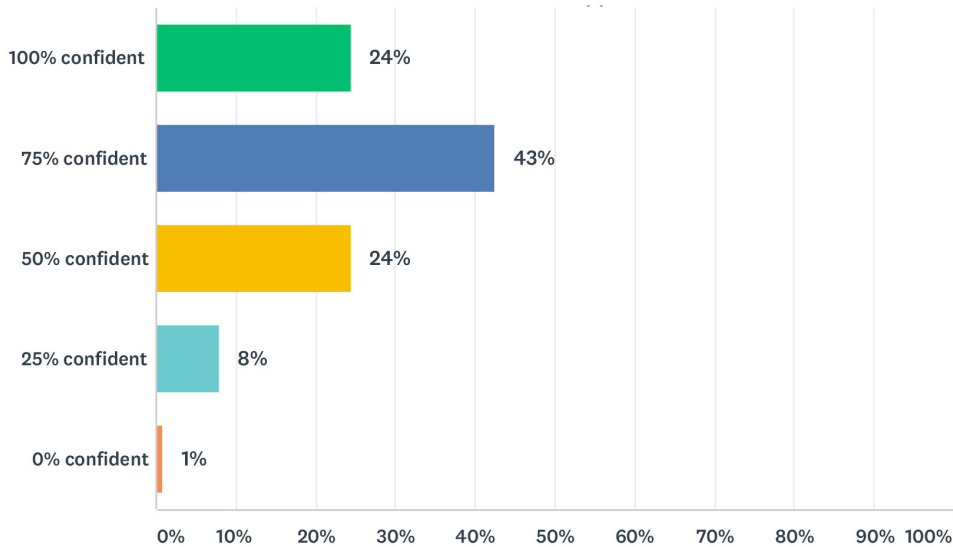
As you think about what you should be offering your clients, keep two principles in mind: The first we've talked about: stay on top of what's new and different and talk with your clients about it. Doesn't mean you have to institute that which you discuss, but just letting them know you're operating in their best interest will be of value to them (and you).

The second is, if you're going to recommend an idea to your client, make sure it serves a real business purpose. Don't be recommending VR because it's cool and all the rage. Introduce it if you really think it can help enhance the way consumers interact with your client's brand – and they can legitimately sell more and make more.

DREW MCLELLAN ASKS

QUESTION 3

HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU IN YOUR AGENCY'S ABILITY TO GENUINELY DIFFERENTIATE ITSELF FROM OTHER AGENCIES?



Love the confidence here!

My question is, what stage of the new business development process are these respondents considering as they respond to this question? The intro call or the introductory letter? Or are they thinking about the pitch or presentation, which naturally provides them with more time to work a good story into the conversation about what makes their agency different.

In our world, we have 5 seconds to 2 minutes to capture somebody's attention, so you better darn well be ready to call out your POD. The prospect needs to know why they should sit down with you and what you're going to bring to the table that somebody else (their existing agency) can't.

Back in the day, when I'd develop Communications Strategies/Brand Stories for new agency client programs, I'd often pull a page out of my 10 years as a CPG marketer and first focus on the more emotional (end) benefits of working with one of our agency clients. I quickly learned that the emotional play is best suited in the world of the longer phone conversation or presentation or pitch. It doesn't belong in the intro call or email.

Making that emotional connection is important, but the early stage of prospecting (making that initial intro) requires strategic questions, sound RTBs, and a smartness about your approach that can get and keep that prospect moving down the line.

OUR REQUEST FOR A PIECE OF AGENCY NEW BUSINESS ADVICE PROMPTED...
DREW MCLELLAN TO STRESS THIS:

You don't need 100 new clients. You need 2-3 right fit wins every year to grow your agency 20-25% year over year.

By all means – chat with anyone who comes in through your inbound efforts but when it comes to outbound – use your time wisely. Know who your best-fit prospects are and put together a top 25 list that matches that profile. Have a plan to consistently woo them and know that it might be a day or a decade before they're ready.

Work that plan every single day until they hire you or get a restraining order. And then count your profits.

The background features a complex network of thin, light blue lines connecting various circular nodes. Some nodes are solid blue, some are light blue, and some are grey. The lines and nodes create a sense of interconnectedness and structure. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

CHAPTER 4

LAURIE MIKES
ASKS...

CHAPTER 4 LAURIE MIKES ASKS...

Questions in this section come from Laurie Mikes.

Laurie Mikes is the Chief Operating Officer of Second Wind (www.secondwindonline.com), overseeing daily operations while keeping one finger on the pulse of our industry.

Laurie has spent the last 20 years with Second Wind and is deeply involved with our member agencies on a daily basis. Whether it's providing guidance about financial matters, agency growth, personnel or operations, her years of experience bring valuable insight and perspective to agencies looking to build a successful sustainable business.

Laurie can be reached at www.secondwindonline.com



LAURIE MIKES

LAURIE MIKES ASKS TWO QUESTIONS CLOSELY TIED TOGETHER

QUESTION 1

DOES YOUR AGENCY HAVE AN ON-GOING, PROACTIVE NEW BUSINESS PROGRAM/PLAN?

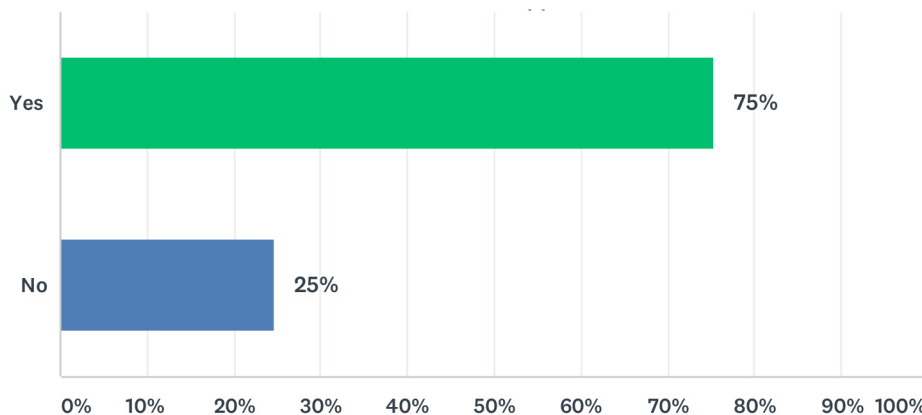
QUESTION 2

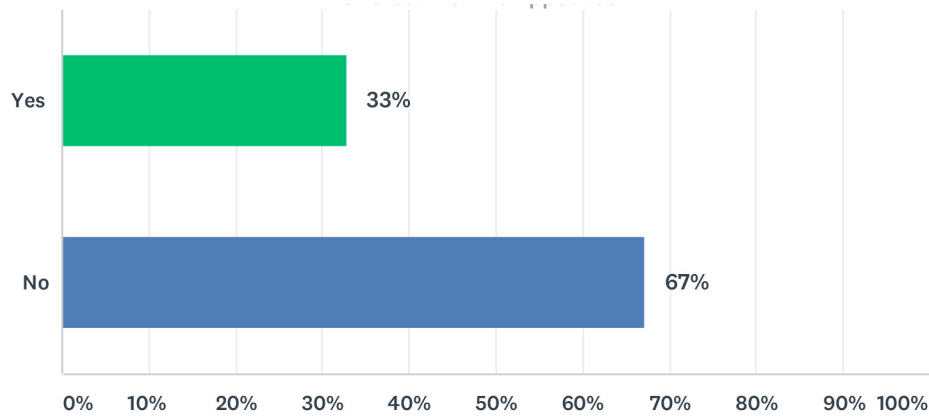
ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE SUCCESS OF YOUR NEW BUSINESS PLAN/PROGRAM?

Looks like most agencies are active on the new business front in some way, shape, form.

But it also looks like few have landed on the secret sauce to success. 75% of agencies have something going. Nearly as many (67%) don't view what they're doing as being a success.

Think about the keys to success: The person. The approach. The process/methodology. And it also takes commitment and patience on the part of management to give an agency's new business director the time to succeed.





We know from our own efforts that while 30%+ of the meetings we set turn into some kind of bid, pitch, proposal, these often don't convert for at least a few months. We also know that only 20% of our clients see closure during the first 6 months of a program, so patience is key.

And the last thing we know (we know other things of course), is that it takes a village to be successful in new business development. You can't hire a hunter and give nothing to support his/her effort. At RSW/US, we have a list team, a marcom team, a mailing team, and a mentor/coach & counselor. If you're going to staff for new business, do it all-in, because if you don't it's going to be more difficult to deliver your hoped-for results.

LAURIE MIKES ASKS

QUESTION 3

WHY DO YOU FEEL YOUR PROGRAM HAS BEEN A SUCCESS OR NOT BEEN A SUCCESS?

Here is a sampling of the reasons why agencies feel their program has NOT been successful:

- Increasingly difficult to engage with decision makers
- Client demands make it difficult
- Lack of ability/understanding of existing new business team
- Wrong prospects
- Inbound marketing only
- Not enough resources to fully execute
- Not enough time to invest; differing priorities
- We have adjusted our targets to larger companies. The sales cycle has been longer.
- Inconsistent. Changing focus.
- We are not breaking through the process to circumvent RFP's.
- Lack of consistent focus. No clear goals.
- Too many unqualified leads
- We've started and stopped it in fits and bursts.
- it has been strangled lately by lack of \$
- We sit back and wait for opportunities
- We are not getting enough in-bound inquiries of qualified prospects

And here is a sampling of the reasons why agencies feel their program HAS been successful:

- A success because we have a good story to share and the proof of performance to back it up
- We've worked hard at understanding our value and communicating it to prospects. Being consistent with the way we present our brand and value.
- We have some clients who are super advocates.
- Hard work, willingness to investigate opportunities, understanding client needs and communication of our value proposition
- Consistency, Authenticity, Excellent Service Offerings
- We are a very niche agency and can only service one client within the same DMA. Our strategy is to only go after clients in vacant DMA and has been successful.
- Prospecting via 3rd party

For a period of time, inbound was all the rage. Problem was, too many agencies only relied on inbound and did nothing else. No follow-up, no nurturing, no strategy, no patience.

The agency new business formula isn't too terribly complex. While the tools we use today are different than those we used 12 years ago, the fundamental methodology and process isn't markedly different. We've just gotten better executing it and managing it. The number of meetings we set for clients reflects that.

The world of new business outreach is no different than the world of marketing for your clients.

It's a multi-media game. It requires consistency of messaging and frequency of messaging. And it needs to be targeted and smart so there is a meaningful connection when talking with the person on the other end.

CONTRIBUTING A PIECE OF AGENCY NEW BUSINESS ADVICE, LAURIE MIKES RECOMMENDS...

Persistence is Key.

When it comes to new business, it's important that agencies never become complacent, even when times are good. In order to nurture and grow a vibrant agency, there must be a steady stream of new business opportunities in the pipeline. Clients can be unpredictable and losing a piece a business without replacing it quickly can be detrimental to an agency's future.

In order to protect the agency from such an event, new business programs should be pursued 365 days a year. While there is no magic formula for the mix of messages and strategies an agency employs for new business success, it is important to use a multifaceted consistent approach that includes online and offline marketing, advertising and PR. By using a wide variety of techniques, agencies have a better chance of reaching prospects effectively. And, since new business is about building relationships, if you stay in front of prospects regularly, they may call on you when a need arises. New business is never easy but persistence certainly pays off.

The background features a complex network of overlapping lines and circles. The lines are primarily in shades of blue, ranging from a vibrant, saturated blue to a very light, almost white blue. Some lines are thicker than others. There are several circular nodes, some in light blue and others in a pale pink or greyish tone, connected by thin lines, creating a web-like structure. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and technical.

CHAPTER 5

JODY SUTTER
ASKS...

CHAPTER 5 JODY SUTTER ASKS...

Questions in this section come from Jody Sutter.

Owner of The Sutter Company, a business development consultancy working with small agency CEOs to activate their natural talents for business development through programs that are easy to embrace and take the agency's available resources into consideration.

You can reach Jody at jody@thesuttercompany.com.



JODY SUTTER

JODY SUTTER ASKS

QUESTION 1

HOW DOES YOUR AGENCY MEASURE NEW BUSINESS SUCCESS?

Agencies appear to be fairly consistent in how they measure success: wins, dollars, clients.

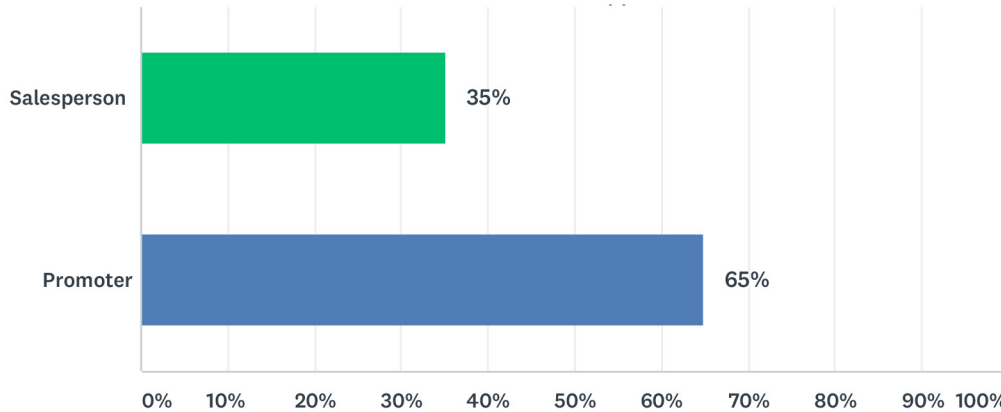
In Jody's counsel at the end of this section she talks a bit about finding the right metrics for your agency and not just relying on the usual suspects like "wins". I'm sure that when we interview Jody, she will provide some additional perspective relative to what she would like to see agencies thinking more about when it comes to setting metrics for new business success.

Quality Annual **Sales** Formal **New Business** Dollars
Projects Metrics **Revenue** Billings **Clients**
close Rate **Wins** Creative **Opportunities** Value
Measure Close Ratio **AGI** Increase **Pitch**

JODY SUTTER ASKS...

QUESTION 2

ARE YOU A NATURAL-BORN SALES PERSON OR A NATURAL-BORN PROMOTER?



I thought this question was an interesting one. And the results also proved interesting.

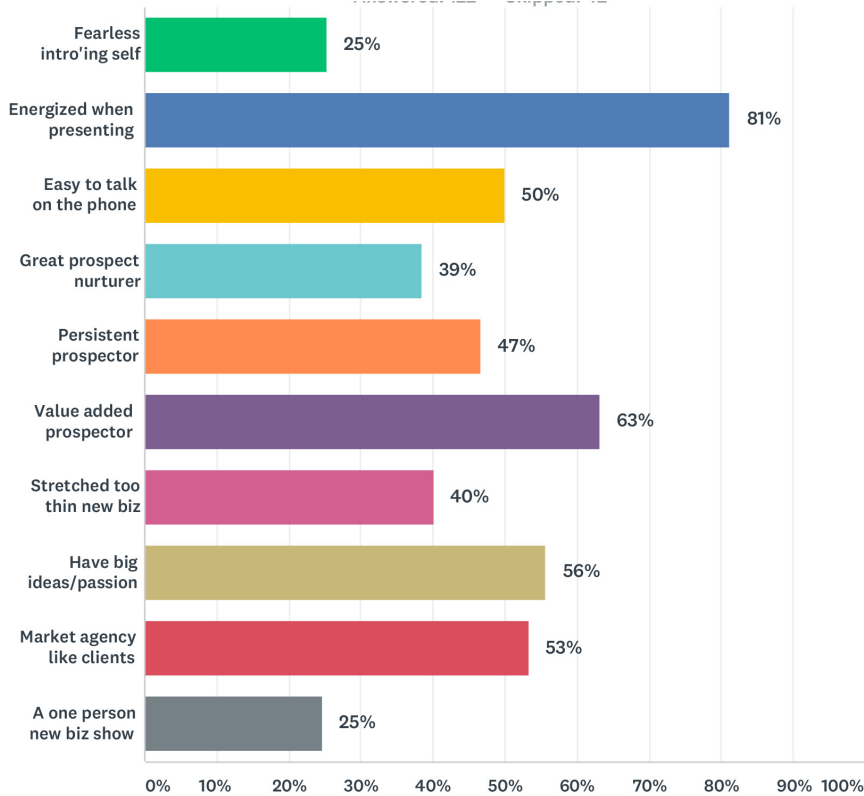
Not surprising that many agency executives don't view themselves as sales people. We see this quite a bit at RSW/US. What we've learned is that it can take up to 11 touches to get a meeting with a prospect. We also know that just because you get that meeting, doesn't mean, you've got a new client tomorrow. We recognized early on, that even if we get clients all the great meetings in the world, doesn't mean they are automatically going to win business. It takes work. You've got to nudge them down the line by bringing value to their world – hopefully in the same way you brought value to their world when you introduced yourself and when you first engaged with them.

I wrote a post back in 2008 and then again in 2012 about [“The Second Hardest Part of Prospecting”](#). In it, I talk about the challenges of taking prospects past an intro meeting, and keeping them engaged as you move them to close. In the post, I offer some counsel on how to best manage that post-meeting process. I also have a webinar called [“Getting to Close”](#) that you might find of help as well.

JODY SUTTER ASKS

QUESTION 3

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOU?



Good to see agency folks more “energized” and “having big ideas” and “adding value” than they are “stretched way too thin” or “a one person show”.

Not so good to see agency folks say they aren’t a “great nurturer.” You need to be in today’s hyper-competitive world. Big networked agencies are going after stuff that they never used to touch. New agencies pop up every day. Firewalls are blocking your emails to prospects. So finding ways to stay in front of the marketer you met last week or last month or last year is critical.

Only rarely are you going to win right after a first meeting or call. You hang up that phone or leave that meeting and that marketer is on to their next task and during your meeting they just received three other calls from three other agencies looking to do what you just did.

How are you going to make your agency the winning agency? Stay with your prospects and in front of them by nurturing them with good, smart, thoughtful ideas and content.

JODY SUTTER SHARED THE FOLLOWING...

For many agencies the metrics are usually tied to short-term progress like an increase in leads or short-term revenue.

Certainly, those are important, but don't neglect to measure success over time. And the best way to sustain a successful business development practice is by choosing tactics that fit your agency's culture and skill set.

Start by asking yourself an important question: Are you a natural-born salesperson or are you a natural-born promoter?

For instance, are you fearless when it comes to introducing yourself to new prospects? Are you willing to nurture prospects for weeks or even months to reap the adrenaline-inducing rewards of converting them into clients? Those are qualities found in great salespeople and if that describes you too, then something like an outbound sales program might be for you.

On the other hand, maybe you've got big ideas and passionate opinions and get energized by the opportunity to share them. Sounds like you'd be more successful building a public profile and using marketing tactics that will naturally attract like-minded clients to you.

It's likely that you fit somewhere in the middle. It's also likely that you're already overcommitted and stretched way too thin. By embracing tactics that align with your natural talents, you'll find it easier to make time in your busy schedule for new business activities.

The background features a complex network of overlapping lines and circles. A prominent blue line runs diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. Other lines in shades of light blue and grey form a web-like structure. Several circular nodes are scattered throughout, some in blue, some in light blue, and some in grey. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and technical.

CHAPTER 6

**TIM WILLIAMS
ASKS...**

CHAPTER 6 TIM WILLIAMS ASKS...

The questions in this final section come from Tim Williams.

Tim Williams is one of the leading voices in transformational business practices for agencies.

As a career agency professional and founder of Ignition Consulting Group (www.ignitiongroup.com), Tim works with firms around the world in the areas of pricing and business strategy.

He has authored two books, serves as a one of LinkedIn's global "Influencers," and writes the popular blog "Propulsion" devoted to helping agencies and other professional firms improve the way they create and capture value.

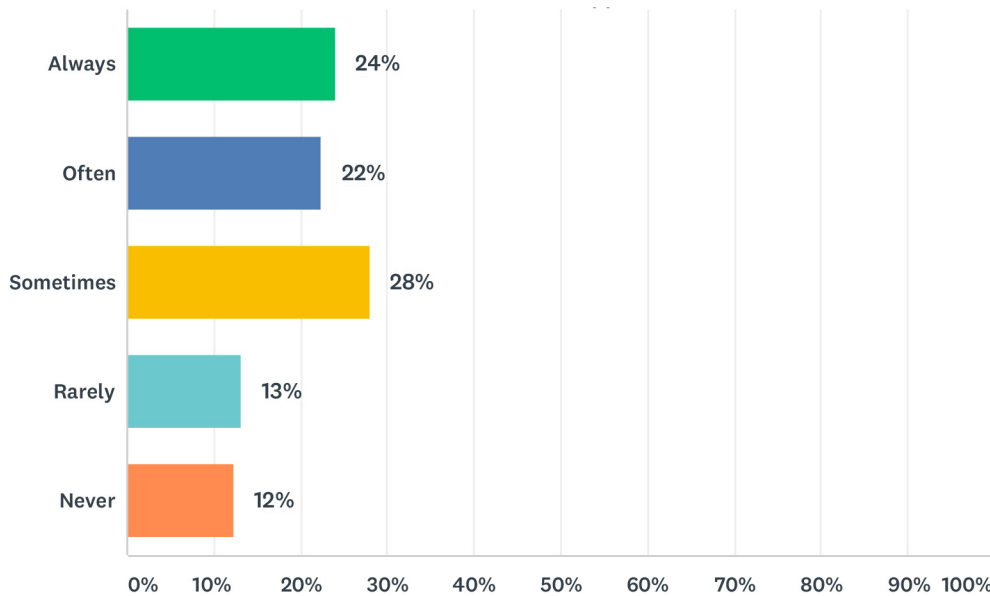


TIM WILLIAMS

TIM WILLIAMS ASKS

QUESTION 1

WHEN YOU BEGIN A MAJOR NEW ASSIGNMENT, HOW OFTEN DO YOU PRECEDE THE DISCUSSION OF SCOPE OF WORK (EXPECTED OUTPUTS) WITH AN IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION ABOUT THE “SCOPE OF VALUE” (EXPECTED OUTCOMES)?



Adding value is important at all stages of the new business development process. From the moment you first reach out, you need to add value. Show that prospect that you have some knowledge and understanding of their business.

When you meet with them, ask good smart questions and bring some thinking to the table they might not have otherwise thought of.

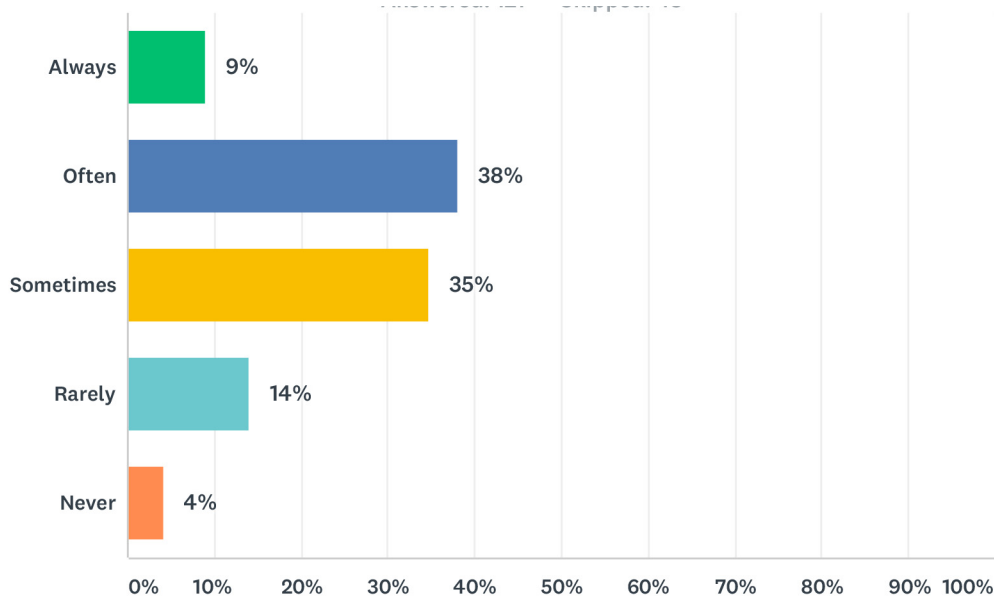
As you nurture them, show them you care by sharing interesting articles, bringing value to meetings, helping them sell your ideas into the organization.

And as Tim’s question and the results suggest here, carry it right on through to the minute the engagement starts.

TIM WILLIAMS ASKS...

QUESTION 2

WHEN PROPOSING COMPENSATION TO A NEW BUSINESS PROSPECT, HOW OFTEN DO YOU PROVIDE MULTIPLE OPTIONS, VERSUS JUST A SINGLE PRICE OR APPROACH?



As Tim talks at the close of this section, in his “one piece of advice for agencies”, giving marketers choices and the ability to control the selection process is a good thing.

As Tim notes, it turns the conversation away from “how many hours” to a question of relative value.

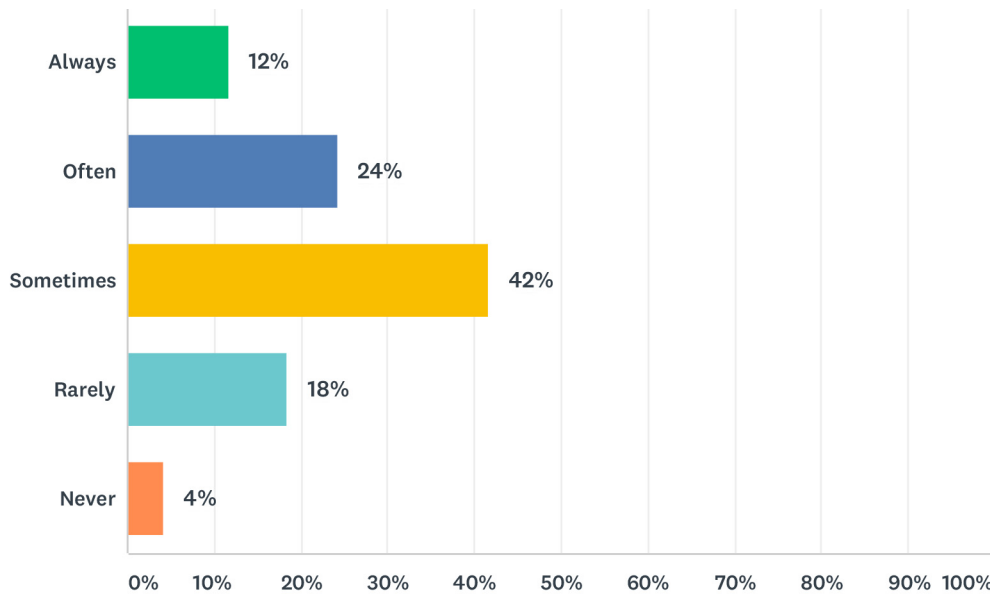
There is a social psychological theory called “Self-Determination” and it involves achieving better results by giving control (or at least creating the sense of control). [I wrote a post](#) on the RSW/AgencySearch side that offered counsel to marketers on the ways in which they need to use this approach to give agencies more control over the relationship and how by doing that, it would result in better output for them.

This is the same thing. Give marketers more control and you will find yourself in a better place.

TIM WILLIAMS ASKS

QUESTION 3

WHEN PREPARING NEW BUSINESS PRESENTATIONS, IN ADDITION TO APPLYING CREATIVE THINKING TO THE PROSPECT'S MARKETING PROBLEMS, HOW OFTEN DO YOU ALSO APPLY CREATIVITY IN OUR DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRICING AND COMPENSATION PROPOSAL?



Looks like there's an opportunity here to use pricing and compensation more creatively to put you in a better place to win more business.

Give your marketing prospects choices.

Show them the value of what they can get – not just the price and process.

Let them know how you can help them get to where they want to go within the context of what you're offering them.

And as we tell our agency clients, do all you can to talk your prospects through proposals...don't just email them and hope they read it all – or understand it all. Being on the phone with them (or in person) gives you a chance to talk them through it, and gives them the opportunity to ask questions versus just dismissing the proposal if they don't agree with something, don't understand something, or don't like the pricing you've proposed.

WRAPPING UP THOUGHT LEADERS' "ONE PIECE OF ADVICE"
FOR AGENCY NEW BUSINESS,

TIM WILLIAMS URGES...

Given the increasing importance of the role of price, you can greatly improve your chances of success by employing the same pricing technique used by most other companies: offer options.

Instead of just presenting a single price (a "yes or no" choice), provide the prospect with at least three options (a choice of "yes's").

Buyers need context in order to ascertain the value of what they're buying. Also, when you put options on the table, it changes the conversation away from "How many hours will this take?" to "Which of these options do you think would work best?"

IN CLOSING...

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE THOUGHT LEADER SURVEY?

In the weeks ahead, we will share guest posts from our Thought Leaders.

We are also SKYPE interviewing each of the Thought Leaders and we will be releasing videos and podcasts of those recordings.

**To those who participated, thank you so much.
We invite dialogue/input from all.**



RSW/US is a full service, outsourced agency lead generation and new business development firm that helps marketing service companies (exclusively) find and win new business.

We help Agencies find qualified leads, set meetings, better position them in the market, and help move them closer to close.

More information about RSW/US can be accessed at www.rswus.com