

# NEW YEAR OUTLOOK

*2019 SURVEY REPORT*

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**RSW/US**

New Business Solutions for Marketing Agencies

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# WHO WE ARE

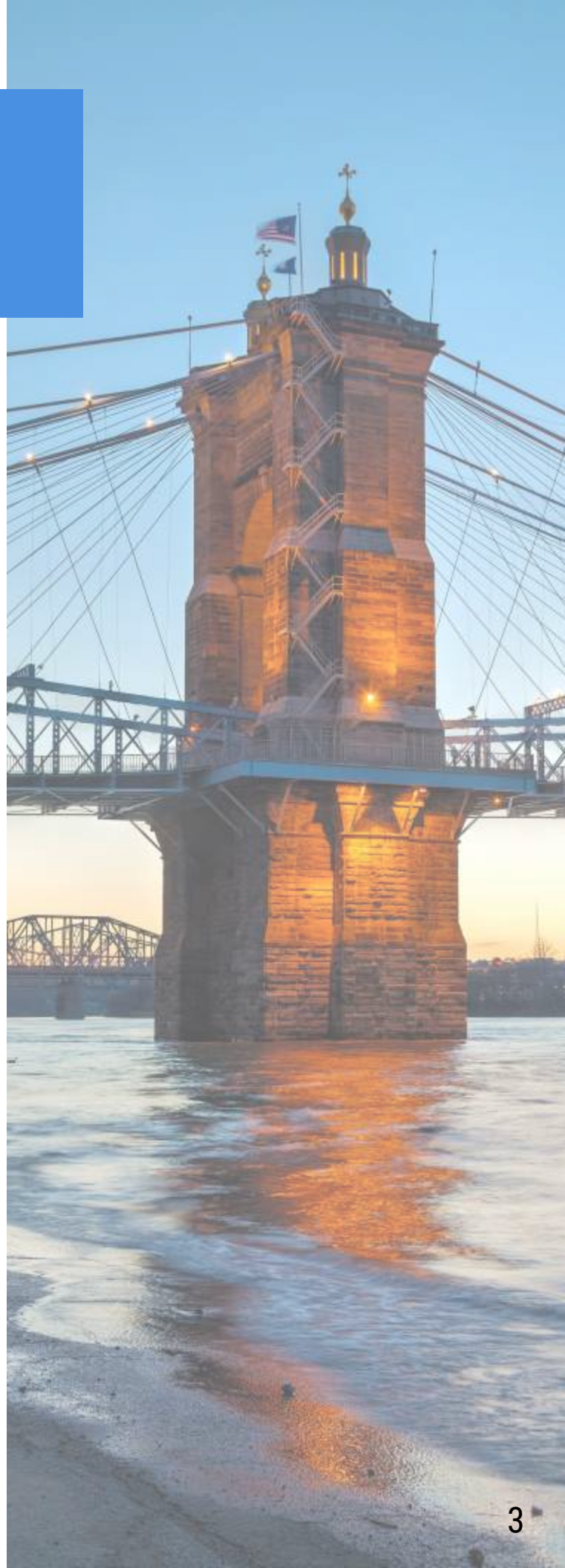
This study was commissioned by RSW/US. RSW/US is an outsourced lead generation/business development firm that exclusively services marketing service firms (of all sizes and types). RSW/US works with over 50 agencies across the U.S., operating as their outsourced sales and marketing team. RSW/US was founded in 2005.

In 2010, RSW started RSW/AgencySearch. To-date, RSW/AgencySearch has managed over 30 searches for marketers across a range of different categories, helping them find better agencies. The RSW/AgencySearch model is unique to the industry.

The exposure to the agency and the marketer world has armed RSW/US with perspective unmatched in the industry. This perspective is woven throughout this survey report.

To learn more about RSW/US, visit [www.rswus.com](http://www.rswus.com).

To learn more about RSW/AgencySearch, visit [www.rswagencysearch.com](http://www.rswagencysearch.com).



# INTRODUCTION

The 2019 RSW/US New Year Outlook survey was completed by 158 senior level Marketers and 115 Marketing Agency executives during December, 2018. The purpose of the survey was to glean insights relative to marketer and agency perspective as they each headed into 2019.

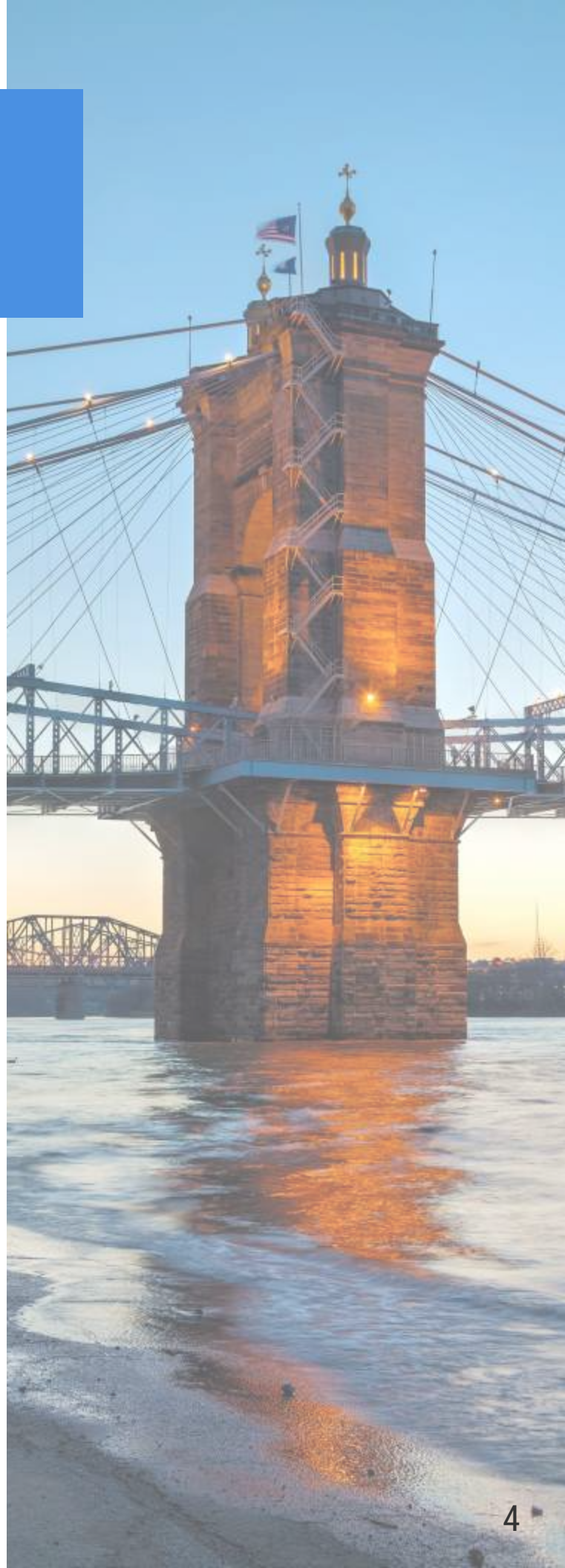
Topics explored included “biggest challenges facing marketing agencies” as seen through the eyes of marketers and agencies. Also probed were topics related to spending and investment expectations, the growth of specialty agencies, the importance of measuring ROI (which marketers and agencies don’t necessarily see eye-to-eye on), and the ever increasing importance of data and analytics.

Our hope is the key findings and implications from this study are of value as you kick your marketing and sales planning into gear for 2019.

The agency sample came from the RSW/US database of over 5,000 marketing service companies in the U.S. and Canada ranging in size from under \$5M in capitalized billings to over \$100M. The disciplines of each Agency varied from full service advertising, to digital, to PR, to marketing consultancies, etc.

The marketer sample came from our RSW/AgencySearch database of 70,000 marketing decision maker contacts. Company size, location, and category varied.

If you would like to reproduce any of our findings in any format whatsoever, please give either Mark Sneider or Lee McKnight a call (513-559-3101/3111) or email us at [mark@rswus.com](mailto:mark@rswus.com) / [lee@rswus.com](mailto:lee@rswus.com).

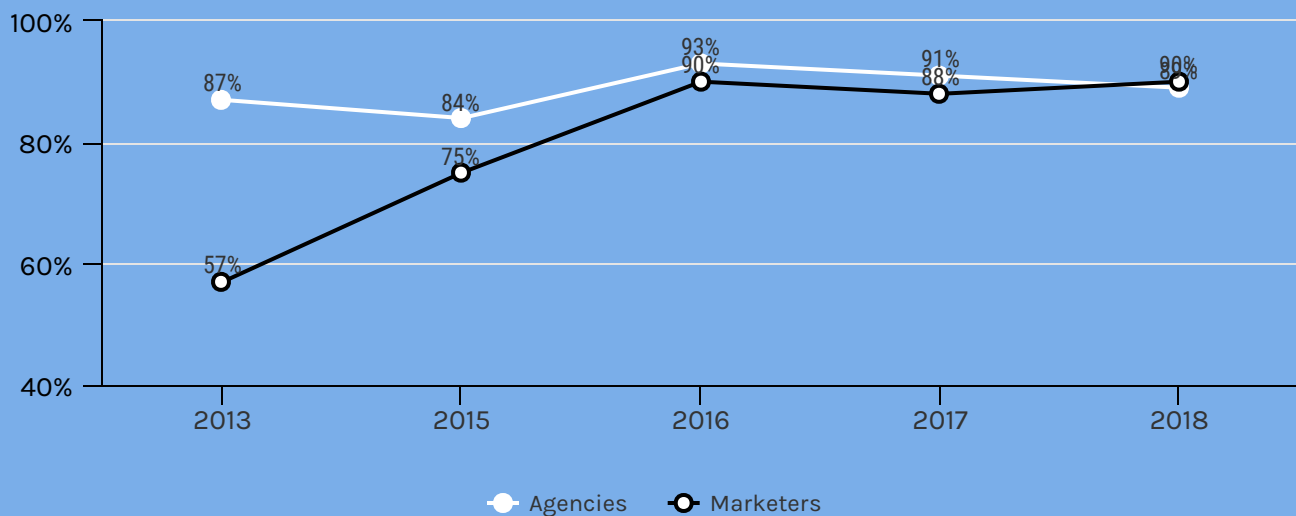


# Business Investment - Agencies and Marketers

## INVESTING FOR 2019

Both agencies and marketers continue to be bullish on their business and presumably the outlook for 2019. For a third straight year, close to 90% of agencies and marketers state that they will invest “somewhat” or “heavily” in their business.

Agencies & Marketers That Plan to Invest "Somewhat" or "Heavily" in Their Business (Non-marketing Spending)



## Implications

This is particularly good news for agencies on two levels. The first assumes the investments agencies are making are being made in the right places. As we’ll see later, there appears to be a bit of a void in how marketers view the skill sets of agencies as it relates to their ability to measure ROI and their ability to be effective at delivering solid analytics for their clients – and how agencies view their own skill sets in these areas.

If monies are being invested by agencies in these areas – both in terms of personnel and technology, then that’s a good thing!

This also bodes well for agencies if marketers are indeed, as optimistic as they appear to be. If they anticipate solid investment in non-marketing related aspects of their business, this could mean good things for their spending expectations. We’ll visit this next.

# Marketing Spend Expectations

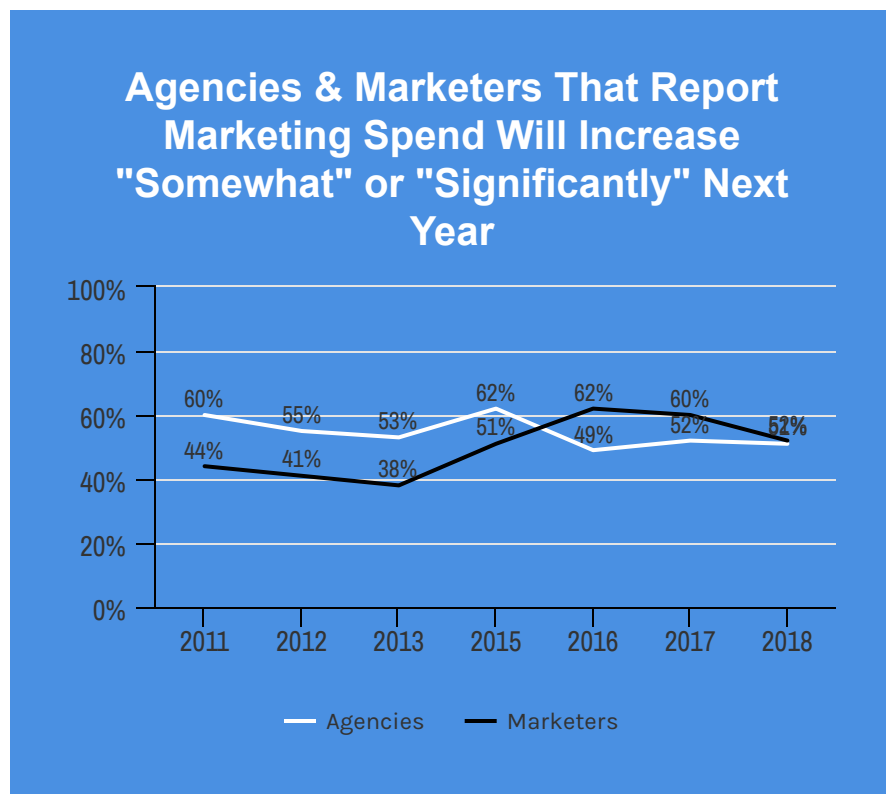
## FINALLY... SOME ALIGNMENT

While marketers are optimistic about the amount of money they will pour into their business in general, they aren't as bullish on their marketing spending in 2019. 52% of marketers state they will "somewhat" or "significantly" increase their marketing spending levels next year, which is lower than the previous two years. On a positive note, 52% is certainly a marked improvement over the levels we saw in 2011-2013, where marketer enthusiasm dipped as low as 38%.

### Implications

One other piece of good news in these results is marketers and agencies appear to finally be in alignment. For years, there has been a great divide between what agencies thought their clients would spend in the upcoming year and what the marketers actually believed they would.

We suspect that some of this depression in anticipated spending has to do with marketers finding more efficient ways to achieve the same end result. With more money moving into digital and social, marketers are more demanding when it comes to spending justification. We suspect that marketers aren't just focused on how to spend more, but focused on how to spend smarter – which might mean fewer dollars.



Again, the ROI and Data/Analytics theme we'll hit on later ties neatly into this.

So if this all plays out as true – agencies need to be prepared to do two things: first, play more efficiently within the four walls of their firms (e.g. maybe lose some lower margin offerings or extra staff); and secondly, help clients find ways to spend less and get the same or more. I know that it might be easier said than done, but this is the reality of the expectation, so agencies will need to deliver at this level to remain relevant.

# SOCIAL/DIGITAL VS. TRADITIONAL

Interestingly, unlike year's past, we see some divergence in opinion relative to traditional media spending expectations. Last year, 18% of marketers and agencies expected spending in traditional media to increase "somewhat" or "significantly".

18% of agencies believe this to be true in 2019, but significantly more marketers (27%) believe they will be spending more in traditional platforms in 2019.

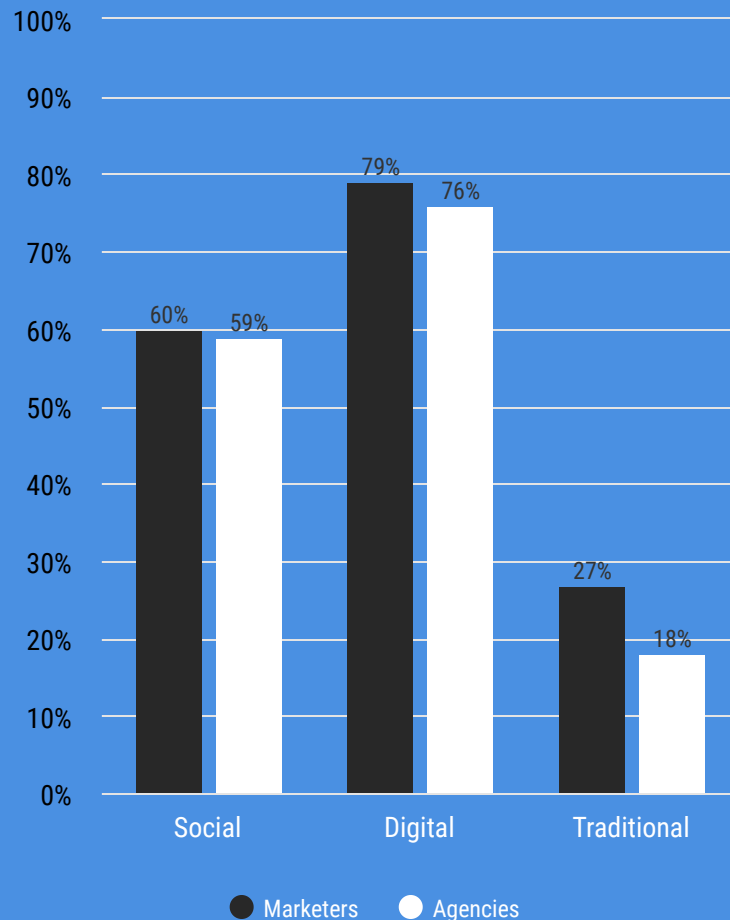
## Implications

If being well-integrated as an agency and taking a more holistic approach was important in 2018, it appears that delivering at this level will be even more important in 2019.

Interestingly (as we'll see later), marketers tell us they expect their agencies to not only measure the ROI for digital and social platforms, but are equally as demanding in their expectations for validating the value of traditional media spends. So as you think about the potential to integrate more traditional platforms into the mix for your marketing clients, also think about how you're going to measure and report on its performance as well as how all of the platforms impact each other and influence brand performance.

**27%** of marketers expect to increase traditional media spend in 2019.

### Do you expect to see a marketing spend increase ("somewhat" or "significantly" higher) in 2019?

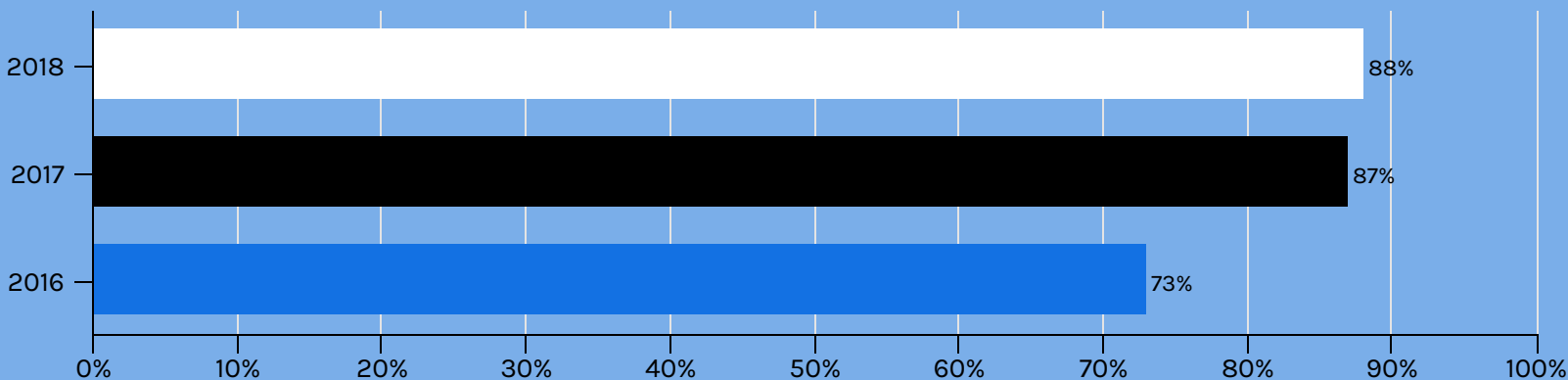


# Importance of Data & Analytics Capabilities

## CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

Things aren't getting any easier for marketing agencies – or for their marketer counterparts. Demands on marketers to justify spending and measure performance of virtually every dollar they're spending is only increasing....it's not easing up.

Would you consider data/analytics capability to be either "important" or "highly important" for your agency in the year to come? (Marketer Responses)



Not having an agency that can provide the proper marketing data and analytics capabilities will continue to be limiting for marketers. We see it every time a marketer comes to us on the [RSW/AgencySearch](#) side of our business looking for a new agency, telling us their agency isn't coming to them with new ideas on how to improve their business.

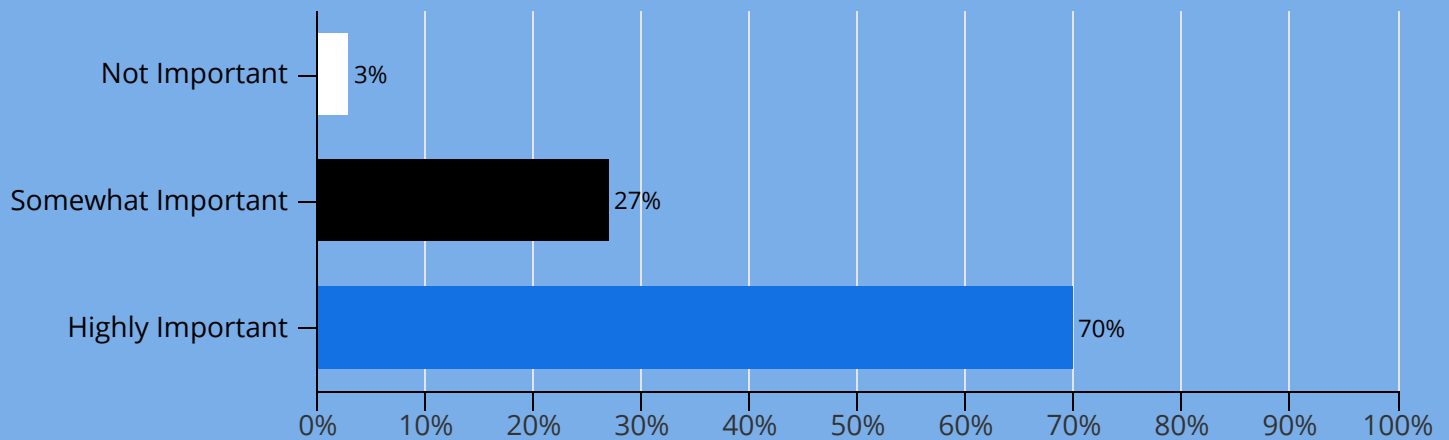
It will also prove limiting in terms of a marketer's ability to look forward and better organize their marketing efforts in a way that will maximize performance. If an agency can't dig deep and create plans that creatively keep their marketing clients in front of their customers in an interesting and engaging way, more than likely this lack of performance will catch up with that agency.



## CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS, CONT'D

Fortunately, the majority of agencies surveyed recognize that it will be extremely important for their agency to provide marketing data analysis and analytics capabilities as they roll into 2019.

### Looking to 2019, how important will it be for your agency to provide marketing data/analytics capabilities? (Agency Responses)



## Implications

Agencies must continually add value if they are going to stay ahead of the game with their clients. Part of this involves being a good steward of their client’s customer and business data. Knowing how to manage it effectively, how to maximize its potential for the business, and how to discover gems in a sea of data, is what will prove most helpful to an agency’s marketing partner.

The technology of data management has changed dramatically over the past decade – and so have the expectations of your marketing counterparts. If all you do is sit back and take orders, it’s highly likely that one day you’ll wake up to find your very own marketing client has woken up and feels like there has to be something better out there for their business.

Don’t let that happen to you.

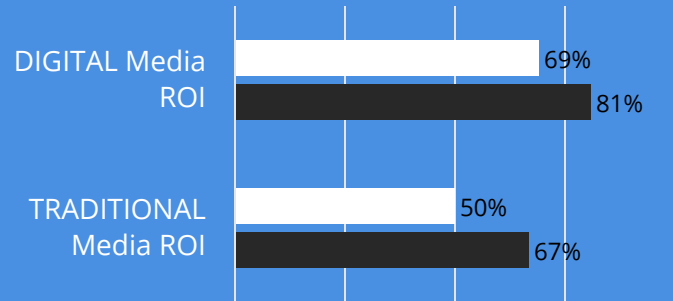
# Importance of Measuring ROI

## MEASURE A LOT...

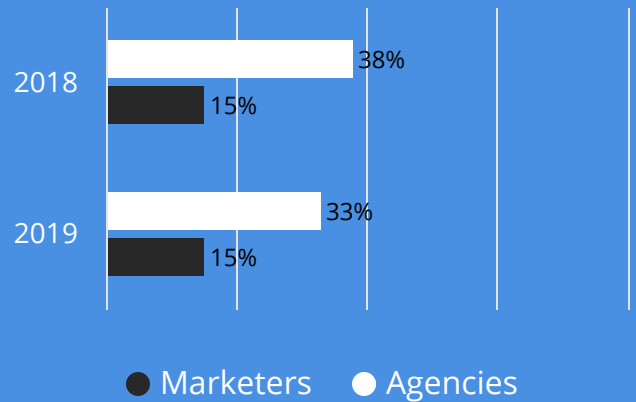
Not much has changed since last year. More marketers (than agencies) think that measuring ROI for digital and traditional media is extremely important – by a pretty wide margin.

And more agencies think that their prowess in this space is solid. Granted the number of agencies that feel positive about their capabilities in this area isn't great (only 33%), but the fact that their perception of their skills so differs from their marketing counterparts is a bit concerning.

Which of the following do you consider to be "somewhat" or "extremely" important to measure?



How Effective is Your Agency at Measuring ROI?



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## MEASURE A LOT... CONT'D

### Implications

Agencies need to step up their game in this space. The last couple of searches we've run on the RSW/AgencySearch side of our business have been for marketers who felt like their agencies weren't doing a great job sorting out the value of the marketing programs they were putting forward.

The marketers couldn't pinpoint exactly what they felt like they were missing, but they believed their business wasn't being optimized from a media and marketing standpoint. They felt like there had to be something better out there – a better way of doing things.

Maybe what they were feeling was the residual from the few times they actually had inquired about the return on investment for plans they put in place...and instead of a well-informed response and a look forward, they got little back from their agency.

Bottom line: more marketers will make topics like data management, effective analytics, and useful measurement of investment return, key selection points for future agencies.

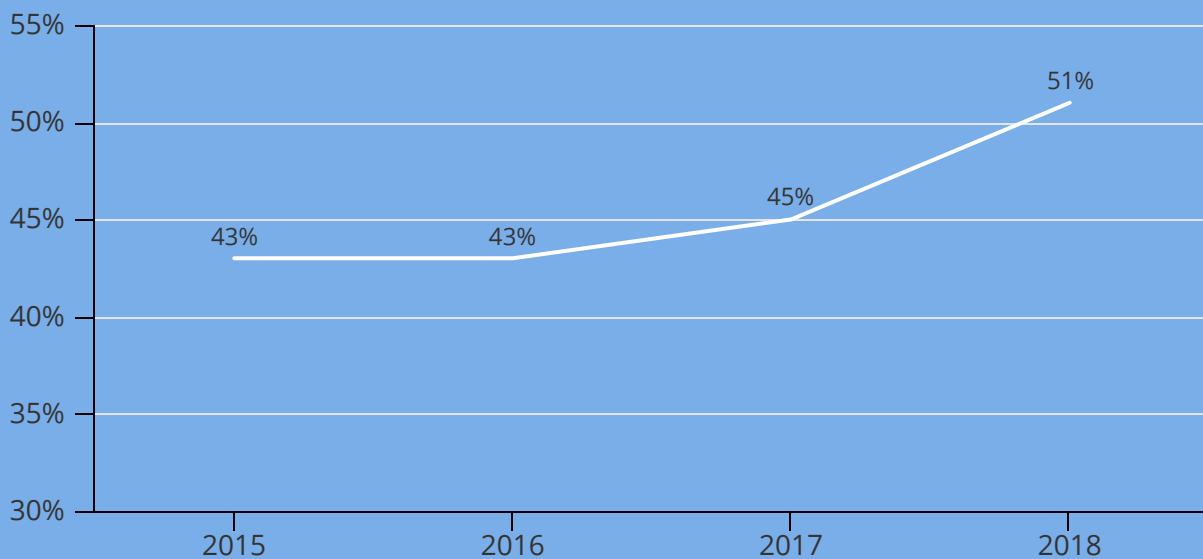
Don't fret, if you don't have the capabilities inside the four walls of your firm, look outside for help. There are plenty of technology platforms and/or strategic agency partners you can connect up with to help you work your way through this effort. In [past RSW/US surveys](#), marketers have told us they are willing to work with agencies that operate as a curator of superior talent and technology.

# Marketers' Use of Agencies

## THINNING THE ROSTER

Historical trends suggest a movement to consolidate the number of agencies a marketer uses (on a regular basis) versus what we experienced pre-2015, which was more of an expansion of the roster.

### Marketers Using 1-2 Agencies to Support Business Needs



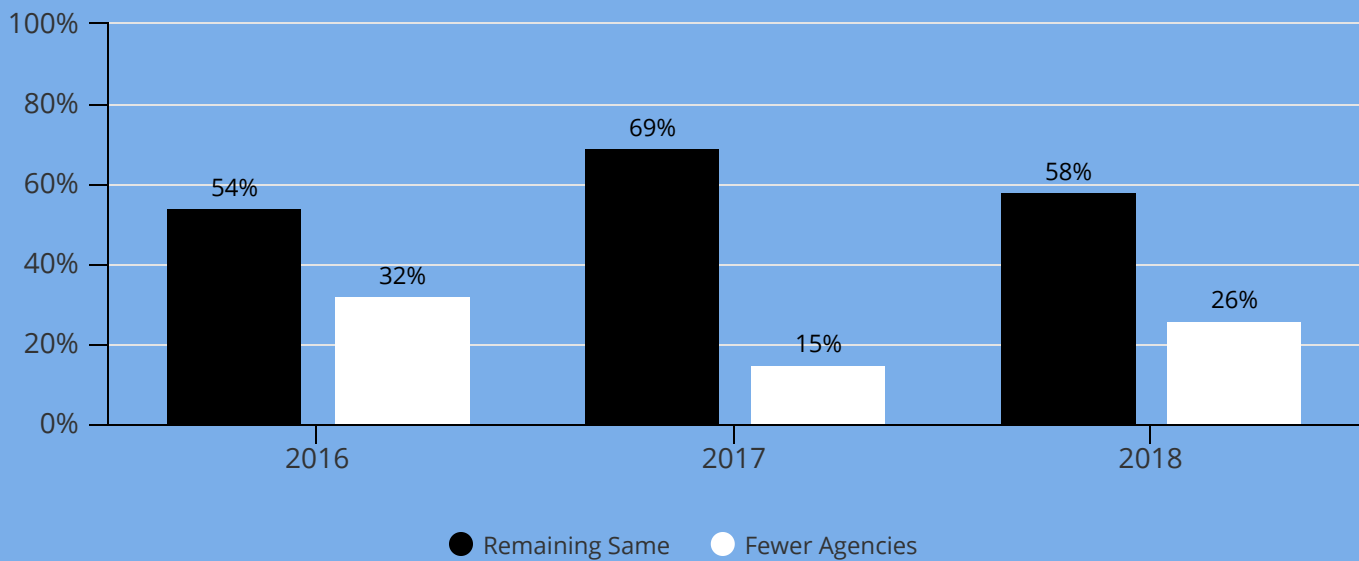
What I'm seeing and hearing today is a marketing community interested in simplifying by consolidating and integrating efforts. Too many agencies on the roster vying for the "pole position" doesn't make it an easy ride for the marketer. Not only do they have to make sure all the agencies play nice together, but they have to keep one eye on the integrity of their brand and the efficiency of what all the agencies are doing to support the business. Having a smaller handful of firms makes this exercise simpler.

As we'll see next, project work continues to be a key for marketers interested in "sampling" agencies before they engage on a more permanent basis.

## THINNING THE ROSTER, CONT'D

And as we'll see next, agencies are fairly optimistic about the amount of new business out there. With so many marketers opening up doors to try new agencies, I can understand why agencies might feel this way. The numbers of absolute "jobs" might increase, but the number of more permanent (and substantial) relationships aren't as great. We hear this all the time from agencies.

### Marketers Consolidating Into Fewer Agencies or Remaining Same



## Implications

With marketers consolidating rosters, your firm needs to do two things: first, be more aggressive in opening up doors for your agency. With marketer ranks thinning and fewer opportunities of longer term engagement available, the networking and referral opportunities aren't going to be as plentiful; and second, you need to do everything in your power to constantly bring value to your current clients. I like to say that you need to "treat every day like it's the first day of the relationship." It was [Burnett's message when he left his shop in 1967](#) and it should be your mantra today.

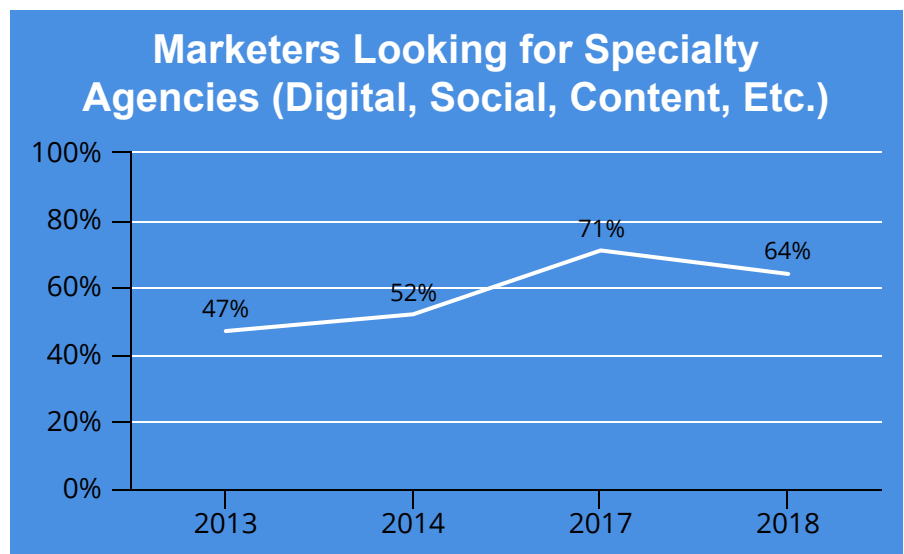
# Specialty Agency Outlook

## FIND YOUR SPACE

The dip in the percentage of marketers looking for “specialty” agencies (noted below) is fairly consistent with the data previously discussed, which indicates a consolidation versus an expansion of the marketer’s agency roster.

While there is a bit of a dip, it is important to note that the numbers are still high. 64% of marketers want agencies that can bring a measure of expertise, whether that be in something as broad as digital media, or as specific as branding or category/industry expertise.

While it may be that some of the assignments handed over to specialty agencies might not be long-term or sustainable, the opportunities will still be there – and agencies need to aggressively pursue them.



## Implications

I know you’ve heard this before from plenty of consultants operating in the agency space...but you need to define your position. Being a generalist isn’t going to win the day anymore. Marketers have a hard enough time sorting out the value of one agency over another, so being just another agency that “does it all” isn’t a good strategy.

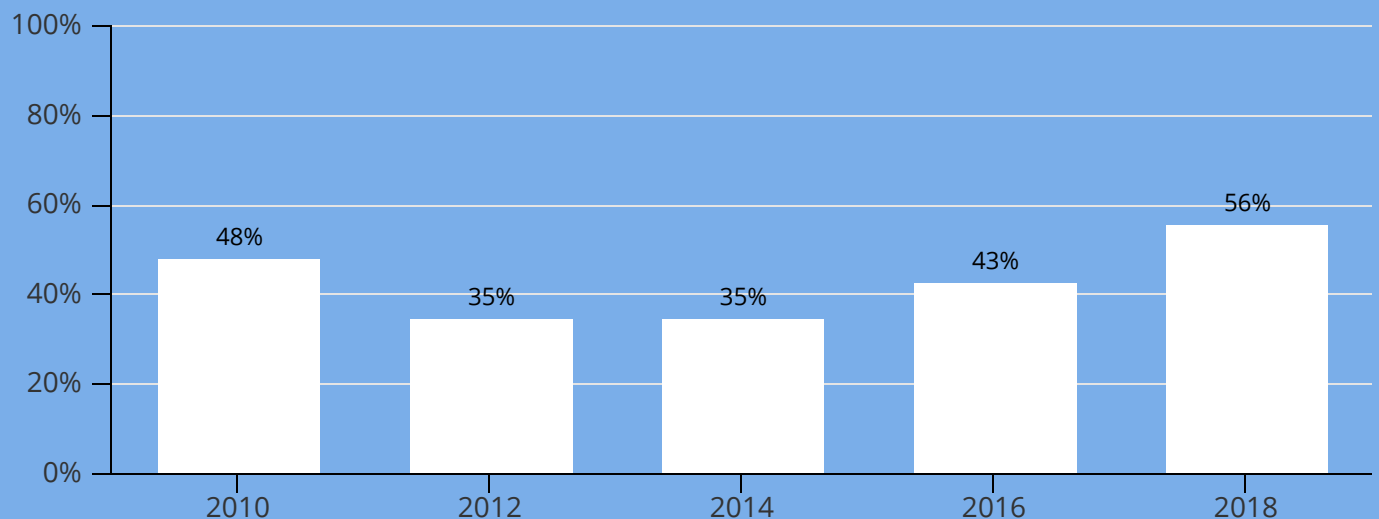
As painful and difficult you might think a narrowing will be, in the end it will help marketers better define your point of difference and the reasons why they should consider bringing you in for their business. Doesn’t mean you have to live in a world of small projects, or in a narrow world of being a social media agency. Simply means you need to help the marketer see what new value you can bring to their world that they haven’t already experienced. Might be an approach, industry expertise, the caliber of your successes, or the offering itself.

# 2019 New Business Opportunities

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

While these next two charts might appear to be direct contradictions with each other, I don't believe they are. I would argue what's playing out here is the impact of project work. While the absolute dollar volume or the number of longer-term AOR relationships might not be as great as in years past, the absolute number of project opportunities are on the rise and I believe it's reflected on the following page (in the second chart) in the optimism shared among agencies relative to the number of potential opportunities existing in the market.

### Agencies That Believe Obtaining New Business Will Be Either "Somewhat" or "A Lot" Harder in the Year to Come



The first chart above is reflective of a few dynamics going on in the market that we referenced earlier: the decline in referrals and networking opportunities. Many agencies that come on board with [RSW/US](#) to help them with lead generation/agency new business development, do so because their once plentiful pipeline of referrals and networking opportunities are dwindling. There are fewer marketers making moves to fewer companies, so naturally, these numbers will decline.

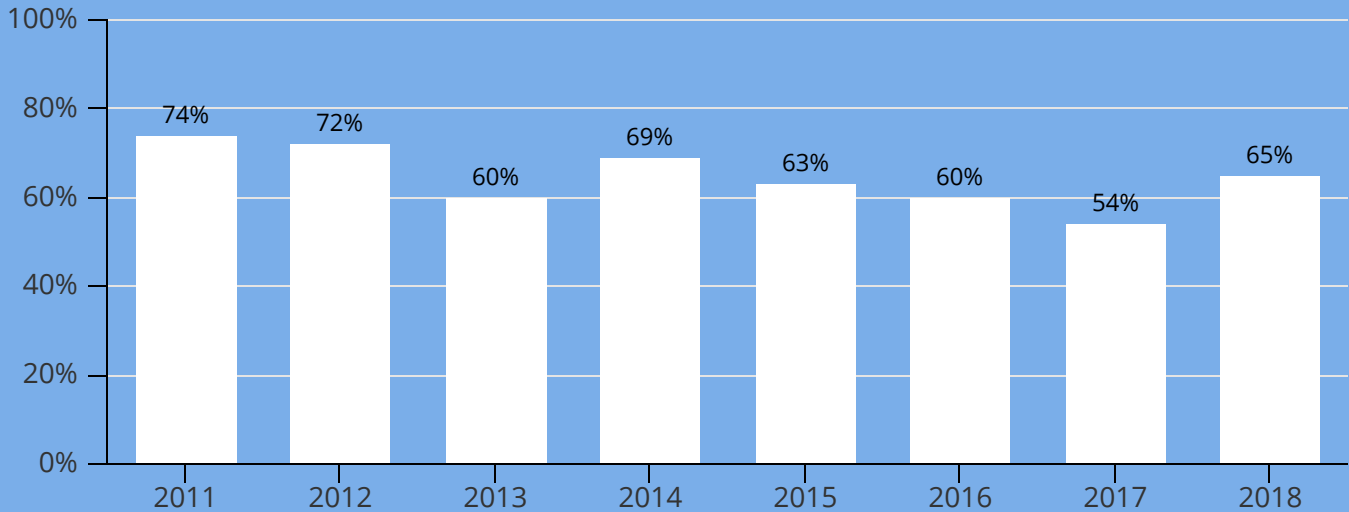
The other factor is an increasing number of larger agencies going after pieces of the pie they might not have historically considered.

With big networks like WPP and MDC struggling, they need to find revenue and profit wherever they can. I know our clients are seeing agencies they have never seen before now involved in searches. I'm sure you've seen it, too...and it will likely continue until the dynamics of how marketers shop for agencies changes.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, CONT'D

And finally, as we'll see later, there are a lot of agencies out there that are doing little-to-nothing to help themselves win new business. Agencies that have new business directors and those using outsourced services like ours are more likely to suggest their programs are a success.

### Agencies That Expect New Business Opportunities to Increase in the Year to Come



## Implications

If you don't have a program put together to support agency outreach, start it now. And while inbound can be a good source of leads, you must be more proactive in your attempts to connect with the prospects you want to engage with. Whether you do it on your own, or hire somebody on the outside...just do it.

The business of winning new business isn't getting any easier, so don't sit back and hope it all changes. Because as fast as the marketing and advertising world is changing today, the more aggressive your plans will need to be tomorrow to ensure your agency thrives and survives.

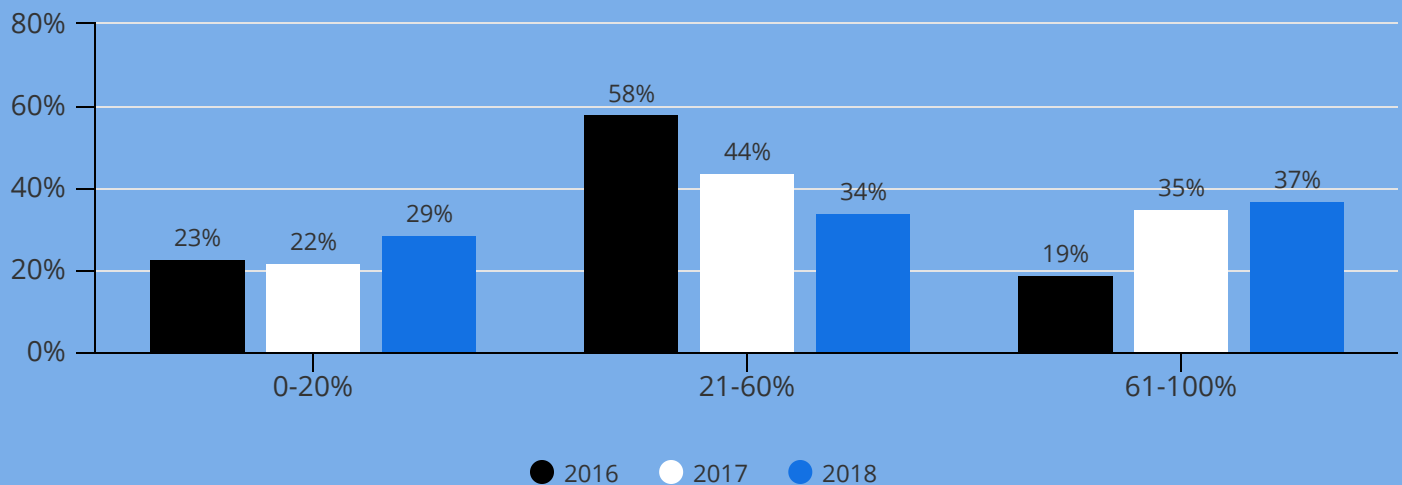


# Growing Number of Project Opportunities

## PROJECT WORK ON THE RISE

We've talked this topic of project work ad nauseam at this point, so not much more to discuss now that we're finally on this chart! Bottom line is project work is on the rise in terms of its composition of all the work that's walking in the door of an agency.

Percentage of Work That is Project-Based (Agency Responses)



## Implications

I will speak to the implications of this in a context beyond the hunt for new business. What this changing dynamic means for an agency is two things: The first is agencies need to look at project work like a financial investment consideration. Agencies need to ask themselves if there is potential for growth via other work or other brands if what they do for this initial project plays well. It might not be the most profitable project, but if it has the potential to be a solid investment in what could be a brighter future, might be worth the time.

The second thing is agencies need to put an “A” level of effort against projects. Where maybe 5 years ago a project might have been a nuisance, today it is central to an agency’s success. Agencies need to put their all into proving to the marketer they are committed, capable, and ready to tackle other projects the marketer might have. Projects are how agencies now need to prove their real value.

Speaking of value...if you can add additional value beyond the project at hand, do it. It will help you win the day and put you in good light with that potential long-term client.

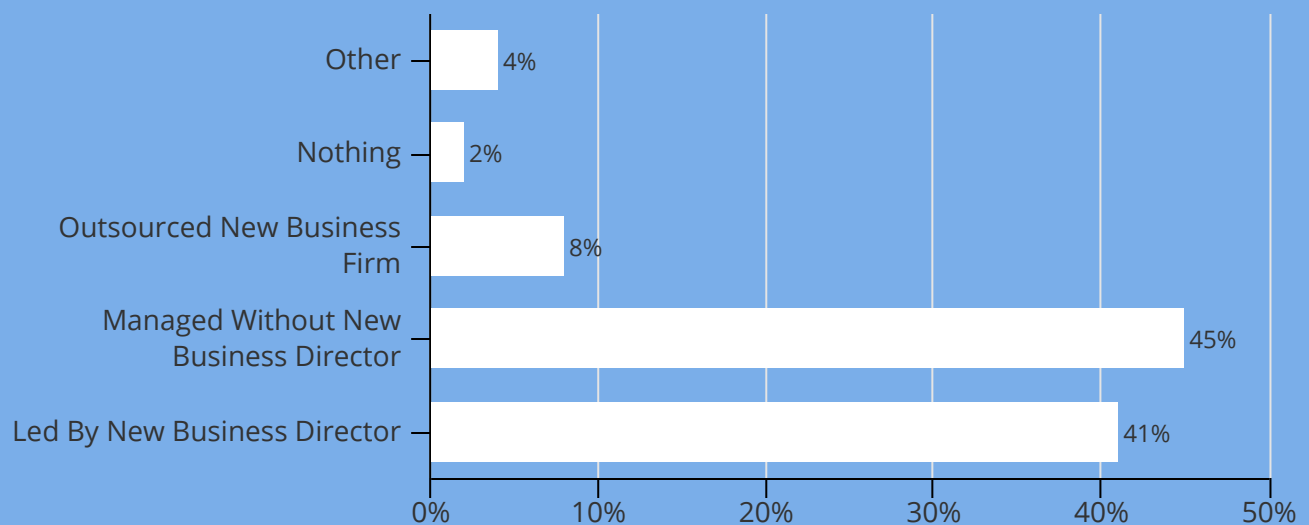
# Management and Effectiveness of New Business Programs

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## MANAGING THE PROCESS

While outsourcing the activities of lead generation/agency new business development is a relatively new phenomenon (relative to the advertising business - Volney B. Palmer opened the first American advertising agency in Philadelphia in 1850, and we opened our doors in 2005), it has proven a relatively successful way of managing a new business development program.

### How Are You Managing New Business at Your Agency?



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## MANAGING THE PROCESS, CONT'D

Among those using outsourced services, **92%** view it as either “somewhat” or “very” successful. This compares to **97%** who use an internal new business director and only **86%** who manage it themselves without the help of a firm like RSW/US or an internal new business director.



### Implications

The bottom line is it doesn't matter what you choose to do, as long as you do something.

The challenge with having a new business director managing a program is their tenure is short and the pressure on them and their total cost can be great. Adweek wrote a piece about it a few years ago ([The Most Dangerous Job at an Agency](#)).

And the challenge with doing it without a new business director and managing it as a team is that it can slow the process down if too many people are involved in the decision making processes relative to new business. In addition, not having someone or some group exclusively dedicated to it can make it challenging to keep up with. I had this problem when I was working for a marketing service firm back in 2003-2004 when we hired RSW out of the UK to represent us.

And of course the challenge in using an outside firm is that some firms don't put the energy into getting to know your business and bring folks into their companies to represent you that simply aren't qualified. Of course, not the case here at RSW/US. We go through great pains to represent you as well as you would represent yourself. And we also go through great pains to put our candidates through the ringer to make sure they not only have the right skill sets and experiences, but they are passionate about seeing their clients win.

# Marketer POV - Biggest Challenges Facing Agencies in 2019

## STRAIGHT FROM THE MARKETER'S MOUTH

The following is a sample of responses marketers provided to the question “What are the Biggest Challenge Agencies Will Face in 2019”. Some of the more frequently mentioned answers were:

- *Measuring ROI*
- *Being agile enough*
- *Movement of work in-house*
- *Self-service tools getting easier to use*
- *Acquiring and retaining talented and experienced personnel*
- *Adding enough strategic value*
- *Providing value, creativity, and new ideas*
- *Providing less traditional advertising strategies*
- *Truly understanding the client's business*
- *Restoring trust by increasing transparency*
- *Focusing on what drives the bottom line*
- *Slower response times*

***These responses have not been proofed for grammar or spelling.***

- ROI for digital ad spend, and using it the most efficient way possible.
- Maintaining focus on delivery and results. Being agile and entrepreneurial given how everything is changing.
- the economy
- Differentiation
- 1. Leveraging social media channels in a highly regulated pharma business. Big opportunity, big challenges. 2. Measuring and demonstrating effectiveness of marketing tactics.
- budget cuts for their vendors. Remaining valuable from an ROI standpoint
- Being more in tune with other departments and delivering exactly what they need.
- coordinating services
- activities moving in-house w companies merging
- Self-service tools continue to get easier to use.
- Acting on customer data in cost-effective ways while also measuring roi.
- Talented, experienced personnel that fully understand or have worked in industry dealing with industry customers - not just MBAs, but those who have sold and marketed to customers and stakeholders.

## STRAIGHT FROM THE MARKETER'S MOUTH, CONT'D

- engaging the customer at the right time
- Adding more strategic value and recommendations to clients
- Cost cutting
- ability to produce accurate and regular ROI data
- Proving relevance
- Proving value. Our organization does not commit funding to marketing or advertising and instead relies on person to person relationships for referrals. Maybe old fashioned but effective and cost effective. So, for marketing agency, where is the person?
- Effectively executing on multiple communication channels simultaneously with limited total budget.
- Large infrastructures driving high costs at bigger shops making it hard to compete with leaner firms
- Being about to show ROI
- Consistency in reporting. None of our current agencies measure things quite the same way.
- Providing value, creativity and new ideas.
- Providing highly specific content/strategy with a limited budget.
- Economy
- Retention of talent in the industry. Rarely do more senior/experienced Account Managers/Supervisors stay due to the work environments prevalent in the industry (long hours, stressful deadlines, budget/P&L is king) so it is hard to find an agency that will have good talent in the mid-seniority levels to support the business. VPs/NBD pitch for the business but then junior account team works on the business that has no experience or appropriate internal training/support.
- Client demands for less traditional advertising strategies, resulting in the need for new commission and retainer structures.
- Identifying the most effective marketing channels for the types of services offered to drive new business.
- Analytics
- Being creative and truly understanding the clients' business
- Dealing with and controlling social media
- Fraud
- Agencies struggle to paint a full data picture because they care more about creating demand and telling their own stories than connecting to a wider logistical and analytical view of the entire business. We need to connect our ERP to Advertising to understand customer behavior and value. Most agencies don't want to do that.
- Measurement is difficult
- Restoring trust by increasing transparency
- Ability to work with mature marketing departments. Trying to dazzle industry veterans with tech buzzwords just makes the agency look foolish.
- lack of investment in machine learning, data analytics, predictive marketing, data mining and relevant content
- Not focusing on the "shiny apple" or award winning creative but focusing on what drives the bottom line. It doesn't need to be "sexy" it just needs to work.
- Clear roles & responsibilities

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## STRAIGHT FROM THE MARKETER'S MOUTH, CONT'D

- Finding the right mix of traditional and digital media for their clients.
- Proving their value
- uncertainty in digital media channel usage around privacy, fraud, brand safety and building brand fame.
- Slow response times. It takes dramatically longer for an agency to respond to things than it does a freelance role or an internal role.
- Prove they can both build the brand and business performance.
- Managing ROI and active marketing dollars
- Offering solutions that internal teams can't cover, or do not have the tools to create
- Poor operational models. Budgets no longer support teams of people who are not doing work: Account Manager, Assistant Account Manager, Finance, Operations, IT, Chief Creative, etc. They need to optimize to be able to take on many small projects and studio work instead of only the big AORs.
- The need to grow left-brain analytic capabilities while simultaneously delivering creative excellence.
- Staffing with qualified people
- proof of concept
- The need to provide personalized messaging to the optimal target audiences.
- Cost vs Value - showing the client the strategy work and other agency costs added value to the marketing activity
- depending on the size of your business, the movement to more specialized agencies is impacting our resource allocation including human capital.
- Value and consistency. Is the investment with the agency worth the spend and if it is, can they consistently deliver?
- They're not the real deal. They talk about data but they don't understand it. They're trying to be everything to everyone and they're not strong in any one capability. And they're expensive. Not strong ROI :)
- Keeping up with trends

# Agency POV - Biggest Challenges Facing Agencies in 2019

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## STRAIGHT FROM THE AGENCY'S MOUTH

The following is a sample of responses agencies provided to the question “What are the Biggest Challenge Agencies Will Face in 2019”. Some of the more frequently mentioned answers were:

- *Staffing*
- *Keeping up with change*
- *Specialization*
- *Uncertainty in the economy/fear about a recession*
- *In-house agencies*
- *Transformational change/disruption*
- *Oversaturation in the market*
- *How to stay creative while increasing efficiencies*
- *Keeping up with technology/change*
- *Budget constraints*

***These responses have not been proofed for grammar or spelling.***

- clients not valuing expertise, going to cheaper options
- Staffing
- no longer clear who does what
- keep up with change
- Keeping up to date with technology & ROI of efforts
- The continued reliance on and investment in short-term online sales activation (direct marketing) as opposed to long-term, mass market brand building. We've become an industry of direct marketers instead of marketers and brand builders. Despite evidence to the contrary from studies by Sharp, Binet & Field, ThinkBox, Ebiquity, etc. most clients do not believe long-term, brand building through integrated campaigns is worthwhile.
- Mix talent to meet client demands
- Specialization
- Uncertainty in the economy despite administration saying it's going well. Clients are not spending.
- Alignment with prospects
- In house departments
- Fear about a recession and the negative reaction to this fear.

## STRAIGHT FROM THE AGENCY'S MOUTH, CONT'D

- multi-channel ability to meet expectations
- Companies wanting to diversify pieces of their business to multiple agencies
- Transformational change/disruption. Holding on to core strengths while adapting and transforming to a new world at a rapid pace.
- agencies cant really do predictive modeling tied directly to the buys. We can and will run hard to socialize that:)
- competition, both in-house and other agencies.
- Differentiation. There are so many agencies that are exactly the same.
- Oversaturation of the market.
- The market place, prospects and clients are wildly confused at the huge variety of options, technologies, approaches and price points...making them frozen to act
- Retaining and finding top talent
- Retooling product offerings and our staff's skill sets to provide them
- Clients are unclear on what type of advertising and marketing agencies they need. We spend a lot of time consulting and stewarding their requests.
- Getting clients to focus on consistent business objectives that marketing will help them achieve.
- Differentiation
- changing digital mediums
- In house agencies; lack of respect, silos.
- The economy
- Continuing trend toward in-house services by clients
- Clients bringing services in-house
- The need to be experts at too many different things
- Shrinking budgets for larger projects
- find companies that are not afraid to invest in marketing
- differentiation
- Truth in data
- clients in-sourcing
- How to stay creative while increasing efficiencies
- changing digital landscape
- Managing a workforce that is more entitled than engaged. Less extra effort to help the agency prosper.
- Managing volatility on client side that can disrupt business
- Growth of in-house client teams.
- generating new business
- The coming recession.
- Talent shortage
- Instability in the world
- As clients merge due to the strong economy they are outpacing our capabilities and using the large acquiring company agency.
- Not being able to move quickly enough and make adjustments.
- Building new digital services
- A coming recession
- Dysfunction in government and the instability that creates in the economy



## STRAIGHT FROM THE AGENCY'S MOUTH, CONT'D

- Client looking at different, lower cost, vendors.
- Finding the right staff
- Inefficient RFP process wastes valuable time
- Lack of new business approach
- Pricing pressures - talent is more expensive and clients continue to want to pay less.
- Client changing people on their end.
- Our biggest challenge is going against agencies that say they are experts in areas they are not really experts in at all.
- Battling the constantly evolving digital marketplace and perceptions/education of clients
- executive talent
- Marketers pesuing technology solutions without a clear strategy
- The trend toward in-house marketing depts.
- Changing technology
- Resourcing project work as it comes in to take full advantage.
- Talent acquisition and retention, talent costs
- Measuring our impact
- Encountering so many disparate systems or technologies that clients use
- More competition from traditional agencies, media companies and independent consultants
- Staying up to date with changes in Marketing Technologies
- Keeping pace with changes in digital marketing
- generating client relationships that result in referrals
- in-house agencies
- showing our value
- How service offerings can evolve in a constantly shifting landscape.
- budgets and roi
- Justifying online spends, social media data
- Keeping up with the solid economic outlook. Going to be a strong year.
- Provide attribution for clients marketing spend
- clients for whom much of marketing spend is discretionary
- Uncertainty among clients and prospective clients about the strength of the economy.
- Increased competition from everyone: big agencies, small agencies, freelancers, and even in-house staff.
- Project management and new business
- Convincing Clients that Drinking the Digital Koolaid is not the answer
- business taken in-house
- It's lack of contribution to business objectives
- Keeping up with technology/New Business
- Many companies are highering internally to cut agency budgets.
- Figuring out how to make a living off current clients

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## STRAIGHT FROM THE AGENCY'S MOUTH, CONT'D

- People not wanting to grow biz.
- Budget constraints
- Too many offering like/kind products and services
- Talent acquisition
- unrealistic requests for data from clients
- Advertising requires less material production.
- Recession
- Companies implementing in-house agencies
- some uncertainty in continued spending by our big accounts. Tougher to get new accounts.
- Demonstrating continual and measurable value to clients.
- Clients taking activities/skills in-house
- A recession



# WHAT'S NEXT?

Obviously this year will be no different than year's past. New business will be challenging. The market will be ever-changing. In-house and project work will be a big part of the conversation.

But one thing is for certain: the agency world is not going away. For all those poor agencies that slipped into oblivion during the recession, there have been twice as many new ones that have emerged. This doesn't suggest that just because there are more, they are here to stay. But as long as marketers are hiring them (which they are) and as long as the need for smart, strategic, creative partnerships exists, agencies will continue to be part of the conversation.

Thanks for joining us today.

Keep an eye out for blog posts about some of these specific topics included in this report. We'll be hosting a webinar later this month. And I'm sure we'll be discussing some of these topics in a soon-to-be released bi-weekly podcast called "10 Minutes Under the Hood"...a conversation with marketers and agencies about finding new and better agencies.

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