

2019 RSW/US

Agency New Business Report



Perspective on the Agency New Business Environment

RSW/US

New Business Solutions for Marketing Agencies



CONTENTS

- 3 **Who We Are**
- 4 **Introduction**
- 5 **Agency Type & Size**
- 6 **The New Business Hunt**
- 12 **New Business Process & Approach**
- 16 **The Life & Success of The NBD**
- 20 **Other Things Agency New Business**

WHO WE ARE

This survey was commissioned by RSW/US. RSW/US is an outsourced lead generation/agency new business firm. We only work with marketing service firms (of various types/sizes), operating as their outsourced sales team. We help our agency clients find qualified leads, set meetings, better position them in the market, and help them move prospects down the line to close.

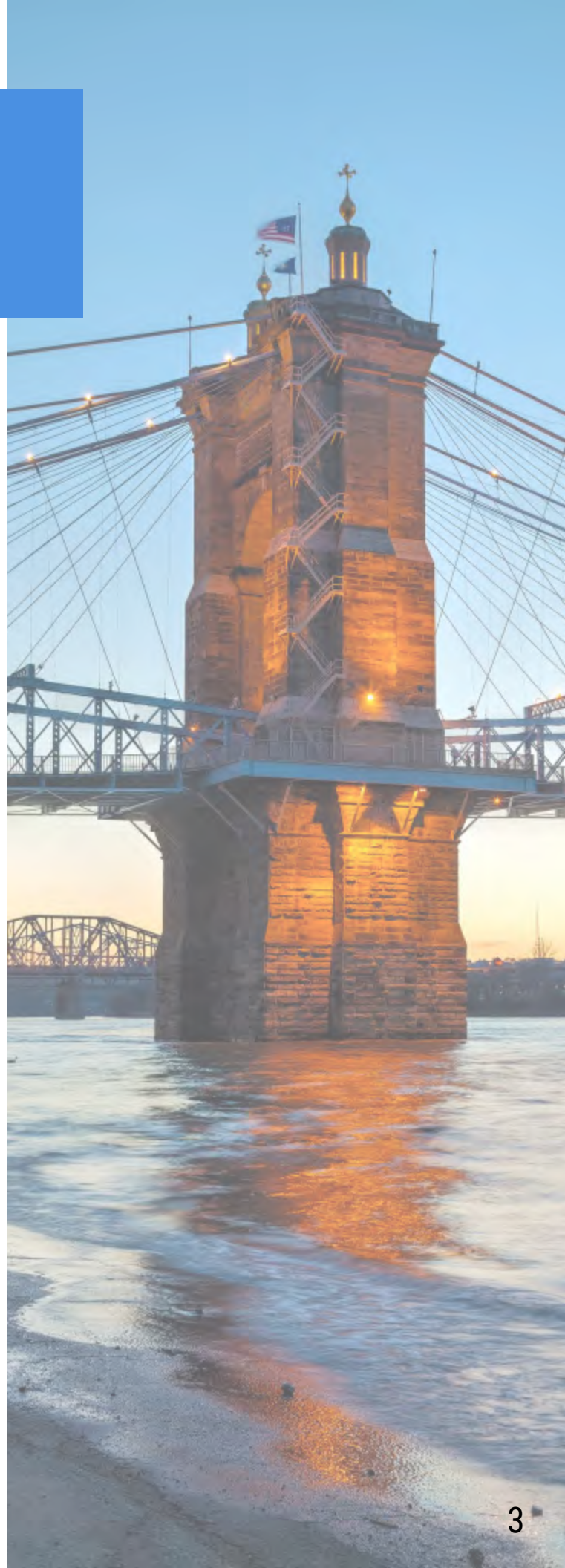
RSW/US was founded in 2005.

In 2010, RSW created RSW/AgencySearch. To-date, RSW/Agency search has managed over 40 searches for brands across a variety of industries.

Exposure to both the agency and marketer worlds presents unmatched perspective to RSW on the advertising and marketing industry. Insights in this survey report are enriched by the benefits of this unique perspective.

To learn more about RSW/US, visit www.rswus.com.

To register your agency with RSW/AgencySearch, visit www.rswus.com/our-services/rswagencysearch.



INTRODUCTION

The Agency New Business Survey has been fielded every other year since 2010.

This report presents comparable data that is available across all four surveys, providing insight on trends in key areas over the past nine years. It's interesting to see how some things have changed, and other things remain exactly the same.

Over 5,000 Agency executives nationwide had the opportunity to participate in this 2019 RSW/US Agency New Business survey.

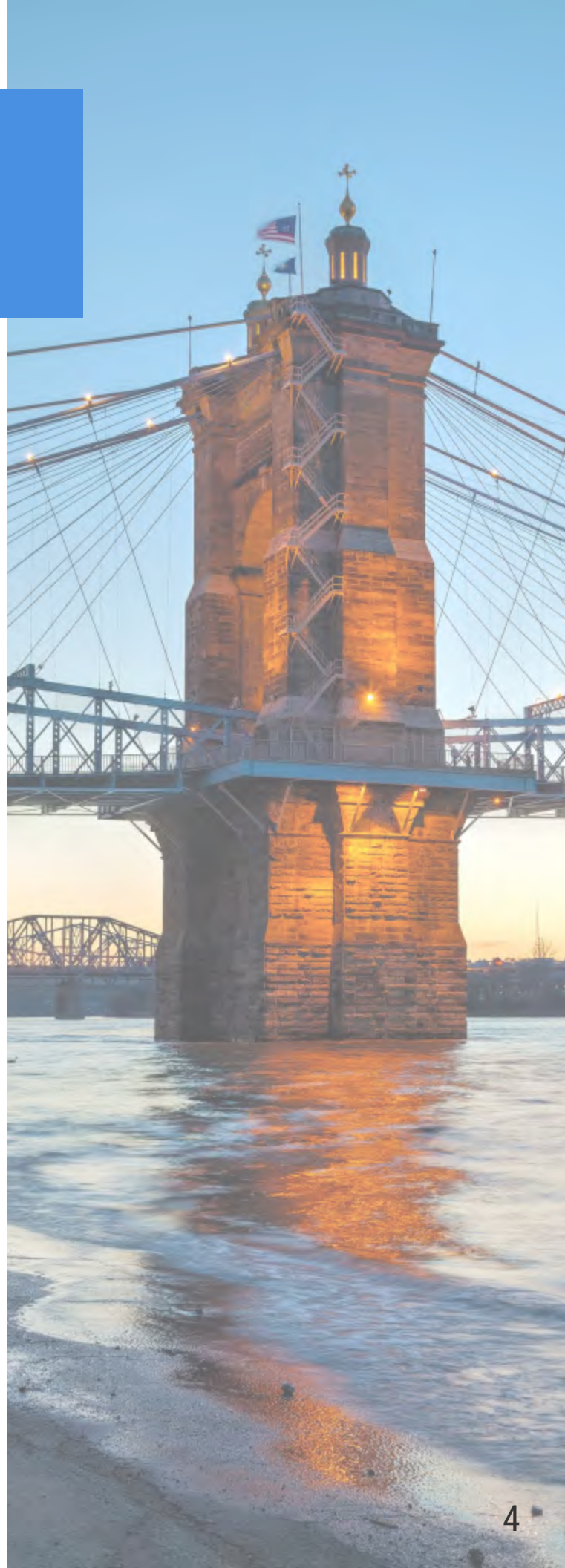
In fielding this survey, we wanted to discern how the challenges and dynamics of agency new business efforts have evolved with the relentless pace of rapidly developing media channels and marketing technologies.

Our hope is the key findings and implications of the study presented in this report provide value to you as you develop your plans for 2020. Can you believe it is almost 2020?!

If you would like to reproduce any of our findings in any format whatsoever, please contact either Mark Sneider or Lee McKnight Jr.:

Mark Sneider
513-559-3101
mark@rswus.com

Lee McKnight Jr.
513-559-3111
lee@rswus.com

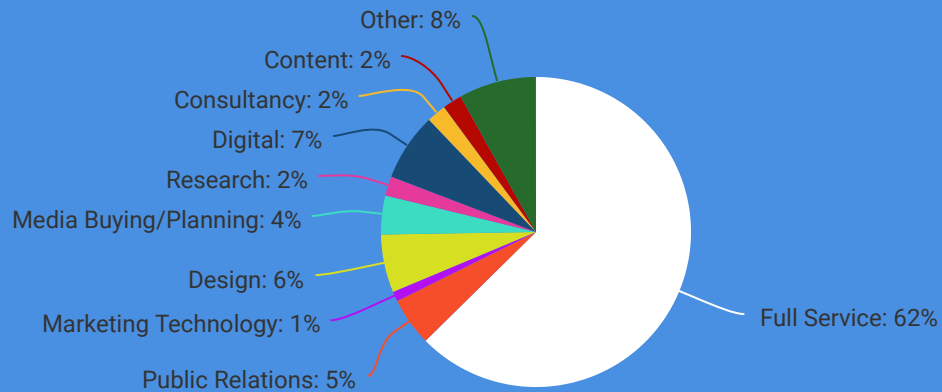


Agency Type & Size: Respondent Profile

Agencies across the United States responded to the survey. All types and sizes of agencies participated.

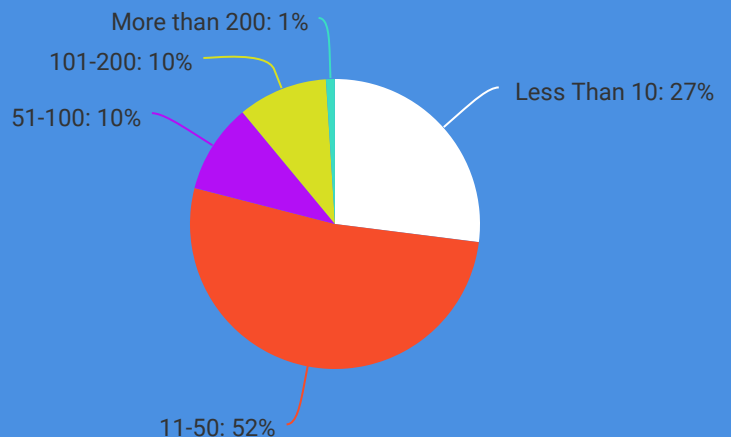
Type of Agency

How Is Your Firm Best Described?



Size of Agency

How Many Employees Are In Your Organization?



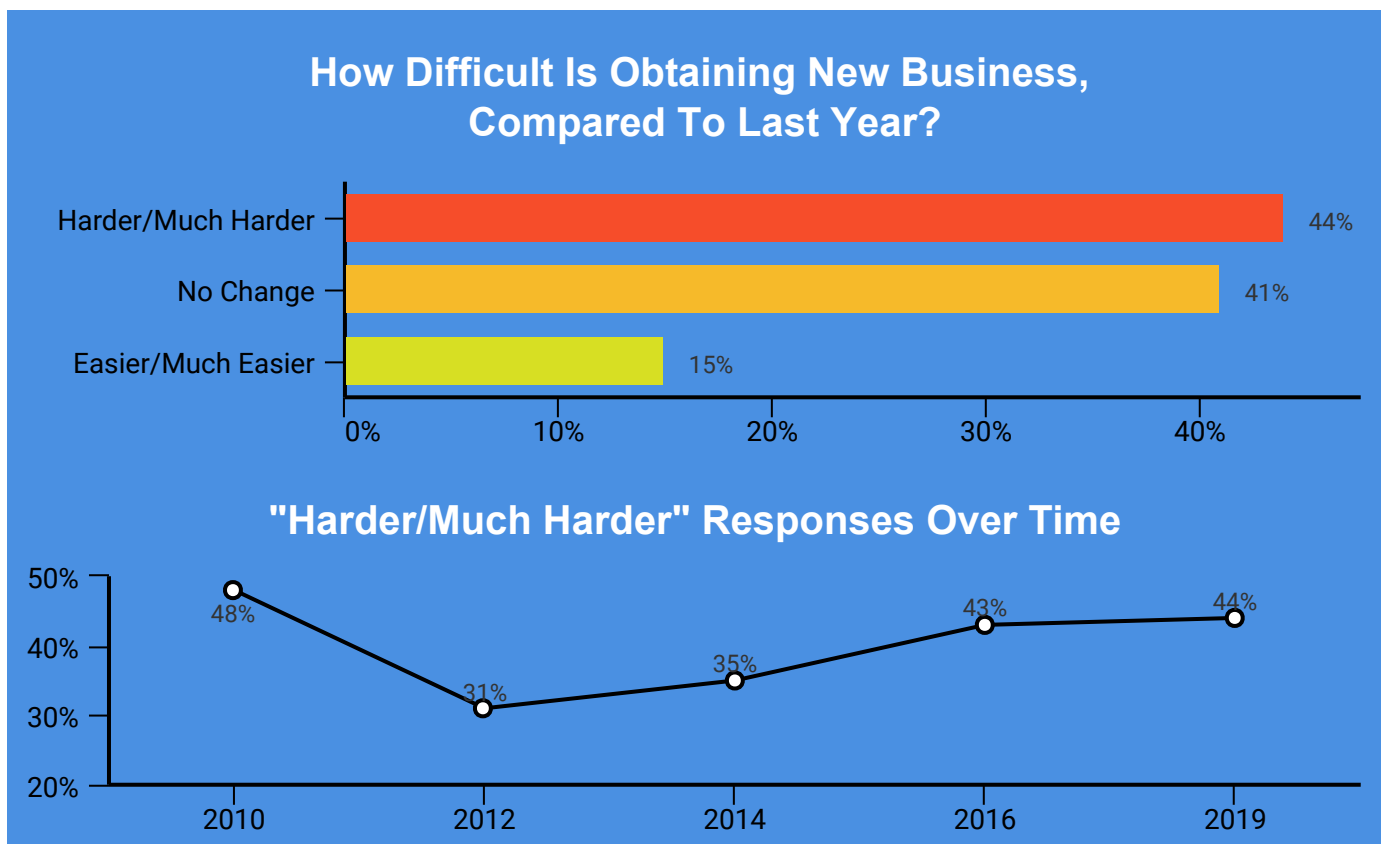
The New Business Hunt

This first set of questions centers on the relative ease (or difficulty) in obtaining new business and the expectations for the coming year.

UPHILL BATTLE

Obtaining new business continues to be a difficult thing for many agencies and seems to have only gotten tougher since the post-recession period of 2008.

44% of agencies tell us that obtaining new business was harder or a lot harder in 2019 than it was the year before. The effort seemed to get easier post the recession, when only 31% of agencies felt this way. But since 2012, things have only gotten tougher and tougher over the recent years.



Implications

Agencies simply can't take their foot off of the new business pedal...or they need to put a foot on it if there isn't one on it right now. As we'll see later, there is an ever-decreasing number of networking and referral opportunities presenting themselves to agencies. While they still play an important role, they are decreasing as a reliable source for new business. As more companies consolidate and there are fewer marketers doing more work than ever before, there are fewer opportunities to capitalize on people moving from one job to another and fewer marketers available to garner referrals.

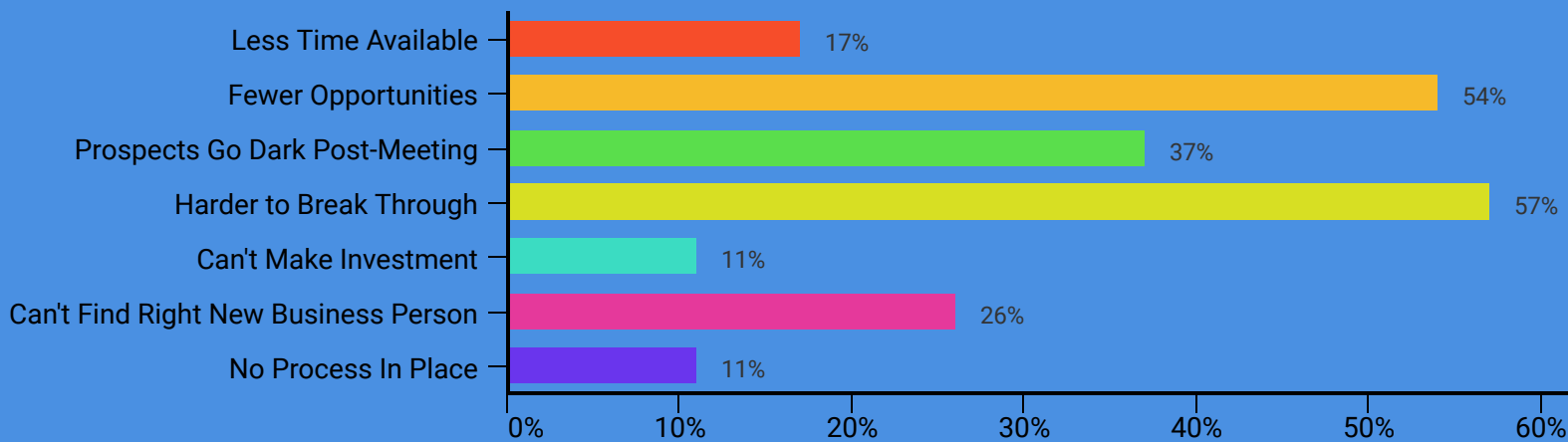
BREAKING THROUGH

What remains a challenge for many agencies is simply being able to effectively break through to marketers. 57% stated that new business is tougher because it's "harder to break through to prospects".

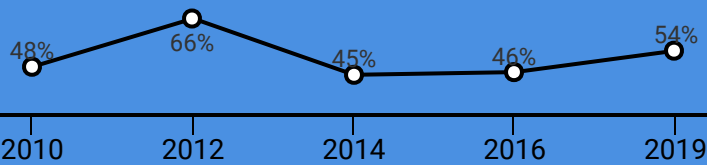
It is also interesting to see the number of agencies stating new business is harder to come by, because there are "fewer opportunities out there". As we'll see later, there are more marketers using project work as a way to "sample" agencies, so one would think this inherently presents more opportunities to win new business, not less. We are seeing more opportunities created here for our RSW agency clients.

While the new business opportunities, when presented as projects, may not be as large in absolute dollars today as they were 4, 5, 6 years ago, they can lead to bigger and better long-term relationships with clients.

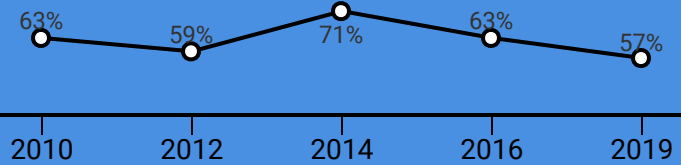
Why Is It Harder To Obtain New Business?



"Fewer Opportunities" Responses Over Time



"Harder to Break Through" Responses Over Time



Implications

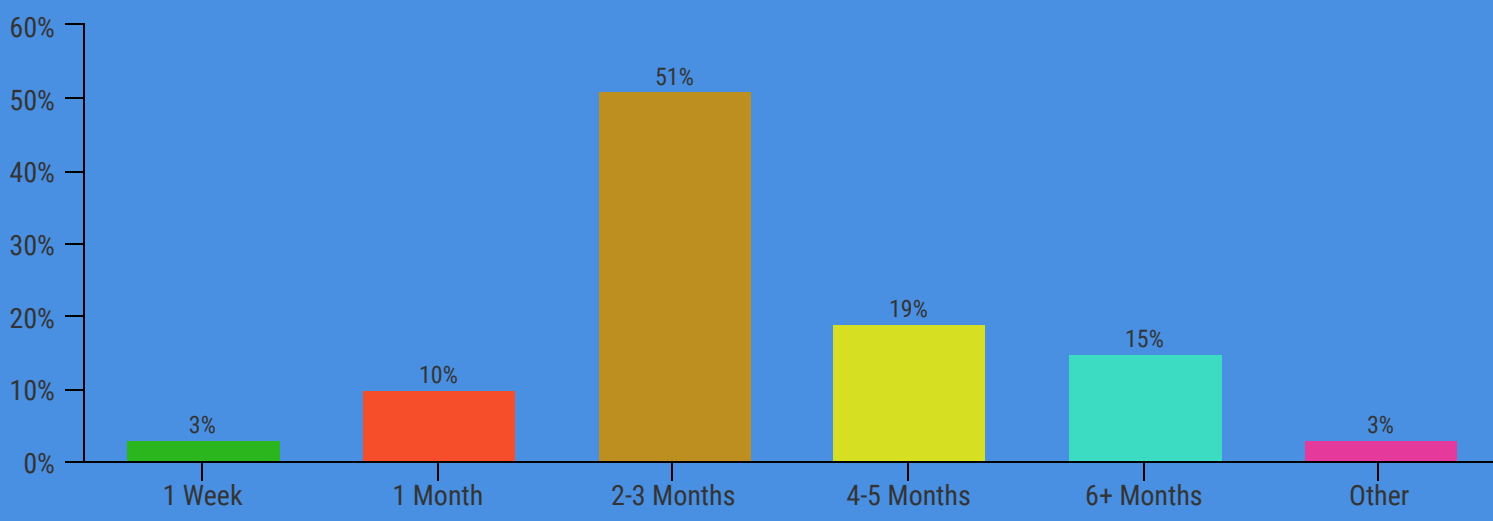
As we'll see later in the report, many agencies do not feel like they have very effective new business programs. Poor hires, lack of sound methodologies, new business run by teams of people - are among the issues facing agencies. Key is developing a plan and sticking with it. Also key is sticking with the "hunt". We tell our agency clients that while they're on the phone with a prospect that we set up for them, another 3-4 agencies have called or emailed to grab that marketer's attention.

If you don't stay in front of your prospects, you'll lose them. I suspect the "fewer opportunities out there" responses are less a function of there actually being fewer opportunities out there, and more a function of agencies not effectively adapting to the changing way they need to garner new business.

CLOSING THE DEAL

When you do break through, the next step after that initial call or meeting is nurturing the prospect. I wrote a post very early on in our existence titled “[The Second Hardest Thing About Prospecting](#)” and it spoke to the difficulties many agencies have nurturing prospects and moving them down the line. It takes time and it takes patience. In this year’s survey, 84% of agencies stated that it takes them 2+ months from 1st meeting to closing a piece of business. We’ve seen big wins among our agency clients that sometimes take double or triple that amount of time.

On Average, How Long Does It Take To Move From 1st Meeting To Closing On A Piece of Business?



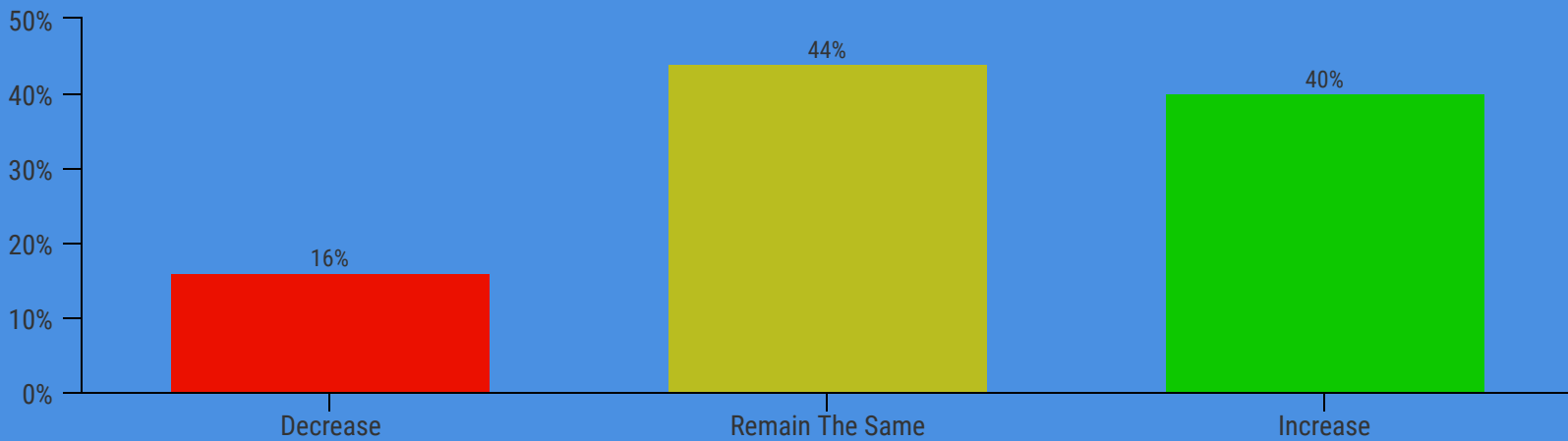
Implications

Many agency folks get impatient with the task of nurturing a prospect. They think that if the prospect doesn’t show interest in them ongoing, then it must all be a lost cause. We have to remember that these marketers have a million and one things going on in their very skeleton-staffed worlds. Just because they don’t get back with you right away doesn’t mean they don’t want you. You’re just not the priority so you have to (as we like to say) take them by the hand and gently walk the prospect down the line to close. Show them that which they don’t have. Make them want what your clients have. Then stay with them over time in a value-added (not hard sales) kind of way. Show them you can be a trusted and valuable partner.

NEW YEAR, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

It's hard to make sense out of the historical see-saw of responses from agencies relative to their expectations heading into the next year. Some years, 2016 for example, leading into 2017, agencies were very enthusiastic. 60% of them believed that the number of opportunities in the coming year would increase. This might have been a function of the soon to be transitioned, Republican White House – which historically is more business friendly. So it's possible agencies (while maybe not loving Trump), liked what he and the all-house majority would do to drive investment by businesses. This year, only 40% of agencies feel like the number of new business opportunities are going to increase.

How Do You Expect The Number Of New Business Opportunities To Change Over The Next Year?



Responses Over Time

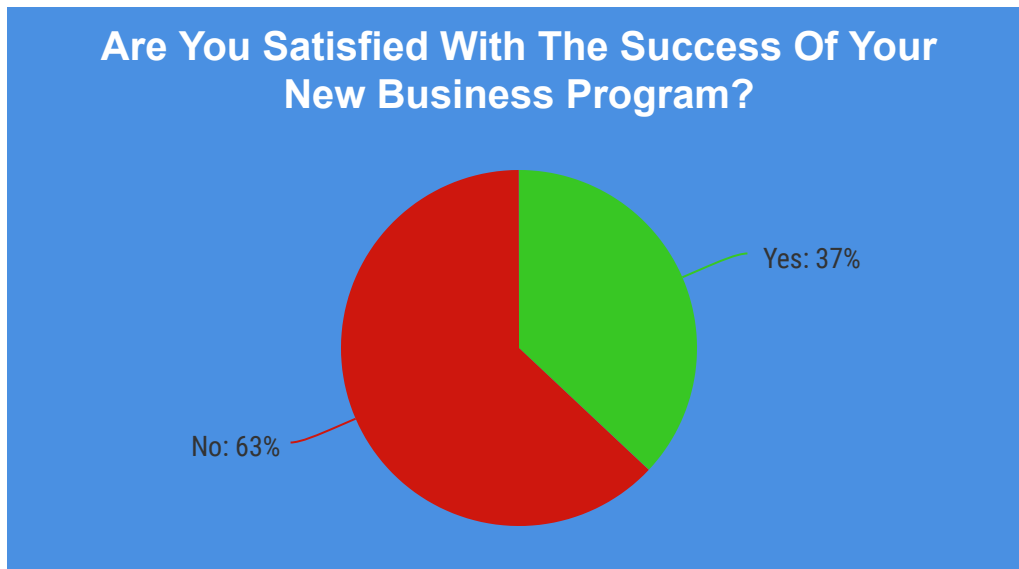


Implications

If what agencies believe ultimately proves to be a reality, then there is even more reason for agencies to dial up their efforts to win new business. Later we'll talk about the best ways to start ramping up a program as it's never as simple as "just turning it on".

FALLING SHORT

As mentioned above, starting a new business program is no easy task. Over 60% of agencies in this year's survey aren't satisfied with their agency's new business plan/program. In past surveys we've found that close to 70% (66%) of agencies don't even have a new business plan. It's no wonder that agencies aren't satisfied!



Implications

Satisfaction isn't just driven by whether or not you have a plan or a program in place, it's also driven by the effectiveness of the plan – as well as the expectations of what the plan will do. Effectiveness is driven by how well/not well the program is set up. Who's driving it? What sort of supporting staff backs up the effort? How consistent is the effort?

Answers to all of these questions (and more) are central to the success of a new business program. We'll talk more about all of this in the following pages.

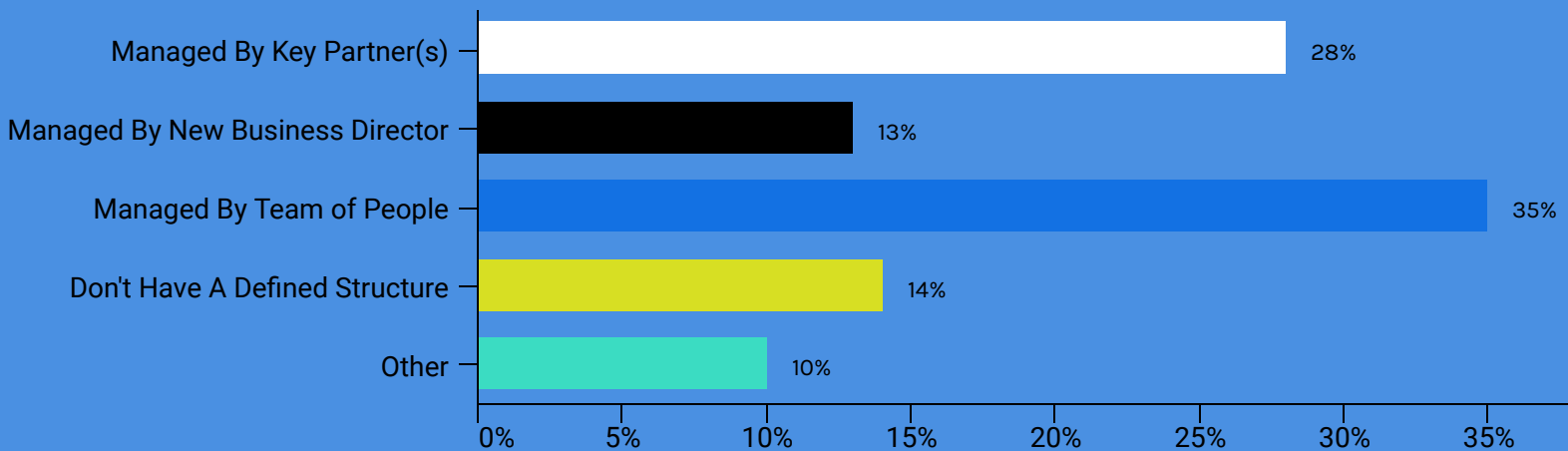
WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Part of what impacts how well or not well a new business program functions is how it's set up and who's managing it. Most agencies responding to this survey have a team of people supporting the effort (35%).

In our opinion (based on our experience), having a "team" is never a good idea. Managing new business by committee slows down the effort. Reality is, you have to move at lightning speed to be effective.

28% of agencies have one or more of the partners spearheading new business. Again, not the best way to consistently carry the new business mantle. Principals get busy, and the first thing to get in the way of new business is an agency's paying clients. If you're going to manage new business on your own (and not bring in someone like RSW/US), the best bet is to have a new business person inside your four walls that can drive it for you.

Which Of These Best Describes The Structure Of Your New Business Staff?



Implications

But that too (bringing a new business director inside) isn't as easy as hiring someone who has worked in an agency, or sold in the healthcare space if you're primarily a healthcare agency. Time and effort has to go into the process of finding the right hire and effectively aligning them with your firm. You don't take the time to do this - or you do it the wrong way, and the tenure of that new business director will be short-lived.

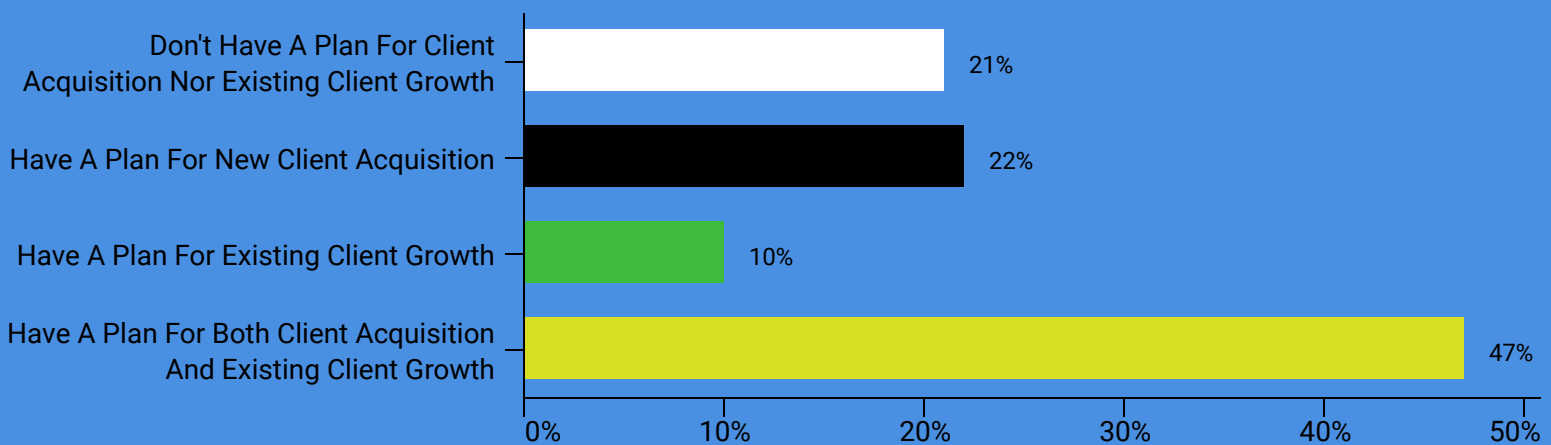
New Business Process & Approach

The following questions focus on approaches agencies are using and the tools they find most effective when pursuing new business. The hope is that you'll walk away from this section with a clearer understanding of what other agencies are doing to manage their new business world.

EXISTING GROWTH VS. ACQUISITION

I was encouraged to see that almost half of the agencies surveyed (47%) have a clearly organized plan and process in place to manage *both* new client acquisition *and* organic growth. But as the previous results suggested, just because an agency has a plan, doesn't mean it's a good one or one that is fully satisfying.

Which Of The Following Best Describes Your Agency's Position When It Comes To Managing New Client Acquisition Relative To Growth From Existing Clients?



Implications

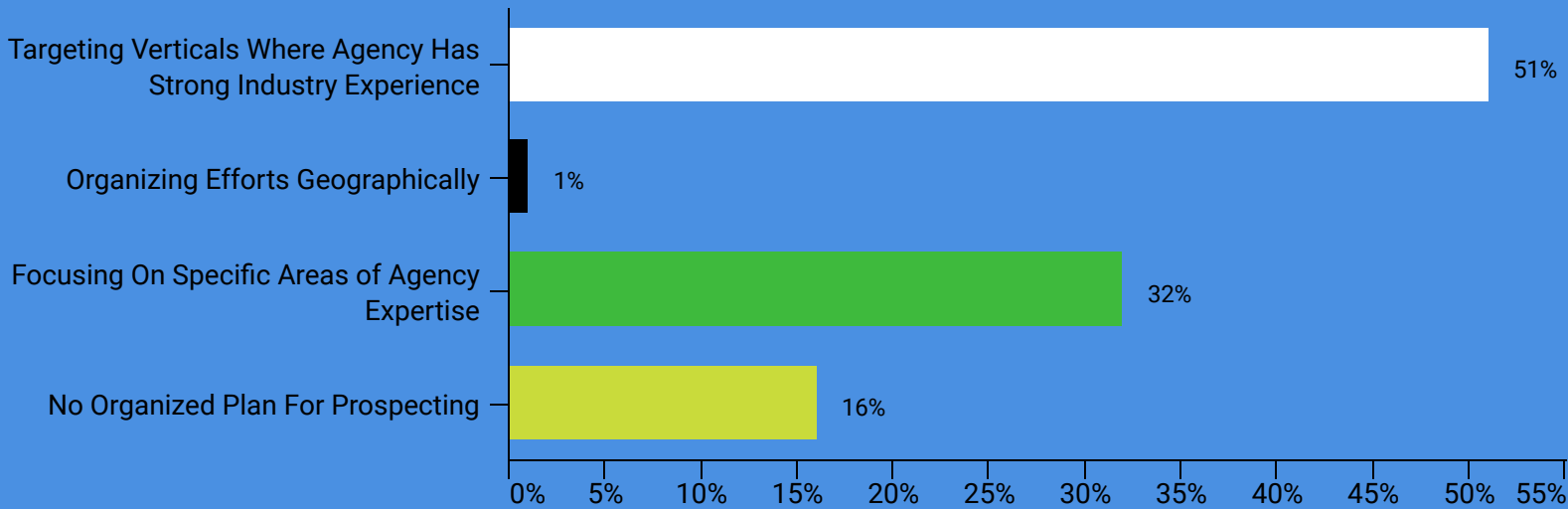
We all know how important finding and winning new business is and it always seems to be top of mind for agencies. But equally as important is having a plan in place for finding and winning more business from existing clients. There are “hunters” and there are “gatherers”. Account people that manage accounts are often more the gatherer variety and are typically effective at nurturing existing client relationships. In order to build business organically, your AEs need to put the hunter hat on as well. They need to think broadly about client challenges and how your agency can help them beyond your current scope.

Take the time to step back on an annual basis and organize a plan to better penetrate existing accounts to win your agency more business. Lee McKnight, our VP of Sales at RSW/US talks about the importance of focusing some of your new business energies on building business from existing accounts in our 3 Takeaways series. [It's a solid watch.](#)

FOCUS YOUR EFFORTS

Not surprising that most agencies either focus on leveraging their verticals (industries in which they have more depth and breadth) and/or areas of expertise the agency possesses. The majority of agencies focus on verticals (51%). 32% focus on areas of technical expertise.

Which Of These Best Describes Your Approach To New Business Prospecting?



Implications

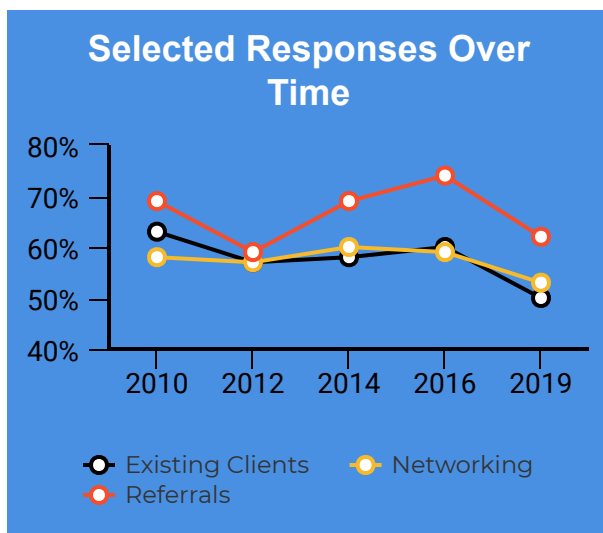
If you have both, leverage both. The beauty of having a unique technical strength is it gives you the ability to push yourself across categories. We just picked up an agency that is expert at organizing and leveraging first party data. Makes no difference to them what category they operate in – nor does it matter to their clients. What marketers are buying is their expertise – and they know how to bring it.

If you're focused primarily on verticals (as most agencies are), the more experience you have in a given category, the more permission you have to push yourself out geographically. As an example, having one bank or one hospital client doesn't constitute enough experience to go too far outside your geographic space. Pick any market and you'll find an agency that looks just like you with a hospital or a bank as a client. Now if you've got 3-4 banks and/or 2-3 hospital systems...now you're talking. Now you have "permission" to push yourself further out, and leverage your industry expertise.

OPENING THE TOOLKIT

As we mentioned upfront, the world of networking and referrals is slowing. And while it's important to have a good plan in place to win organic/existing client business, that too is declining as a resource for additional work.

With more companies buying up other firms, fewer marketers tasked to do more and more work, and more firms pulling more work in-house, relying on these resources as your only source of new business isn't a good way to go. This year, all three pipelines for new business experienced their lowest ratings since 2010 when we first started measuring the value of each of these resources.



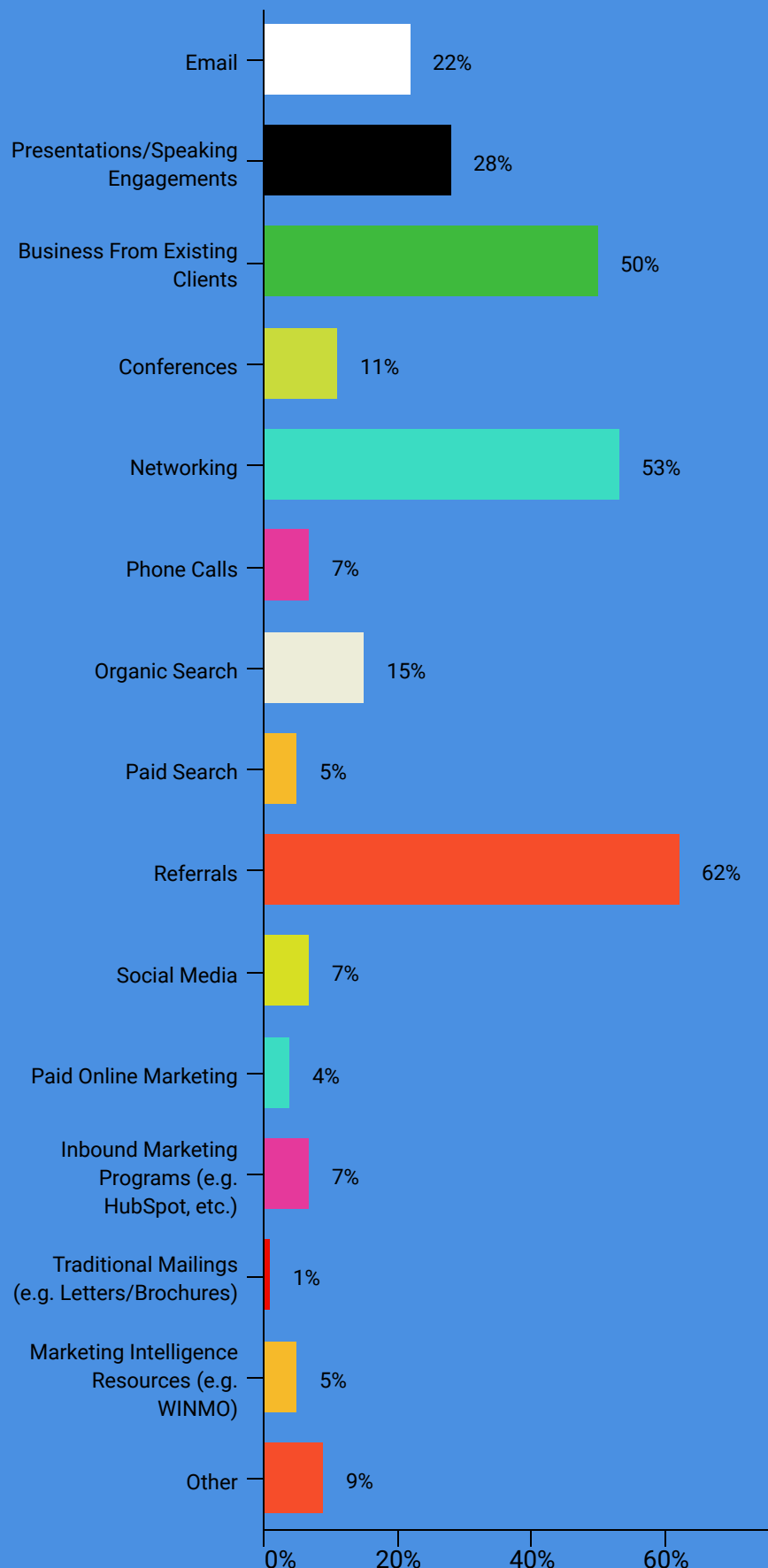
Implications

In addition to relying on the tried and true avenues for getting new business, also consider some of the other tools and tactics agencies mentioned they use successfully:

- Emails (not spammy...smart, short, and well targeted emails work best)
- Speaking/conferences (we often set meetings for clients at shows)
- Organic search (is your website search friendly?)
- Outsourced lead generation (thanks for calling us out!)

Of course, other tools and tactics, like social media, picking up the phone, and using physical mailings are all parts of every program here at RSW/US and all work effectively in helping us break through to prospects.

Which 3 Marketing Tools Have Been Most Effective In Generating New Business For Your Firm?

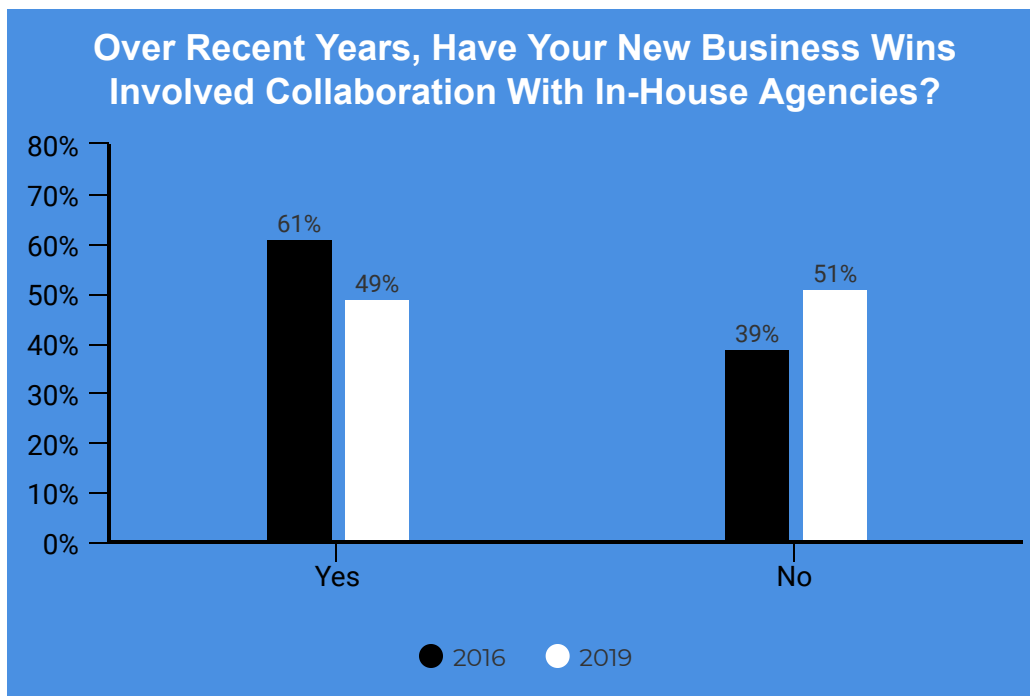


OUTSIDE YOUR FOUR WALLS

2016 was the first year we asked this question. Given we started to sense the rise of in-house firms as we prospected on behalf of our agency clients, we felt it was important to quantify just how “bad” the situation was. And our worst fears played true. Back in 2016, 61% of agencies responding to our survey said they had to collaborate with in-house agencies when working to win new business.

Article after article appeared in industry pubs touting the demise of the agency. Companies were taking over!

Frankly I was a bit suspect. Agencies have lived through a lot of change. I’ve seen a ton of it just in the 15 years that we’ve had this business. Agencies always adapt and survive. This year, only 49% of agencies said they had to collaborate with in-house shops. I suspect the “yes’s” have gone down because companies are figuring out three things: **1)** doing agency work in-house isn’t as glamorous as they once thought; **2)** finding and keeping good agency talent is no easy task; and **3)** companies are doing a better job knowing where their in-house groups begin and end in terms of their responsibilities, so the need to collaborate isn’t as great – they can more easily separate what the in-house firm does from the agency hired outside.



Implications

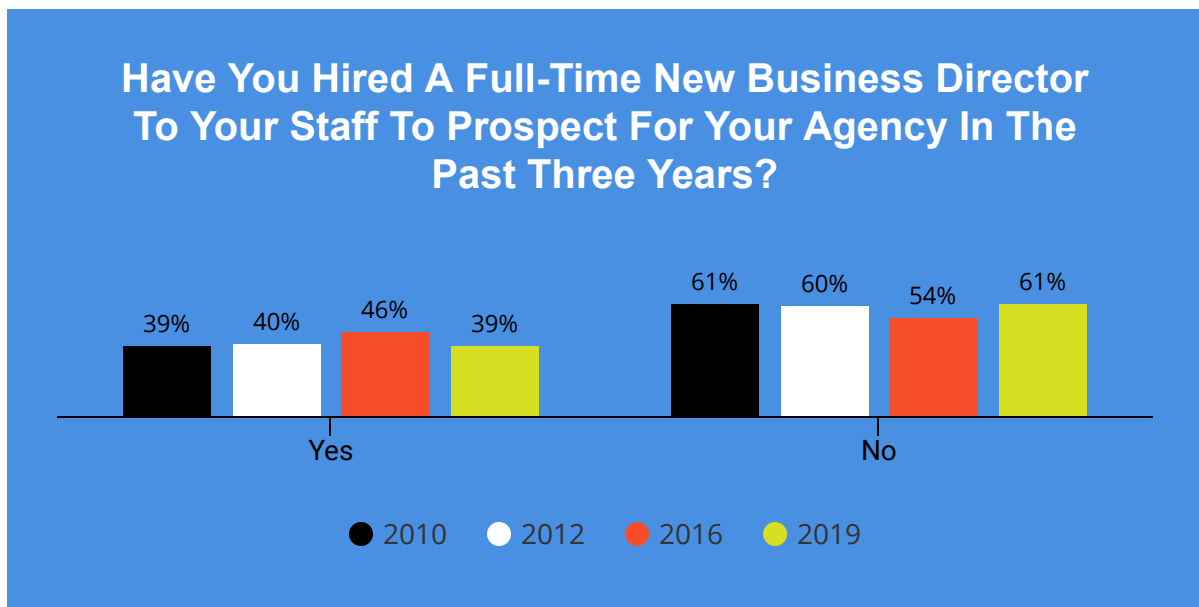
In-house agencies will always be part of the mix...but it’s unlikely they will be THE mix. What this means for you, the agency, is you need to play nice with in-house firms, show your value constantly so they don’t just see you as an extension of their in-house firm, and present yourself as a smart, strategic partner that isn’t just there to take on a creative assignment or a communications assignment, but there to treat the relationship like a business assignment – you’re there to help your client build their business!

The Life & Success of the NBD

This section touches on the challenges facing new business directors in agencies today and offers some advice and counsel on how to improve the situation. Our hope is that you'll hire better and manage better, the next time you bring a new business director on board.

BRINGING IN HELP

Only 39% of agencies have hired a full-time new business person to prospect for leads in the past 3 years. This is the lowest level since 2010. It's possible that hiring is down for one of three reasons: **1)** as we'll see next, the overall level of success of new business directors hired internally isn't that high; or **2)** finding good quality candidates is getting tougher to do (which could lead to poorer performance); or **3)** more agencies are looking outside for support (as the options available to agencies has grown considerably since we started RSW/US in 2005).



Implications

If you're thinking about bringing a new business director on board, make sure you do two things:

1. Run them through some serious screening. At RSW/US we look at 100's of resumes to find the 1 or 2 candidates that make sense to bring in to interview. We have them meet at least 4 members of our new business team – each of whom has a different set of questions to ask. If they pass this round, they take a sales assessment test. If that pass that round, they take a writing test and they shadow one of our new business directors for a portion of the day. We want to make sure they have what it takes and they come in with eyes wide open, knowing what the requirements of the job are and how different it is to sell an agency. It's a unique animal of a job.
2. Arm them. Don't bring your new hire in and expect them to be able to do it all. Either buy them the resources they need, or assign people in the agency to assist them with the resources they need. Lists, content, administrative support. New business isn't a one man or woman show. At RSW/US, each new business director is supported by a list AE, a marketing communications person, and a team of strategic advisors helping them excel at what they do.

Don't rush into it. Take your time and find the candidate that fits your personality and can deliver on the demands of what you need.

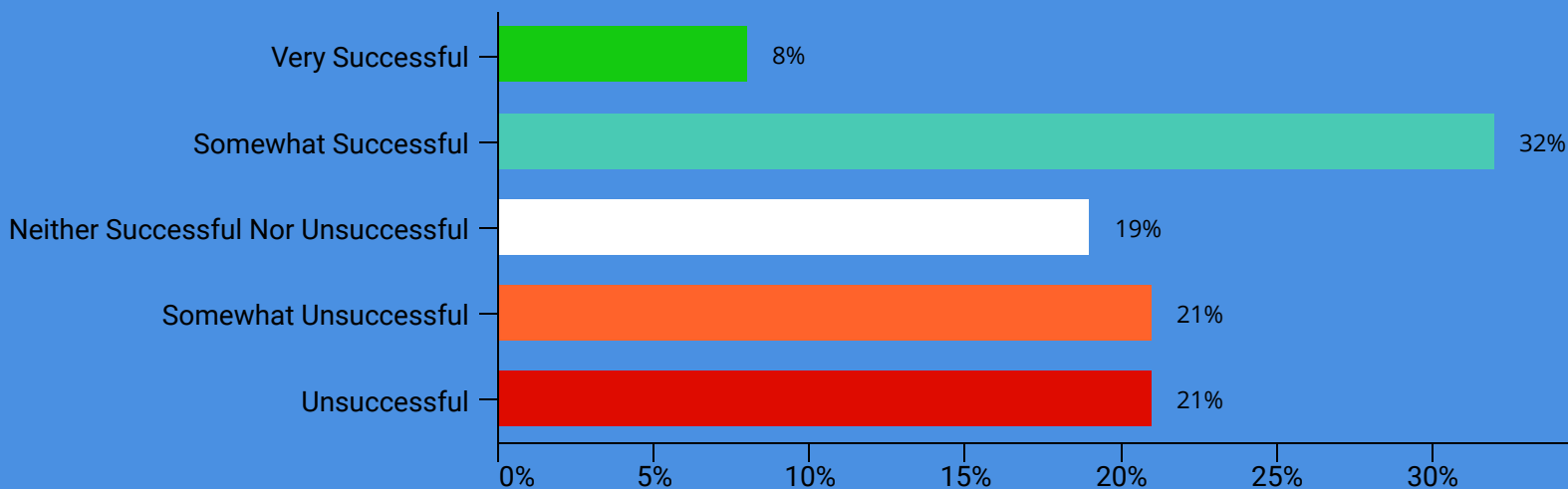
EVALUATING THE PICK

61% of agencies state that the last new business director they hired was at best, “neither successful or unsuccessful”. 42% stated that their new business director was “somewhat unsuccessful” or “not at all successful”. Unfortunately for agency owners, these numbers have only gotten worse over the years.

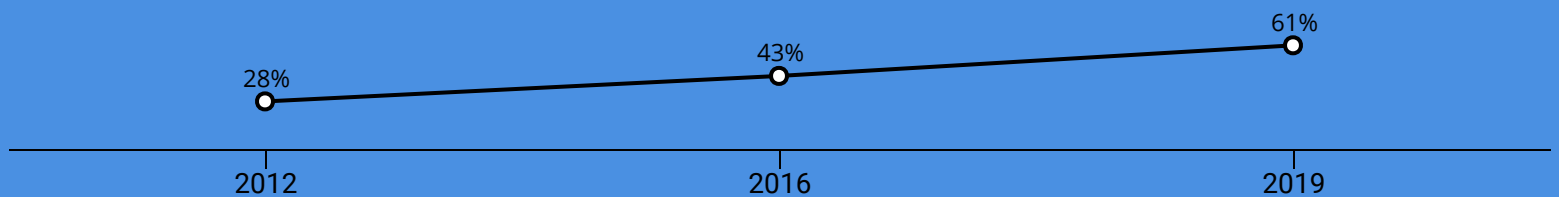
Back in 2012, 28% of all agencies said their new business director was at best “neither”. In 2016, the number jumped to 43%.

With the market getting more and more competitive and pressures on agencies increasing, the tendency to give new business directors little time to get the job done tends to increase over time. At RSW/US, this is all we do – break through to decision makers. And we know just how tough it can be. Key is keeping on it and never giving up. Key is also having the support you need and the talents one needs to be a success in this position.

How Successful Was/Is Your Last New Business Hire?



Combined "Unsuccessful", "Somewhat Unsuccessful", and "Neither Successful Nor Unsuccessful" Responses Over Time



The implications are the same as the implications noted in the previous question, with one exception. If you're going to bring a new business director on board, make sure you and he/she properly set expectations. New business directors: you've seen how long this can all take. Before you get yourself too far into it, make sure your agency principal knows when to expect results. Keep them informed of your progress. Use them and others to talk strategy and explore new ways to move prospects down the road to close. Don't turn yourself into an island. Make yourself the center of all the action and smart thinking. This added value can help buy you time and go a long way.

DIAGNOSING THE ISSUE

There are lots of reasons why new business directors have a hard time succeeding.

Some of it is poor expectation setting, but the top reason for failure is lack of a well thought-out plan or methodology (52%). We've seen it before in agencies. New hires selling the value of their rolodex – which is the same rolodex they've used in their last three jobs. New hires walking in enthusiastic and ready to roll, but soon getting sidetracked by other agency activities.

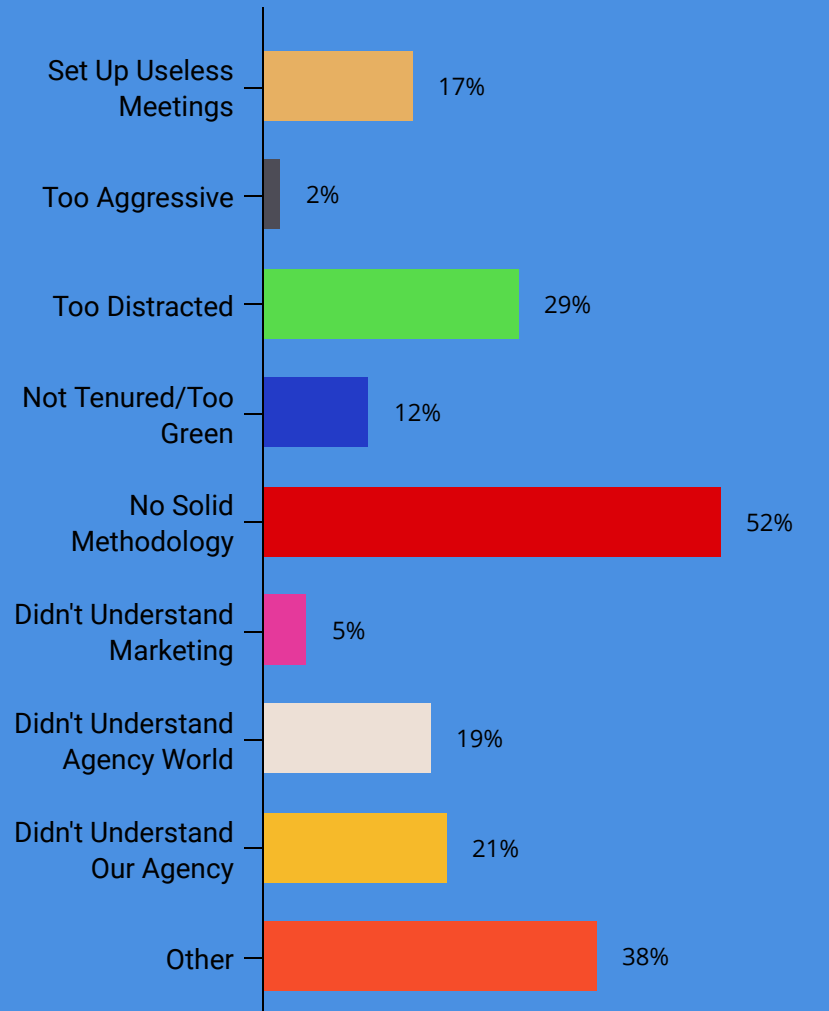
It used to be that new business directors had a hard time understanding the agency world. Back in 2010, 71% of agencies said that this was the top reason why new business directors failed. Today, only 21% feel this way.

Implications

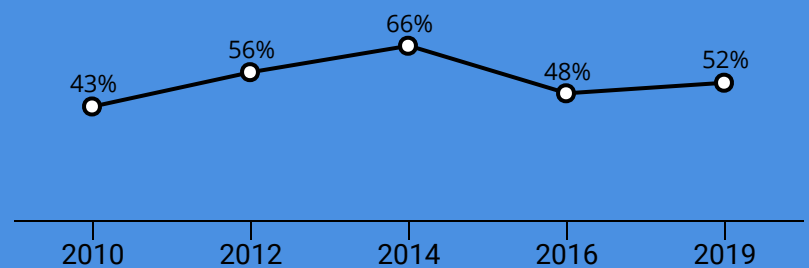
Methodology and persistent use of a methodology is critical to the success of a new business director at any agency. Challenge is, agencies are full of distractions: new business pitches, random meetings, ping pong tables.

If you want your new business director to just focus on prospecting and moving prospects down the line, then don't make them the herder of the team when RFP response and pitch time comes around. If your new business director gets pulled off of the activity of building the pipeline to do other things, the pipeline will dry up and the whole process will fall behind.

Why Wasn't The New Business Director Hire Successful?



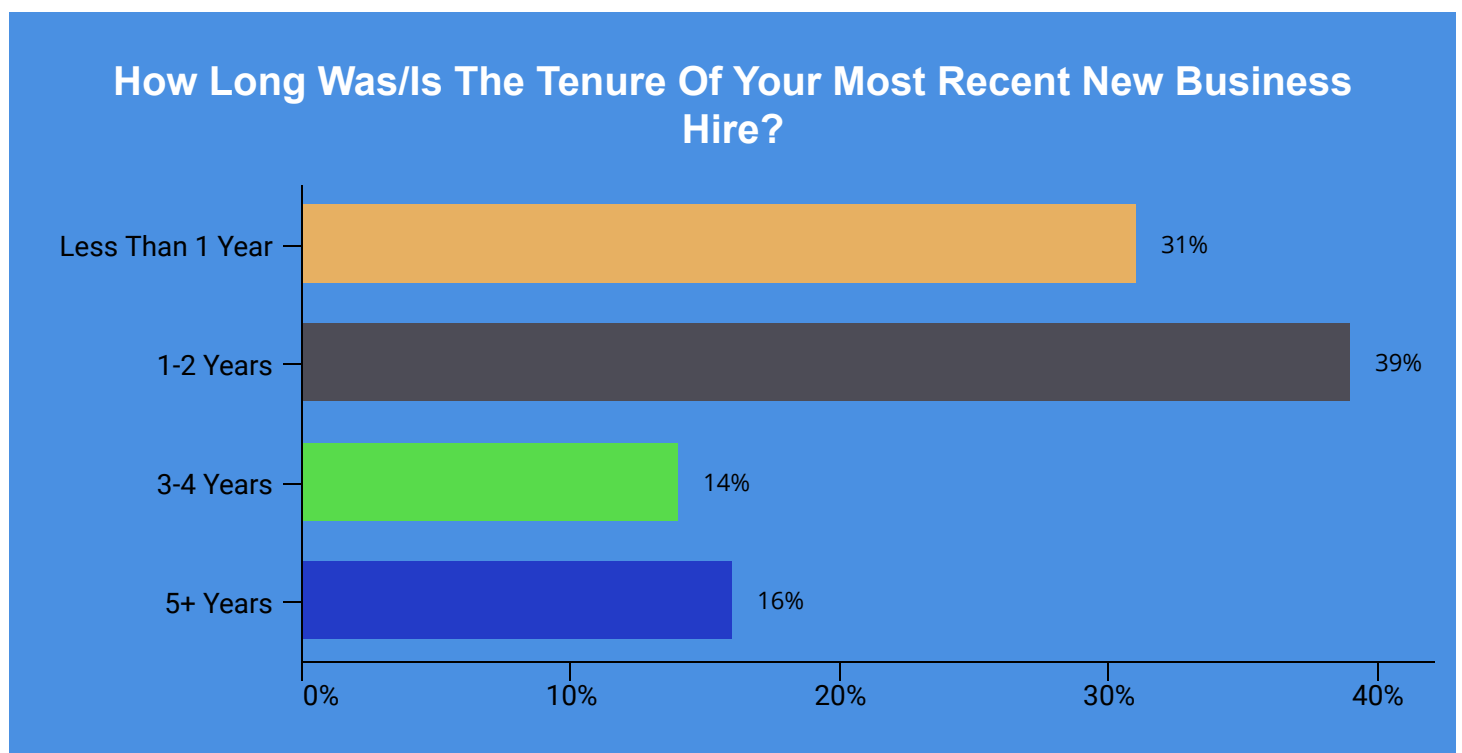
"No Methodology" Responses Over Time



TURNOVER ISSUES REMAIN

Unfortunately, the issues surrounding internal new business directors don't do much for their longevity in the job. It frankly rivals that of CMOs. In this year's survey, 70% of agencies stated that their new business directors lasted 2 years or less. 31% said they lasted less than a year!

I recently reviewed one of our competitor's newly re-done websites and for the first time in 20 years they put their new business directors on their site. I checked them all out on LinkedIn and was shocked to see that the tenure of their staff was even worse than what we see in agencies. No wonder they avoided putting them up on the site this long!



Implications

It all boils down to your recruiting process and practices. Simply having sales experience isn't enough. And if your environment (or the environment of organizations competitive to ours) isn't welcoming and nurturing, then the difficult nature of being a new business director becomes even worse! It's a tough job beating your head against the wall trying to break through to these busy marketers. Finding the right person and arming them with a proven methodology and doing it all in an environment that's positive makes all the difference in the world.

The tenure of our new business director staff, you ask? 8 years strong! We made our mistakes early on when the business started 15 years ago, but not anymore.

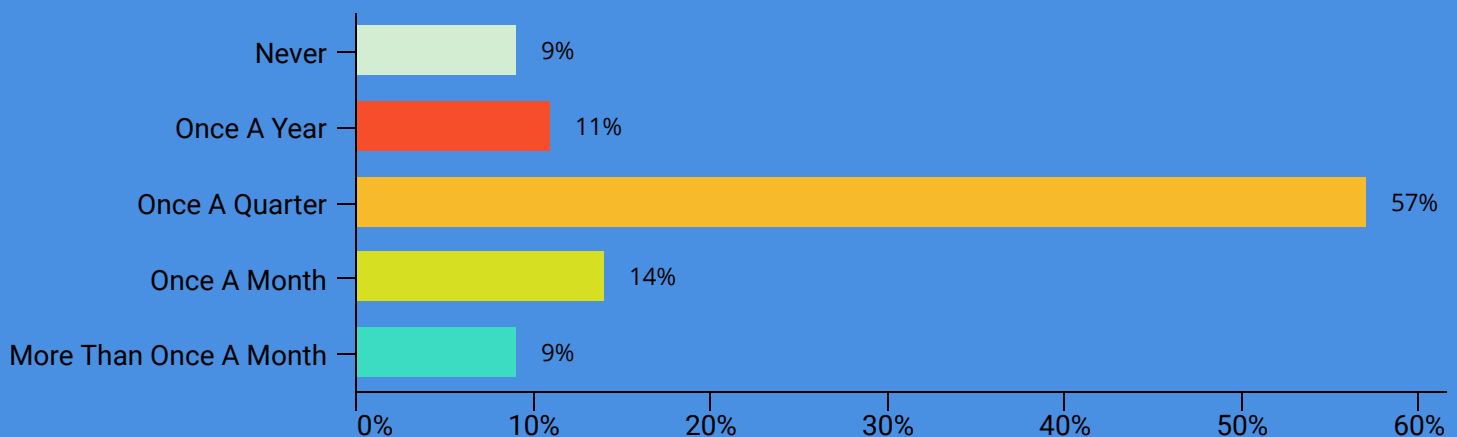
Other Things Agency New Business

This last section covers a random group of issues related to new business that we wanted to address to help you, the agency. Some of the responses will not be new news to you...and that's ok. Might just be re-affirming for you. I think the last question in this survey is the most provocative in this section. There are some interesting open-ended responses that might prove helpful to your efforts, both when vying for new business and when managing and nurturing existing client relationships.

GETTING IN THE PITCH ROOM

This is the first time we've asked this question about pitching and the frequency of pitching. Given what we see among our agency clients here at RSW/US, these numbers appear to be somewhat in-line.

About How Often Do You Find Yourself In Competitive Pitches?



Implications

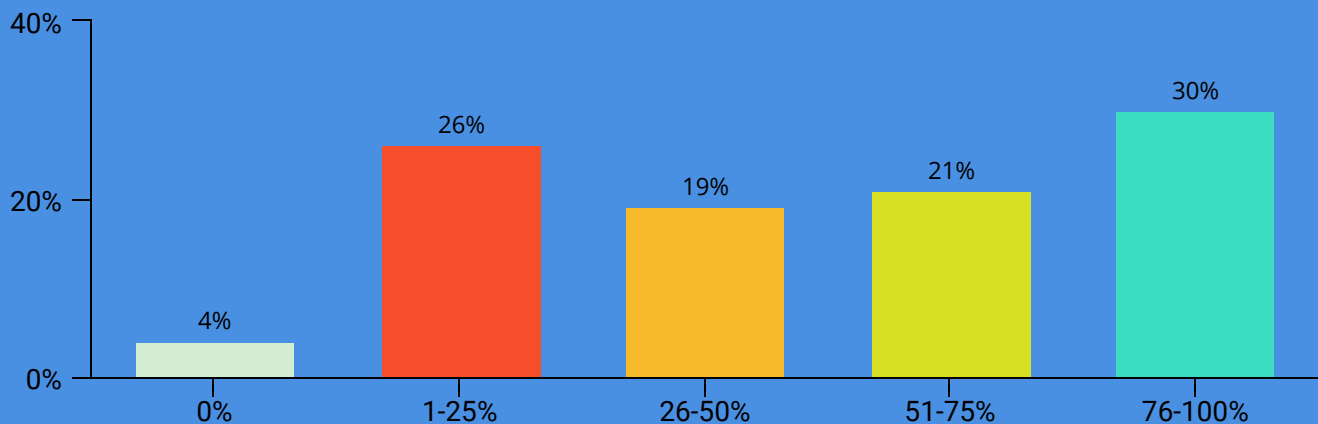
Not that this is an implication of this data...this is more of a word of counsel as you think about moving into your next RFP response or pitch. If you're going to get into one, get into it for the right reasons – because you legitimately think you have a chance to win the business. And if you do enter into a review, remember the number one thing you need to do to best insure you will win the business: make it all about them, not about you!

Make it relevant, and meaningful, and to some extent, surprising. Show them you understand their category, their company, their brand. Ground your ideas in consumer, business, and brand insights. Make them feel like you're already ramping up on their business and you're likely a shoe-in to win the prize!

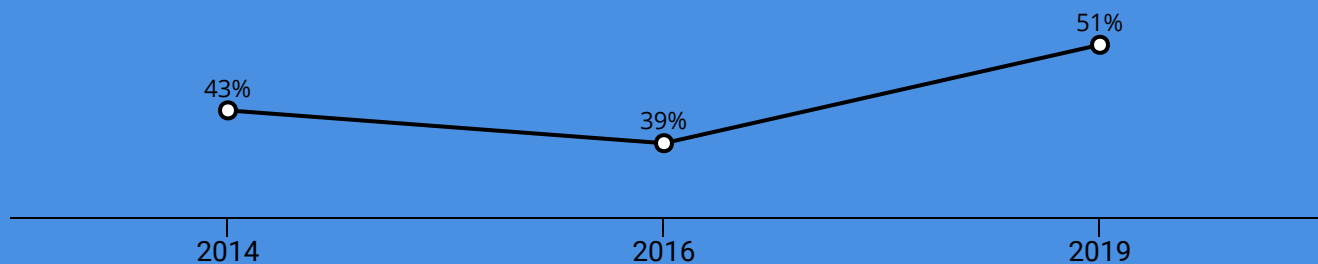
ONE PROJECT AT A TIME

Project work continues to grow in importance in the agency world. This year, over half of the agencies surveyed (51%) said that over half of their work was project work given to them from their marketing counterparts. We're seeing this same trend among our agency clients. More and more marketers are using projects as a "sampling" mechanism for agencies. So what may have been a bit of a nuisance some years ago, now has to take on more of an important focus if an agency wants to develop a longer term relationship with a marketing client.

How Much Of Your Work This Year Has Been Project-Based (Non-Retainer)?



Responses 51% and Above Over Time



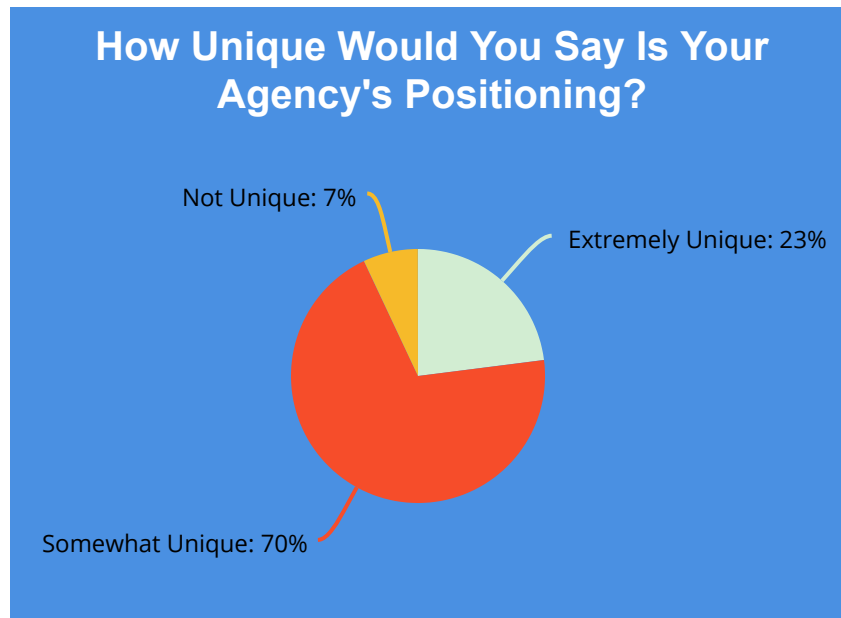
Implications

The advice we give our agency clients is that they need to treat projects with the utmost care and use that project as the avenue to more projects or a longer term relationship with their clients. We suggest they look at it like they might look at a financial investment. You wouldn't invest in something if you didn't expect long-term gains would you? Same goes for a project from a marketer.

If you see the potential for more work, more brands that can give you work, or other divisions within the company that you can work your way into if the project does well...invest the people, time, and resources to do an "A+" job so that client can't do anything but keep you around.

STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD

Good to know that 70% of agencies think their positioning is unique. Over the past 15 years we've seen a lot of agency consultants come into the market stressing the importance of agencies focusing their efforts and defining their positioning so marketers can more easily recognize their value.



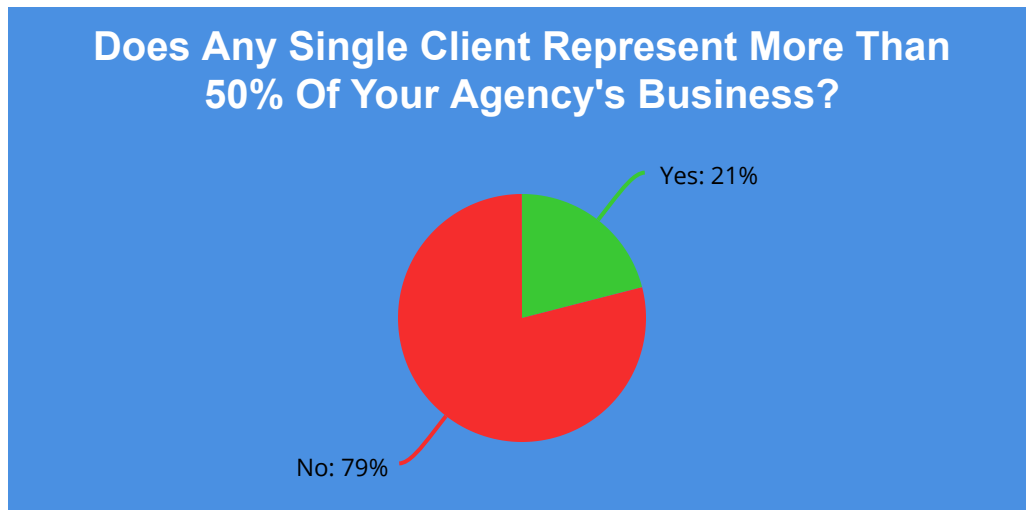
Implications

We have two pieces of counsel here. One is to recognize that what you say when you're in a pitch situation is different than what you have to say when you're first trying to break through to a prospect. Your new business director (or you) have 5 seconds to 2 minutes to capture the attention of a marketer, so the long, drawn out elevator speech isn't going to cut it. Focus on the "why" as well as the "what". Marketers need reason to see you. They want to know you'll be bringing something different and potentially better to the table to help them move their business ahead.

The second thing is when you define your positioning, wear it everywhere. Website, collateral, presentations, everywhere. Your employees should embody it and your clients should feel it and see it on-going. Positioning isn't just about winning new business. It's about taking a stand and defining and delivering your value to make it stick in the minds of all who encounter it.

SPREADING THE LOVE

Also good to know that there are significantly fewer agencies with one client that represents more than 50% of their business. It certainly can be a frightening thing to have so many eggs in one basket. We've seen situations where one client dominates everything the agency does. Times are good because the revenue is flowing in, and the agency loses sight of the need to get the new business machine turned on – until it's potentially too late.



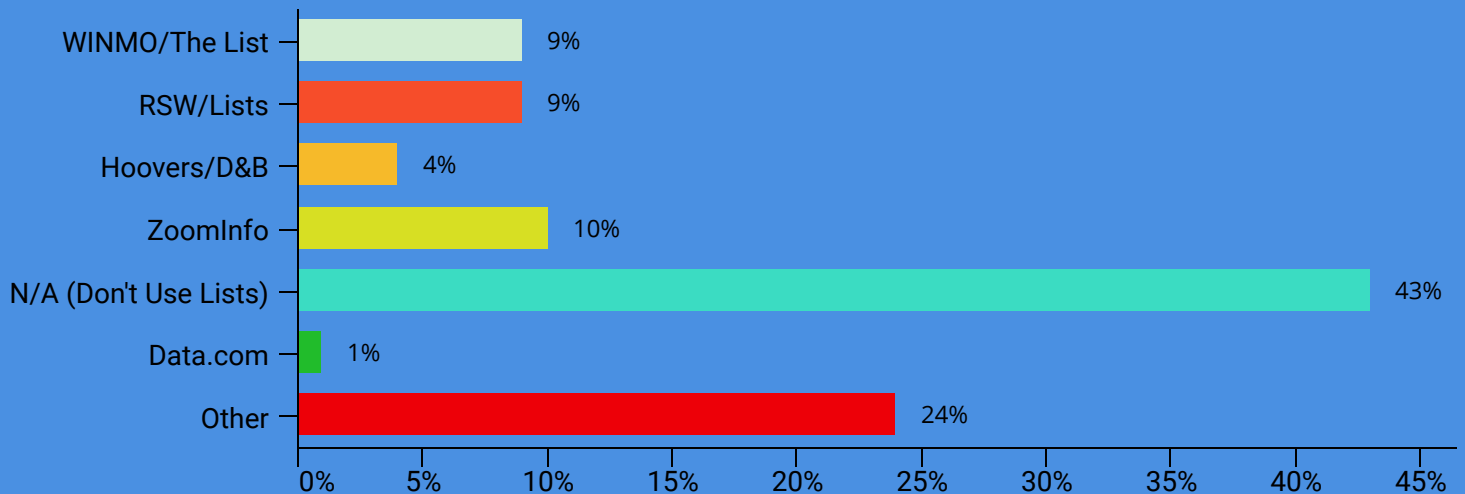
Implications

There's never a good time to start a new business program. And you have to recognize that just because you turn a program "on" today, doesn't mean you're going to be swamped with more new business tomorrow. Wish it worked that way! Building a pipeline of opportunities takes time and patience.

FEEDING THE FUNNEL

Interestingly, most agencies don't buy lists to support their new business efforts (if they have one). List resources used by agencies are all over the board, with ZoomInfo ever-so-slightly leading the pack among the five list resources mentioned.

Which List Resource Have You Used (Or Currently Use) To Support New Business Efforts?

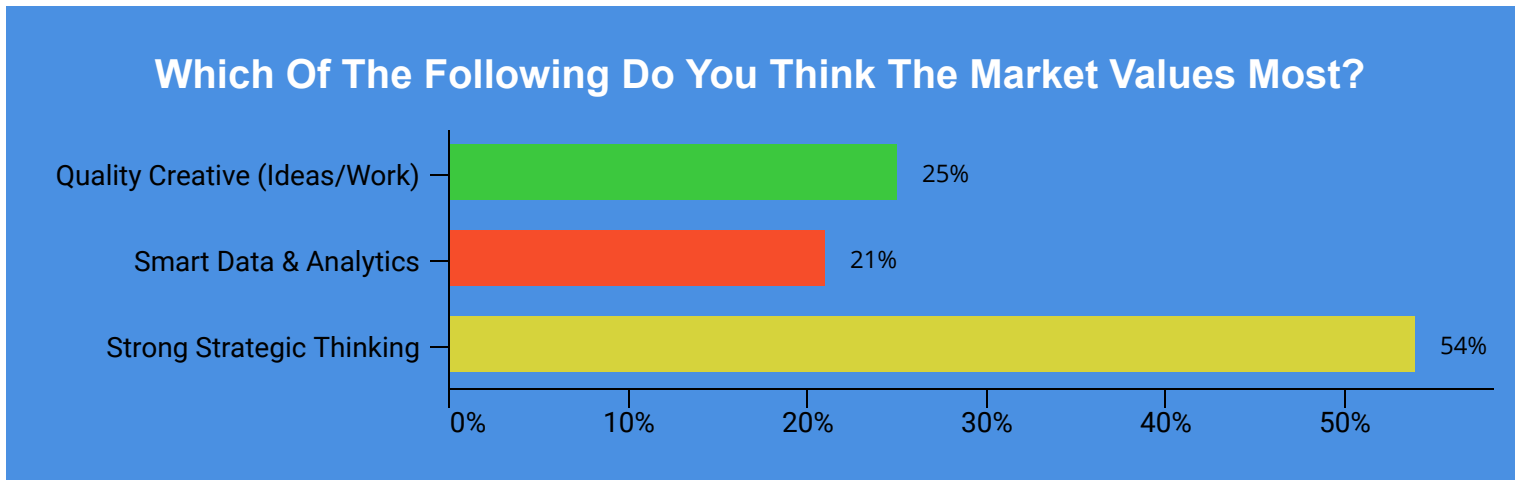


Implications

Regardless of the list resource you use, key is to verify information prior to use. Lists (for the most part) are only as good as the day they were cleaned and verified. At [RSW/Lists](#), we're custom building lists for clients and verifying information prior to our sending them to the client. Even our lists, which are likely the cleanest of any list resource out there, will have their fullest impact the day they're verified.

FIND YOUR VALUE

We asked agencies to explain their responses to the question of which was more important: Quality Creative, Smart Data & Analytics, or Strong Strategic Thinking. Of course all three are important, but we wanted to force a choice to see what agencies are seeing out in the market.



An interesting mix of responses. Rather than do the talking for the agencies, we'll let them do the talking for themselves.

On the following page is a sampling of open-ended responses tied to each of the three answers offered to agencies.

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES FROM AGENCIES THAT SELECTED:

Quality Creative (25%)

- Much of the work won is based on design.
- Emotional and entertaining creative wows prospects. Strategy – no matter how solid, is boring!
- Strategy and analytics are useful, and nice, but they will not win you a pitch if creative sucks.
- Our agency believes strongly in strategy first, then creative, but many of our clients and prospects place more value on creative.
- Although there is strategic thinking behind everything we do, strategy and data/analytics is going in-house.
- Prospects are still human beings.

Smart Data & Analytics (21%)

- Clients are constantly in search of ROI often at the expense of brand building.
- Clients seem to be highly focused on measurement, analytics, and ROI these days.
- Quality creative is table stakes. The market doesn't truly understand strategic thinking, so it boils down to data.
- The world is moving to direct response marketing – which is primarily based on measurement and testing.

Strong Strategic Thinking (54%)

- Historical proof.
- What clients seem to request regularly.
- Because you have to integrate the data science into the strategic thinking and then inform the creative so the strategic thinking leads the pitch.
- Ultimately, it's about solving problems. Creative and data/analytics are often tactical parts of a solution to a problem, not the solution.
- This skill set closes more business.
- Plenty of people can do good creative, and many people can find good data, but unless you can understand and anchor effort strategically to inform creative, it will not pay off.
- Seems like most clients are looking for thinking that drives business. We don't see a big emphasis put on creative. And although everyone is talking about analytics, few of our clients are using them.
- It drives the other two options.
- We see the result of that thinking each day. Data and analytics can only tell you what was.
- Without good strategy, data and creative don't matter.
- Many of our clients are looking for brand strategy assistance and looking for the brand platform from which to build off of, but are handling the campaign executions in-house.
- We have more clients coming to us with "solve my problem".
- I believe most clients assume we all have quality creative and smart data. What separates us from other agencies is our strategic thinking.



IN CLOSING

To see success in agency new business, your firm needs to have a plan in place. Our past surveys have identified as many as 66% of agencies without a new business plan.

A new year is fast approaching. Don't let your business fall into that 66%. Establish the plan.

Also, recall that 52% of firms responding to this survey indicate that the leading factor inhibiting new business director success is absence of a solid prospecting methodology.

So, make sure your new business plan details a solid and effective prospecting methodology. If your new business director is internal on-staff, devote the time to collaborating on the methodology, and jointly set goals. Schedule time at least monthly to evaluate how the plan is working. Adjust early, where weaknesses appear; it will help your new business director and your firm establish the path to success early in the year.

Importantly, enable your new business director to focus entirely on new business. Being “too distracted with other agency things” tied as the number two reason inhibiting new business director success. Also, ensure they have the appropriate resources in tools and in collaborating management. Often, new business directors are expected to cover the whole funnel—from initial meetings to pitching to RFP responses. While they need to lead your business development program, greater success (and longer tenure!) will be achieved with team support.

Certainly, the rigors of new business development can bring demands that go beyond the ability of many agencies to manage in-house. Still, out-sourcing new business development does not mean foregoing the discipline described above. Whether internal and on-staff or outsourced, your new business development program will generate the most success for your firm with a strong strategic plan, solid prospecting methodology and collaboration between the new business director and agency management.

Here's to a prosperous 2020!

Call us or email us if we can be of any help!

RSW/US
New Business Solutions for Marketing Agencies

www.rswus.com