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EXPERT EXCHANGE



Tips for Hiring a Marketing Agency

Use this guide as a resource for hiring a Marketing Agency that fits your needs and goals.



General Overview

Clarify Your Objectives

Define your goals

Before reaching out to agencies, ensure that you have determined the goals you are hoping to achieve. Be specific about what you want to achieve with marketing—whether it's increasing brand awareness, generating leads, improving customer retention, or launching a new product. Clear goals will help you evaluate agencies that specialize in the areas most important to your business.

Budget

Have a realistic budget in mind, as this will influence the scope of services you can expect and the types of agencies that are a good fit.

Look for Industry Experience

Relevance to your industry

While agencies with experience in your specific industry can be beneficial, it's not always a must. Look for agencies that understand the nuances of your target audience, product, or service, even if they haven't worked with direct competitors.

Specialization vs. Generalization

Some agencies are specialists in certain areas (e.g., SEO, paid ads, social media) while others provide full-service marketing. Decide if you need an expert in one area or a full-service approach.

Review Their Portfolio & Case Studies

Case studies

Look for detailed case studies that outline specific problems, strategies used, and results achieved. Strong agencies will have measurable outcomes to back up their claims.

Diverse industries

If they've worked with a variety of clients, it can show they have the adaptability and creativity to address different challenges.

Check References and Reviews

Client feedback

Ask for client references or check online reviews (e.g., on Google, Clutch, or Trustpilot). Speaking with former clients can give you insights into the agency's communication, work ethic, and the results they delivered.

Long-term relationships

Agencies that have long-term relationships with clients are often more reliable and committed to results.

Evaluate Their Expertise and Team

In-house talent

Ask who will be working on your account and what their experience and roles are. Some agencies have dedicated teams for each client, while others might outsource certain tasks.

Up-to-date knowledge

Marketing trends change quickly. Ensure that the agency stays current with the latest tools, technologies, and best practices in digital marketing (e.g., AI, paid ads, SEO, etc.).

Communication & Transparency

Clear communication

The agency should be clear, transparent, and responsive in their communication. A marketing agency is a partner, and open communication is key to making sure strategies align with your business objectives.

Reporting

Ask about the types of reports they provide and how often they will update you on campaign progress. Metrics like ROI, lead generation, and conversion rates should be clearly communicated.

Understand Their Pricing Structure

Pricing models

Agencies might charge hourly rates, fixed project fees, or monthly retainers. Make sure the pricing structure aligns with your budget and the services you expect.

Value for money

The cheapest option isn't always the best. Look at the agency's value proposition—are they delivering quality for the price? A more expensive agency may offer better results or deeper expertise, which could be worth the investment.

Industry standard hourly rates can range from \$125 - \$200 per hour

Ensure Clear Expectations and Agreements

Contract details

Ensure that the agency outlines everything in a clear contract, including timelines, deliverables, performance expectations, payment terms, and cancellation policies.

KPIs and measurement

Define key performance indicators (KPIs) upfront to track progress and evaluate success. These could include website traffic, conversion rates, social media engagement, etc.

Start Small, Then Scale

Trial project

If possible, start with a smaller project or trial period to assess the agency's performance and fit before committing to a long-term relationship.

Scalability

Once you've established trust, see if the agency can scale their efforts in line with your growing business.

Red Flags to Watch Out For

Lack of transparency

If an agency is unwilling to share case studies, results, or team members, it's a red flag.

Unrealistic promises

Be cautious of agencies that promise unrealistic results, such as instant ROI or guarantees of virality. Marketing is a process, and results take time.

High-pressure sales tactics

Agencies that pressure you into making a decision quickly or push for large upfront commitments without enough clarity could be a sign of trouble.

How to Start The Process

Where to look

Reviews from past clients about the vendors to verify their services and quality of work

1. [Clutch](#)
2. [Upcity](#)
3. Google Reviews

Reviews from current and past employees about the vendors to verify what kind of workplace it is. Satisfied employees usually means a high quality of work:

- [Glassdoor](#)

Contacting an Agency for Digital Ads Services

What to share in the first inquiry (via email or their contact form)

Template message: *Hi X, My business is [share 2-3 sentence description about your business, and include a link to your website (if applicable)]. We're looking to increase our customer base by X. We're currently receiving about X inquiries per month. We convert about X of them into paying customers on average per month.*

I have a budget of \$X to spend on ads and a budget of \$X to spend on your services to set up, manage and optimize these ads and provide weekly reporting. {We have ad accounts already set up for [insert ad accounts you have set up, if applicable - Facebook Ads Manager, Google Ads, Pinterest Ads, TikTok Ads Manager, etc]} OR {We do not have any ad accounts set up, and understand if you help us set up these accounts, we will be the account owners.}

What to expect in pricing

Monthly Ads Management Fee: \$800-\$1200 (this will depend on the scope of your campaign, and number of ad accounts)

Monthly Account Management Fee: \$700-\$1000 Onboarding, weekly updates, monthly reporting, analysis, strategy and recommendations

One Time Set up Fee: \$1,000-\$1,400

Contacting an Agency for SEO Services

What to share in the first inquiry (via email or their contact form)

Template message: *Hi X, My business is [share 2-3 sentence description about your business, and include a link to your website (if applicable)]. We're looking to increase our website traffic by X for the purpose of [insert business goal - ie. increasing product purchases] We're currently receiving about X amount of website traffic per month. We convert about X of our website visitors into paying customers on average per month.*

I have a budget of \$X to spend on SEO services to strategize, manage, optimize and report on our SEO performance. {We already have Google Analytics set up on our website, and can grant you admin access, but we will remain the account owners} OR {We do not have Google Analytics set up, and understand if you help us set up an account, we will be the account owners.}

What to expect in pricing

Monthly onsite technical fee: \$1,000-\$2,100

Monthly Account Management Fee: \$700-\$1000 Onboarding, weekly updates, monthly reporting, analysis, strategy and recommendations

One time website audit: \$1,000-\$2,500

SEO Blog production: \$700-\$1400 a month

Offsite SEO: See PR Services

Contacting an Agency for Website Development

What to share in the first inquiry (via email or their contact form)

Template message: *Hi X, My business is [share 2-3 sentence description about your business, and include a link to your website (if applicable)]. We're looking to develop a new website for the purpose of [insert business goal - ie. improving user experience to drive more conversions, purchases or inquiries]. We're currently receiving about X amount of website traffic per month. We convert about X of our website visitors into paying customers on average per month.*

We would like a website developed by X date, with X number of pages. Some websites we have reviewed for inspiration include:

[insert list of websites that represent elements you would like included on your website]

We would also like up to 2 x 1 hour training sessions with your team to onboard us on the site so that we can make future optimizations and edits with ease.

Finally, we need support to integrate Google Analytics into the new website. {We already have Google Analytics set up, and can grant you admin access, but we will remain the account owners} OR {We do not have Google Analytics set up, and understand if you help us set up an account, we will be the account owners.}

My budget for the project is \$X.

Please confirm your website development process and if this timeline and budget works for your team.

What to expect in pricing

Squarespace website build from scratch: \$5,000-\$7,500 (then \$25/month afterwards for hosting and software updates)

Wordpress website build: \$7,500-\$20,000+ (will also have hosting fees and you need to keep up on keeping Wordpress in the most current edition)

Shopify Build: \$7,500-\$12,500+ (great if your primary purpose is to sell products - otherwise Squarespace and Wordpress allow you to add on a shopping cart for 3-10 products for example)

Squarespace conversion - taking your old website on Wordpress or Wix and putting it on Squarespace: \$3,500

Photos and Videos for the website: See Media Agency Guidelines below

Website copy (writing): \$1,500-\$3,000+

Monthly Account Management Fee: \$700-\$1000 Onboarding, weekly updates, monthly reporting, analysis, strategy and recommendations

SEO for website: See SEO Agency Guidelines above

Contacting an Agency for Public Relations Services

What to share in the first inquiry (via email or their contact form)

Template message: *Hi X, My business is [share 2-3 sentence description about your business, and include a link to your website (if applicable)]. We're looking to [insert purpose of PR or Influencer Marketing campaign - ie. build awareness about our latest product launch, announce our expansion to X market, etc]. We have [insert context and examples about past PR or Influencer Marketing experience, or note if you have none].*

We would like to launch our campaign by X date, and our budget is \$X. Some PR / influencer campaigns we have noted as inspiration include:

[insert list of PR or Influencer campaigns that represent elements you would like included in your campaign]

Please confirm if this timeline and budget works for your team.

What to expect in pricing

Earned Media Monthly Management: \$2,500-\$3,500

Influencer Monthly Management: \$1,500-\$2,000

Media Buy Management: \$1,500-\$2,000

Monthly Account Management Fee: \$700-\$1000 Onboarding, weekly updates, monthly reporting, analysis, strategy and recommendations

Contacting an Agency for Photography and Videography

What to share in the first inquiry (via email or their contact form)

Template message: *My business is [share 2-3 sentence description about your business, and include a link to your website or social media (if applicable)]. We're looking to work with a videographer and/or photographer for [insert purpose - e.g., creating promotional content, showcasing our products/services, or capturing a special event].*

Our goal with this project is to [insert specific goal - e.g., increase engagement on social media, build brand awareness, or create professional visuals for our website]. We're envisioning [describe type of content needed, such as a series of product photos, a 2-minute promotional video, headshots, or event coverage].

We would like the shoot to take place on [insert preferred date(s)] at [insert location, if applicable]. Some examples of visual styles we like include:

[insert links to portfolios, videos, or photos that reflect the desired style or inspiration]

My budget for this project is \$X.

Please confirm your availability, process, and if this timeline and budget works for your team.

What to expect in pricing

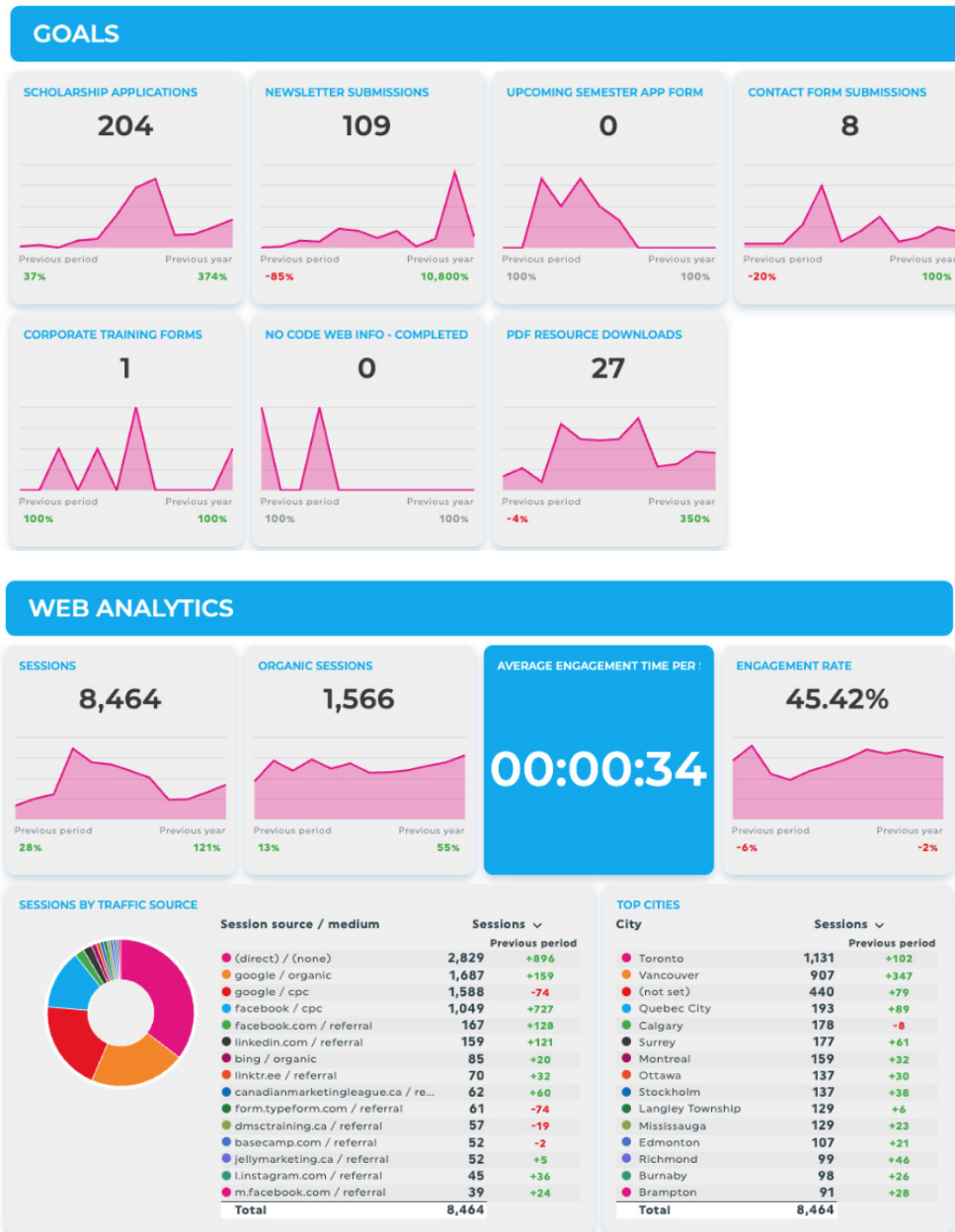
Monthly Account Management Fee: \$700-\$1000 Onboarding, weekly updates, project management

Single Video (1-2 minutes): \$4,900-\$5,500

Up to 50 Photos: \$2,500-\$3,500

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Reporting Dashboard Example



Appendix 2 - Contract Example



Digital Marketing Agreement

Jelly Marketing Inc. (JMI)
and
[REDACTED] (Client)

Recitals: This agreement is entered into by and between Client and JMI, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants contained herein, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is acknowledged. JMI and Client agree as provided in this agreement:

Where as JMI has expertise in digital marketing and public relations and Client desires to gain information, advice and consultations regarding digital marketing and public relations and provide services thereto, Client has engaged JMI as its exclusive provider of aforementioned services.

Terms and Conditions

Commencement Date: December 1, 2024

Term: 60 days. Services will begin immediately upon receipt of initial payment.

Pricing: JMI will charge Client a set amount as set out in Schedule A attached hereto. All prices hereunder are exclusive of GST and HST. Any GST or HST payable hereunder shall be payable by the Party making the payment to which the GST or HST applies.

Payment: Payment is due on the first day of the month on which the services are to be provided, or in the case that service is initiated on any other day, then on the day the services are initiated for that month. Financing charges of 2% per month will be added to all late payments.

Indemnification: Both JMI and Client shall indemnify and hold each other harmless and defend one another from all claims, liabilities, obligations, fines, penalties and other matters and all costs and expenses relating to or arising out of acts of the service during the term of the agreement, that are permitted by applicable law, except for any of the foregoing that arises out of or relating to gross negligence, willful malfeasance, and /or breach of this Agreement.

Privacy and Data Security: JMI agrees to protect the privacy of Client's electronic data including email addresses, accounts and passwords.

Confidentiality: Client recognizes that JMI has and will have information including but not limited to products, email addresses, passwords, trade secrets, pricing, costs, business affairs and other vital information (collectively, "Information") which are valuable, special and unique assets of JMI. Client, or any related parties will not at any time or in any manner either directly or indirectly divulge, disclose, or communicate any information to a third party without the prior written approval of JMI. Any information shared during or in relation to the services provided to Client by JMI shall be protected and treated as strictly confidential. A violation by Client of this paragraph shall be deemed a material violation under this agreement and will justify legal and/or equitable relief.

Proprietary Property: All public relations contacts - including but not limited to their names, phone numbers, email and physical addresses, are the sole property of JMI and are not to be used beyond the scope and term of this agreement without the written consent of JMI. Website hosting remains the sole responsibility of Client.

Photograph and Video Consent: Client agrees to obtain all necessary photograph and video consents for individuals involved in the execution of the services to be provided by JMI under this agreement. Client further agrees to retain such consent for a period to be not less equivalent to that of a commercially prudent operator in their industry.

Governing Law: This Agreement shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the province of British Columbia and the applicable laws of Canada.

Termination: Both JMI and Client may terminate the agreement for any reason upon providing 30 days written notice. In the case of breach of the agreement, either party may terminate this contract immediately if the breach has not been remedied within 15 days of providing written notice to the other party.

Initials

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Name: _____

Client: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

Signature _____

A/P Contact: _____

A/P Email : _____

A/P Phone: _____

Name: Sarah Clark

JMI Jelly Marketing Inc.

#238 - 11590 Cambie Road
Richmond, B.C. V6X 3Z5
Canada

Date: _____

Signature _____

Initials

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