



# Marketing Agency vs. Consulting Firm: What's the Better Choice?

You could use some help in the marketing department. That much you've figured out.

But now, you're looking at all the options available, and it's a bit much. When it comes to choosing between a marketing agency vs. consulting firm vs. hiring in-house, how do you decide?

You could hire a single person to lead marketing efforts, sure. But at this point in your company's evolution, you may need a team of people who can strategize and/or execute to steer your company in the right direction.

Often, it makes more sense for companies beginning their marketing journeys to hire a whole team. But what kind of team is the right fit?

## Marketing agency vs. consulting firm: A high-level overview

First, let's start with some definitions. We'll preface this by saying that every agency and firm describes their own expertise differently, but this high-level overview is a great place to start.

### What is a marketing agency?

**Marketing agencies** help their clients implement marketing plans based upon their specific expertise and skill sets. Many marketing agencies are focused on a specific area, skill set, or vertical. For example...

- **Digital marketing agencies** may lean heavily on digital strategies like SEO or digital ad spend with some creative in-house to assist with display ads and landing pages.

- **Creative agencies** provide creative support in deploying the right creative team to execute on web design, graphic design, copywriting, and more.
- Some agencies are focus on a **local geographic area** or **vertical expertise**, like automotive or healthcare, and may combine elements of digital marketing, traditional media, and creative expertise.

## What is a marketing consulting firm?

While agencies are typically called in to execute on tasks, **consulting firms** tend to take on tougher jobs, solving business challenges rather than creating deliverables. For example...

- You know you need leads but between content marketing, digital ads, SEO, and other strategies, you're not sure where to start.
- You've exhausted outbound opportunities and are not sure what to do next.
- Your existing marketing team or marketing strategy has not produced desired outcomes and you struggle to understand why.

A consulting firm is an excellent place to start when you want to produce results with experienced strategic thinkers who work as a part of your organization.

Depending on their specific business model, some consulting firms can also carry out task execution as well.

## How your partnership will look

Many companies primarily want to know what the partnership will look like when choosing a firm.

**Consultancies** tend to be tight-knit groups who already work well together. They are experts in their specific marketing segments or verticals and have a strategic mindset cultivated from many years of experience in the industry. While occasionally brought in by a CMO, the typical relationship starts with the CEO or COO, who recruits the consultancy to essentially act as the company's marketing department or an extension of it.

**Agencies** are more likely to work with new companies or those with marketing talent in-house. They tend to have employees at all levels who focus on creative, digital, or traditional advertising. You will likely have an account manager or single point-of-contact and creative will be pulled in as needed to execute on specific tasks.

Remember, consultancies can carry out execution as well. They may have the ability to do this in-house or they might keep vetted subcontractors on deck to call in as needed.

## Choosing the right fit for your team

As a team of strategic marketing consultants, we may seem a little biased. But, the truth is, consultants don't want clients who aren't a good fit. If you've already got all the strategy you need in-house, we won't be the right fit for your digital marketing or creative needs.

On the other hand, a marketing consulting firm is a much better fit if...

- You are missing the strategic element that delivers marketing results.
- You struggle to tie current marketing efforts back to business objectives.
- You're currently marketing without a clear [marketing plan](#).

## About Marketri

Marketri LLC was created in 2004 with the goal of helping growth-minded businesses move marketing from cost center to profit center. Started by Debra Andrews after over 20 years of experience in B2B strategic marketing, Marketri exists to proactively transform your marketing function to one that drives measurable top-line growth.

