ARE ADVERTISING AGENCIES A COLOSSAL WASTE OF MONEY?

If you're like most business owners, then you've probably thought about hiring an advertising agency at least once in your career — which is great! After all, advertising agencies can be fantastic investments. Professional advertising can mean the difference between profit and just barely breaking even. But there's just one thing that's been holding you back:

THE PRICE.

Advertising agencies are known for being pretty expensive, and most business owners end up feeling like they're jumping into some kind of socially acceptable gambling addiction. First, you'll have to jump through hoops to find an agency that's willing to work with you. Then, they'll start bombarding you with a long list of recommendations. They'll pressure you into various advertising services, all while throwing weird acronyms at you like "PPC" and "SEO". When you finally crack and sign the contract, you'll find yourself shoveling hundreds (sometimes even thousands) of dollars into advertising services that you barely understand. Then, you pull the lever, cross your fingers, and hope for an ROI.

Of course, this never seems to be a problem for larger companies because they typically have a lot more money to throw around. As the age-old saying goes: "you've gotta spend money to make money!" But when you're a small or mid-sized business, you're naturally not going to have a ton of extra cash in the bank. The less money you have, the less money you'll make. Because of this, small and mid-sized business owners who invest in advertising services rarely ever produce an ROI.

TRANSLATION: I SHOULD AVOID ADVERTISING AGENCIES ALTOGETHER. RIGHT?

Not necessarily. Having a budget doesn't mean having zero options available to you. It just means you'll need to be smart about your advertising investments.
So, how do you do that?
Simple: you'll need to weed out the advertisers who will only waste your time and your money. You can find these advertisers sitting comfortably on two sides of the marketing spectrum: the agencies that are too big, and the agencies that are too small.

DON'T BE A LITTLE FISH IN A BIG POND.

If you're a small or mid-sized business, then don't go after large, big-name advertising agencies. Large advertising agencies have a bad habit of over-charging. See, when you work with a larger advertising agency, you're not just paying for the advertising services. You're also paying for their name and their reputation. Big firms charge big bucks because they're big. The brand-name alone is enough to turn heads. While this may be great for popularity, it's definitely not cost-effective, especially when you're a small or mid-sized business.
Not to mention: most large advertising agencies will actually turn small and mid-sized businesses away! If your budget isn't big enough, they may decide that your business just isn't worth the effort. Frustrating? Yes. But a blessing in disguise? Also yes.

BUT DON'T GO FOR THE SMALL FISH, EITHER.

On the flip-side, you don't want to go for the cheapest advertising services that you can find. Small advertising agencies may be more affordable, but they'll also produce worse results. Small advertising agencies are typically cheap because they're investing in cheap solutions. Most of their marketing materials are

out-sourced, which means that none of their "workers" will ever be on the same page with one another. This results in sloppy work and even sloppier results.
The same is true with free-lancers. If you pay one guy to do the graphics, another guy to write the content, and another guy to create your website, then none of your creatives will be on the same page, and the final product will be all over the place.
Why spend money on sloppy results, right?

SO, IS THERE A MIDDLE-GROUND FOR MARKETING?

Yes! Mid-sized marketing firms do exist, and they're typically the happy medium between the two. Mid-sized marketing firms do everything in-house, which means you're paying for a team of creatives who are all working with each other to create the best solutions for your brand and your budget. - How do I know that? **BECAUSE I RUN ONE!**

Candy Harman, Founder - THM²G

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