



Hiring a B2B Marketing Agency? Top 10 Questions to Ask



Hiring a B2B marketing agency to help you generate leads and grow revenue is a big decision. Half the battle is deciding what you are looking for in an agency. Here are 10 questions to ask any agency that offers B2B marketing services. Ask all prospective agencies these questions and you'll be on your way to hiring the right agency to help you reach your B2B marketing goals.

Q 1. What steps will you take to improve our pipeline strategy?

Pipeline marketing is a B2B marketing strategy that aligns sales and marketing around the same goal of revenue generation. It gets sales and marketing to talk to each other. Amazing! Pipeline marketing differs from activity-based marketing because it focuses on revenue, rather than campaign diagnostics and results.

Before you hire a B2B marketing agency, ask them how they plan to improve your pipeline. They should be able to identify the parts of your funnel that require the most resource allocation. They should be able to define the marketing objectives that will influence the most revenue. And they should be able to create a tactical execution plan to deliver against those needs.

Q 2. What success have you had with Account-Based Marketing?

According to Marketo, 97 percent of B2B marketers say account-based marketing (ABM) delivers a much higher or somewhat higher ROI than other marketing strategies. Account-based marketing works because it turns the traditional B2B funnel upside down.

B2B marketers usually cast a wide net in hopes of filling the top of their funnels with as many leads as possible. Account-based marketing, on the other hand, concentrates sales and marketing resources on a narrow set of target accounts within a market, and deploys personalized campaigns that speak to the unique challenges and needs of individuals in each account. Before you choose a B2B marketing agency, ask them about their success with creating and conducting ABM campaigns for their clients.

Q 3. What experience do you have with marketing automation platforms?

The B2B marketing agency you choose should boost your revenue while lowering your costs. So, before you pick your agency, ask them about their experience with marketing automation. Marketing automation can boost sales productivity by around 15%, and reduce marketing overhead by around 12%. So ask all prospective agencies about their success with the top marketing automation tools, including Pardot, Marketo, Eloqua, Hubspot and Salesforce.

Q 4. What experience do you have with B2B lead generation web development?

Many businesses rely on their website to generate a significant number of their leads. Any B2B agency you hire should have experience writing, designing, coding and optimizing landing pages and entire websites to generate leads. Ask potential B2B agencies to describe their experience with attracting and engaging leads with useful content, effective calls-to-action, SEO best practices and compelling user experiences.

Q 5. What experience do you have with sales CRMs?

The most valuable asset in B2B lead generation is data. Data about prospects. And data about what works in turning leads into customers. Any B2B marketing agency you choose to help you grow your pipeline must understand how to optimize your sales CRM. Whether you use Salesforce/Pardot, Marketo, Hubspot or something else, your agency needs to have experience with lead qualification and scoring, dashboard development, reporting, data hygiene, CRM administration and plenty more.

Q 6. How do you track results?

What is the most important KPI in B2B lead generation? Open rate? Clickthrough rate? Conversion rate? Customer acquisition cost? Something else? What you measure affects what you manage. And what you pay for. So, before you sign a contract with a B2B marketing agency, ask them how they intend to measure their success—and yours. Make sure their KPIs match yours.

Q 7. What mix of B2B lead generation tactics do you recommend?

Someone once said that if the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. This is also true of some B2B marketing agencies. They specialize in a particular lead generation tactic, and push you to adopt their method. It might be PPC, or content marketing, or cold calling, or trade shows, or webinars. These tactics can be part of any healthy marketing mix, but beware of any B2B marketing agency that proposes only one tactic, or a narrow mix of tactics. Ask them about the mix of tactics that they recommend, and ask them to justify their recommendations with empirical results.

Q 8. Can you prove your results with case studies?

Speaking of empirical results, you can't argue with KPIs. So when you are choosing a B2B marketing agency, ask them to show you proof that their strategies and methods work. Ask to see case studies that demonstrate that the agency helped a client like you solve the same challenge you are facing, and did so in a way that generated measurable results (good results, we might add).

Q 9. Do you offer a full range of services?

Some B2B marketing agencies are heavy on strategy and light on execution. Others are great at execution but leave the strategy up to you. So, before you hire a B2B marketing agency, ask them about the scope of their services. It takes a wide range of expertise to plan, build, run and measure B2B marketing pipelines. Look for an agency that provides strategy, copywriting and content development, graphic design, video production, website design and development, website management, HTML coding, web analytics, email design, email coding, email analytics, landing page and form optimization, database management, search engine optimization, social media publishing and tracking, results reporting and analysis, and more.

Q 10. How long have you been in business?

Just because a B2B marketing agency is young doesn't mean it lacks expertise. But it will lack experience. And just because a B2B marketing agency has been in business for 10 years or more doesn't mean it has both expertise and experience. Before you hire a B2B marketing agency, find out how long they have been in the trenches. The longer, the better.



About The Winston Group

The Winston Group is a pipeline marketing agency that helps businesses adopt better marketing strategies, run more effective campaigns, and ultimately drive more revenue. Request a proposal.

