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Should you hire an agency or should you keep your SEO in-house?

This question has been asked for as long as SEO has been around, and is a relevant question to ask, especially now that many companies truly recognize its importance in establishing their online presence.

Certainly, there are advantages to doing SEO with an in-house team. But more often than not, these advantages are outweighed by the disadvantages like cost, accountability, the need for regular training and upgrades, and the need to adapt quickly to changes in online search.



First things first



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Whether you intend to build your own team or bring in an SEO agency to help you, it is crucial for you to have a basic understanding of SEO.

Why?

Knowing how SEO works in a general sense can help you avoid common mistakes that companies often fall for. One such mistake is believing that getting a higher ranking on Google is *The Goal*.

Quality SEO work can offer you more than that. It can help you solidify your brand's reputation while providing your company's website with a steady stream of traffic.

And if you are planning on enlisting the aid of an SEO firm, a keen understanding of it will allow you to better choose which company to partner with and avoid getting scammed.

Hiring an SEO agency: 6 things to look into

If you decide that bringing in an SEO agency is best for your company, there are a few important things that you need to look into.

Duration of the service agreement

A company that requires a short contract usually uses tactics that can bring about good results initially. But over the long term, these practices can [hurt your website's health](#).



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On the converse side of the coin, agencies that require clients to sign long term agreements have a tendency to deliver subpar results. In short, they use these long term contracts to justify the sluggish pace by which they deliver promised results.

The ideal length for a service agreement is about six months. Why six months? Over this time frame, you should see a marked improvement in the performance of your website.

Price

One misconception many companies have when hiring an agency is believing that they have nothing to lose by hiring one that offers the cheapest service.

As the old adage goes, you get what you pay for. In SEO, that can mean taking shortcuts and accepting shoddy work that would have far-ranging effects on your company website. Ultimately, you can end up paying more than you should by bringing in another company to repair the damage that has been done.

I have had a former client witness his website get entirely de-indexed by Google. The reason? He chose to work with another provider recommended by a friend. This provider promised results that were essentially too good to be true at a fraction of the cost of our services.

Guarantees

Reputable agencies do not offer ranking guarantees. Why? Making guarantees is both unethical and dangerous.



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When an agency offers to get your website on top of search rankings for a specific period of time, it is highly likely that it will use dubious strategies that work for a limited time and cause long-term damage to your website.

Reputation

Before [hiring an SEO agency](#), you should set aside ample time to interview its past and current clients.

The experience of these clients can provide you with great insight into the agency's quality of work.

Research and development

The SEO landscape is constantly changing and evolving. As such, agencies need to invest enough resources that will allow them to keep pace with changes.

Having a dedicated research and development team allows an agency to monitor changes and test strategies that can yield the best outcomes for clients.

Client base

Having a sizeable client base allows an agency to gain access to more data and leverage its experience with its customers to learn more about different websites and industries.



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Questions to ask an SEO company

Asking the following questions to an SEO company will help you make an informed choice.

- What are the processes that you use to attain the goals of your clients? Why do you use these processes?
- How often will you provide reports? What are the metrics that you use in your reports? Why do you use those metrics?
- What resources does my company have to provide to your agency?
- I'm not getting good results from your agency. What are you going to do to turn things around?



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Things to do before signing a contract

Before making a commitment to an SEO firm, there are a few things that you need to do before putting down your signature.

Check their case studies

The agency should be able to provide you proof of successful outcomes for their clients. In an ideal scenario, your chosen agency should be able to demonstrate how they were able to work with a business similar to yours.

Contact references



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Call up both past and current clients. They can alert you to red flags that may have slipped past by you.

Know what their deliverables are

In short, know what you are paying for.

Ask what they need from you

Your relationship with your agency should be collaborative. While the SEO company will be doing most of the legwork, it will require some assistance from you and your team.

Check their existing client's portfolio

With a backlink checker tool, you can check the agency's client portfolio. The backlink checker tool can tell you whether the agency uses quality tactics or resorts to spammy techniques.

SEO has a huge impact on your business. And as such, the task of finding the right SEO company should not be taken lightly.

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