

AVOID THE ONLINE COWBOYS

Secrets to avoid their lassos



Is the marketing industry just taking you for a ride?

Seven Questions to ask your marketing company,
and know what you should be demanding.



It can be difficult to navigate the seemingly never-ending waves of marketing information.

Just take a look at your LinkedIn connections – chances are every second contact is some kind of digital marketing whiz. But unfortunately, almost everyone who ever needs to work with a marketing agency isn't a marketing expert.

So how are you supposed to identify any red flags? And how do you know that the agency you've been working with is going to give you quantifiable, transparent results and outcomes? Ultimately, will they help you understand what all of the jargon means?

We've put together a common sense guide to helping you find the right partner and **avoid the online cowboys**. It will help you see the potential if your online marketing agency passes the sniff test – and if they don't – we would of course love to have a chat.



Anthony
Baxter

Q1 DO YOU REPORT ON CAMPAIGN RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)?

Your online marketing agency needs to provide regular reporting across all campaigns (minimum once per month).

- Are they providing reports with all of the stats and information you need to make better marketing decisions?
- Are the reports easy to understand, and do they tell you exactly what your campaign has delivered past the click?

Your online marketing agency should report on all activity and show you the number of leads generated from your website. A good agency that asks the right questions and understands your sales process can calculate your close ratio and calculate how many paying customers you should have generated in any month. A great agency can do this, and allow you to listen to all phone call leads, track back all email leads and calculate exactly what you have made from your campaign so there is no grey area.

Don't let online cowboys blur the lines of results and awareness, confuse your campaigns performance with technical jargon or not provide the information you need to assess the campaigns success. If you cannot see the results through your reporting, chances are they aren't great and your agency is hiding something from you.

Q2 DO YOU GET THE IMPORTANCE OF PHONE CALL LEADS?

The importance of phone calls to generating sales leads for a business can't be understated.

- Are they tracking all of these including the offline phone call event?
- Do you have the ability to listen to these calls, and save them for further internal use such as training and development?
- How are you recording these calls?

All leads are important, but for most service based businesses – phone calls are the main point of contact. Even for product and e-commerce websites, phone calls are still a very important part of the mix. Leads are the lifeblood of your company whether they are emails, web form submissions, live chat submissions or calls.

Your online marketing agency should be able to track ALL of these including the offline phone call event. If they are recording these calls there are right and wrong ways of doing so. Cowboys looking to cut-corners will create a duplicate copy of your website to swap out your phone number and record the call. You need to make sure this doesn't happen, and you are utilising your own website to swap out the phone number in real time.

Q3 DO YOU KNOW HOW TO SUPPORT MULTIPLE BRANCHES AND SITES?

Your business exists where your clients can reach you, physically at your premise or online on your website.

- Current targeting needs to be thought out carefully to ensure the campaign is setup for success.

Multi-site businesses require specific local targeting to your campaign. That means a national approach can sometimes be detrimental to the campaign and potentially you could be wasting large portions of your budget. Make sure targeting is setup specifically for your target area catchment (the area of which you can service).

I typically fly to Wellington and Christchurch once a month, and time and time again will notice Auckland businesses running nationwide campaigns to these areas but do not provide their good or service here. This is wasting valuable marketing dollars which could be routed to your catchment area to drive you more local business. Don't let online cowboys rush your campaign setup and take a "cookie-cutter" approach. Make sure location targeting is setup correctly.

Q4 WHAT LEVEL OF OPTIMISATION DO YOU OFFER?

The power of "campaign optimisation" can't be underestimated.

- Campaign optimisation is crucial to increase the efficiency of your campaign spend online.
- Clever optimisation involves focussing budget on what's working, taking budget away from what's not, increasing traffic with the same budget and changing bids throughout the day.

The online cowboys tend to run for the hills when asked about campaign optimisation. Typically, they lack the experience, technology or both to properly optimise a campaign, adopting a set-and-forget attitude and making changes to your campaign in a reactive struggle to keep you happy when things aren't working out.

Optimisation is crucial to campaign performance, and getting this wrong or running a manual campaign with limited scope could result in potential business slipping through the cracks. Cowboys might cut corners in these areas, but the ultimate cost of doing so can be great to you.

Q5

DO YOU HAVE ANY TESTIMONIAL CLIENTS YOU HAVE SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH?

Rushing decisions to choose an online marketing agency can be disastrous.

- Do they have customer testimonials?
- Can you speak to some of their clients?
- Can you view some case studies proving success?

Most reputable online marketing agencies will happily get you in contact with existing clients you can speak to or at least point you to a testimonial page on their website or pass on case studies. These client success stories are important in building confidence that their sales pitch is based on real results and facts. Spend time to compare agencies, talking to clients in a similar industry to you and understanding the journey they went through with this agency.

Online cowboys may have limited or none of these. Make sure you check website testimonials to make sure they are current clients, using the same service you are looking for and don't take images or old testimonials on their website at face value.



Q6 DO YOU OFFER FLEXIBLE CONTRACT TERMS?

You should always be given the chance to "test the waters".

- Don't sign long term contracts with your online marketing agency.
- You are not signing a mobile contract and receiving a free phone over 24 months. Relationships need to be results and service focussed.

All marketing campaigns should be results orientated. At Firefly we strongly believe that customers will remain loyal with positive results and excellent service. That's why we've crafted our campaign contracts to 4 months which gives us (the agency) the time to optimize the campaign and prove a result – typically our optimization journey follows a 4 month increase, and It gives you (the client) a short period to test the waters, see the results you need to build a long term relationship.

Online cowboys typically try and lock you in for "12 month +" contracts which can be a high risk move if the relationship doesn't work out. The power is in your hands as the customer.

Q7 SO, BY WORKING WITH YOU, I AM WORKING WITH GOOGLE?

Beware of convincing sales pitches and reps looking for that instant sale over the phone or email.

Here's some horror stories we have come across working in this space...

"I work for Google and I can help get your business to position #1"

- Google does not offer online marketing services direct to the public. Google relies on Google Partners like Firefly to provide these services. Cowboys like this need to be dismissed, and brought to the attention of Google.

"I can get you 1000's of visitors to your website and increase your traffic"

- Traffic is good, but where is this traffic coming from? On the internet there are websites where you can purchase 1000 visits to your website for \$30 USD. This traffic is spam traffic and holds no real value to your business.

"We can get 400 links from other websites which is crucial for SEO for only ____ \$ per month".

- Avoid these cowboys for the light of day. Spam links that can be purchased from sites such as Fiverr can be detrimental for your website and earn you a Google penalty. Links are earned, and created in a very specific, and relevant way.

SEVEN QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR ONLINE MARKETING AGENCY.

The New Zealand digital market is full of cowboys who class themselves as experts, without offering results, experience, or even transparency to your valuable budget spends. Firefly Search constantly help with client horror stories who were promised the world, and given a tombstone.

It's easy to hear these horror stories, and assume that it's inevitable, or even that there's no way to see it coming, but at Firefly we want to make sure you're making educated choices, no matter where you go.

When you're looking for a marketing agency to get your business or brand out there, you first need to look at what they're offering. A standard package these days should include a variety of different digital marketing options, such as but not limited to:

SEO

PPC (Google Adwords)

GDN (Google Display Network Advertising including Display and Remarketing)

Social media strategy, content and paid media

Analytics and data management (live reporting, call tracking and offline events)

Website optimisation

CRO (Conversion Rate Optimisation and feedback)

Email Marketing

We've tried to break these down into fairly transparent categories, but you see, each of these is a specific trade. Although a plumber and an electrician may work on the same house, you wouldn't hire the same person for both. It's in this area you need to start asking your prospective marketing agency some questions.



YOU NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN DELIVER ON WHAT THEY SAY AND TAKE YOUR BUSINESS TO NEW HEIGHTS

You need to find an agency with a team of experts that focus on their own areas of expertise and come together to give you the best result possible with a tangible way to measure all of your results. Each campaign is set out with a different focus, a different goal with some being pure lead generators, others designed to build trust with your audience or create brand awareness in your industry. Once you're sure the agency you're looking into can offer you that team of experts, it's time to look at whether the results will be measurable, quantifiable, and transparent.

Firefly have been working with companies of all shapes and sizes in New Zealand & Australia. We're proud of the fact that we make sure we take the time to sit down with our clients and break down what we can offer, and what is being delivered. And at the end of every campaign you'll be provided with quantifiable, measurable, and transparent results that won't be bogged down with marketing jargon.

If you're looking for a better solution to digital marketing, one of our team would love to come and have a chat about exactly how we can improve your online results, and we'll bring the coffee.

Get in touch for more information or to arrange a free consultation.

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