

How financial institutions can evaluate marketing agencies

Article



The news: Budgetary or staffing constraints lead many financial institutions (FIs) to rely on third-party partners to meet their marketing needs. Knowing how to evaluate them is key to FIs getting the most bang for their buck.

Evaluation criteria for marketing partners: Here's what FIs should consider when weighing their choices.

- **Industry-specific expertise:** Credit union marketing agency On the Mark Strategies says that partnering with a marketing specialist with a deep understanding of the financial services regulatory environment and unique audience ensures targeted messaging, more effective campaigns, and increased consumer acquisition.

In addition, Forbes recommends looking into an agency's track record and inner workings, including:

- **Success metrics:** The agency should clearly outline how it will measure success, focusing not just on clicks and impressions, but also on how these translate into tangible business growth and ROI.
- **Strategy creation process:** The agency should be able to balance its expertise with the FI's business insights.
- **Service range and adaptability:** Consider whether the agency offers specialized services or a full-service package, and ensure it can adapt to evolving needs as the FI's business grows.

Why 'local' matters: Marketing partners don't always need to be local, On the Mark Strategies argues. We believe whether an FI should prioritize local partners depends on:

- **Its target audience:** If a FI is trying to execute a highly local marketing strategy—for example, if a large bank wants to better understand a small, local community—partnering with an agency from that community could be advantageous.
- **Its budget:** Smaller, local agencies or those without physical offices could offer pricing benefits that large marketing agencies can't.
- **The PR:** Partnering with local businesses could be part of a certain FI's brand strategy.

Key takeaways: Well before choosing marketing partners, FIs should set well-defined goals for what they want to get from a partnership. Whether FIs go with major marketing agencies or local marketing partners, or even keep marketing in-house, will depend on their budgets and which agencies can best help them accomplish their goals.