

# How to choose a digital marketing agency

 By Joshua Maraney

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Worldwide spending on digital advertising is expected to top \$485bn by the end of next year - signifying just how significant this medium has become as companies look to increase customer awareness in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. But it is one thing to realise the importance of digital, and another thing entirely to find an agency that best aligns to the organisational goals.



Source: [www.unsplash.com](https://www.unsplash.com)

Some companies want an agency that offers the full spectrum of digital services while others might only be looking for a specific skill set. And while the obvious caveat is budget, the most obvious way to identify a trusted digital marketing partner is its willingness to understand the business requirements.

This is especially important for those organisations who do not appreciate the breadth of the digital marketing spectrum and might easily get overwhelmed by an agency trying to sell a full suite of services that may not be required.



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Of course, whether it is a start-up or a multinational with hundreds of employees, the business owner and management need to decide on how results will be measured when going the digital marketing route.

Will it be an increase in sales or a strengthening of positive sentiment, or how about improving engagement rates on social media? And then there are things like Google search results and SEO to consider as well.

## Working knowledge

The journey starts by identifying an agency that understands the industry the business is operating in. Digital marketing that works in the property market will differ radically from those tactics that resonate well in the ICT sector.

Different customer segments require different digital services. At a fundamental level, an agency should have some customers in the same industry to showcase its experience, highlight its success, and demonstrate best practices.

And even if the agency is a sectoral specialist, it must take the time to audit and assess how the customer business is placed in that industry. A small, community property agency might be looking to make only an impact in a few residential areas while a national player might be searching for ways to increase its profile across the country.

## Digital skills

Building from there, the right digital marketing agency will have the skills and toolsets in place to modernise the customer strategy in a way that yields the best results. The business must focus on achieving its strategic objectives while the agency will take over the digital marketing function.

A starting point when it comes to searching for the digital marketing skills a company needs is the agency Web sites. The reputable agencies should have reviews by previous customers, case studies, and even a logo section where the current client list is highlighted. The case studies will highlight the portfolio of work undertaken, and the successes of the projects.

## Informed decisions

For its part, the company should not go in 'cold' when meeting with a potential digital marketing partner. It should come with a list of ideas to accomplish the results required. Is the agency willing to listen to different ideas or is it too set in its own ways to take suggestions from the customer?

This provides a litmus test for the company when it comes to identifying the right culture fit with a potential digital marketing agency. As part of this, customer service and service level agreements must be key in progressing beyond the initial conversation and translating that into business deliverables.



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Selecting the right digital marketing agency does not have to be difficult. By keeping these basic tips in mind, a business will be well on the way to building its digital brand in South Africa.

## ABOUT JOSHUA MARANEY

Joshua Maraney owns and runs Top Click Media. Top Click Media are Premier Google Partners and are Google Ads and SEO specialists

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