

Evaluating and Working with a Marketing Professional....and Make it Work!

AccelerAction

Objective:

This session will focus on to know if you're ready to hire a marketing professional, what to look for in a candidate and real life strategies to make the relationship a success in your firm.

Agenda:

- How do you know if your firm is ready to hire a marketing professional
- If you're not ready, does it make sense to outsource?
- What you need to know before you hire
- How to hire a marketing professional
- What to look for in a candidate
- How to help your marketing professional be a success; avoid common stumbling blocks

History of marketing professionals in professional services firms

- Used to promote a secretary
- No job descriptions, no accountability, no budget overview
- Marketing and business development has shifted the culture in professional services firms
- More accepting of the position, no 'stigma'
- Skill sets of applicants began to shift – strong writing and communications
- Today's candidates are experts in the professional services marketing arena. Many have advanced degrees and understand how marketing needs to integrate with your business goals to be successful.

How do you know if your firm is ready to hire?

- Firm has aggressive growth goals
- Partners are spending way too much time doing marketing related administrative tasks
- Opportunities are falling through the cracks
- Poor tracking of business development efforts (proposals, RFPs, etc)
- Professionals doing an inadequate job of trying to be marketers
- Budget – you have dollars to invest
- Culture has shifted
- Nothing is getting done
- Definition of insanity: Doing the same things over and over again and expecting the same results

If you're not ready, does it make sense to outsource? It could!

- No one is available to manage the marketing professional
- Not a big enough budget
- Not enough time to invest in hiring and managing

- Don't have a strategic focus..and need one
- May consider a combination of outsourcing strategy, creative, web production and doing coordination internally

What to know before you hire

- Just because your competitor has hired a professional marketing professional, doesn't mean you should
- Can you have a part time professional?
- Be very clear about what you want: A marketing strategies or a marketing coordinator (and the difference between the two)
- How are you going to hold the MD accountable?
- Develop a job description that clearly identifies short and long-term expectations

How to hire a marketing professional

- Use professional associations (AAM, SMPS)
- Get the word out with your own firm.....word of mouth
- LinkedIn
- Traditional methods
- Do you want candidates who only have professional service background?

Qualities in an ideal candidate:

- Great people skills
- Good written and speaking skills
- Patience with professionals
- An inquisitive mind about the profession - always want to learn more, asking questions
- Project management skills
- Professional firm experience
- Deadline driven
- Budget management experience
- Thick skin!
- Sample job descriptions

How to help your marketing professional be a success

- Clearly articulated responsibilities
- Reports to the top
- A 'seat at the table' – They need to understand the firm's goals
- Budget responsibility

Major stumbling blocks to be aware of

- Understanding this person is NOT an accountant but a marketer
- Not viewed as a professional because there is no CPA after his or her name

- The role of the marketing professional is not communicated to the firm (or being a party planner)
- Overloading the marketing professional with projects, initiatives that are NOT truly marketing or business development
- No reward or bonus system

Key Takeaways

- You need to make a long term commitment, not a one or two year commitment (it takes 3 years to change a corporate culture)
- Setting expectations early is critical
- Professional firm experience is valuable
- Your marketing professional needs a 'seat at the table', not lip service
- Need to allocate a marketing budget not just a salary