



hanapin marketing

*27 Signs You Need
A New Agency*

Data Driven Reach. Human Driven Impact.

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DOES YOUR AGENCY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING?

Working with an agency can be a scary thing. It's not always easy to know if the business relationship is working in a favorable manner. Transparency and good communication are virtues in any relationship, but especially for a relationship with an agency. When you work with an agency, there are certain things you should keep an eye on. Take notes on the following list and evaluate whether your agency is throwing out any "red flags."

1

Lack of transparency and communication.

An agency should be transparent with you at all times. If your agency isn't on the ball with communication and transparency, then it's probable that they're hiding something from you. This is a clear red-flag that they don't know what they're doing. Companies don't stay silent on positive results and they shouldn't on negative results either. When things go south, the best companies will own up to it, tell you ahead of time, and remain proactive until your hitting your goals and beyond. Your success is their success. If you feel like you are being left in the dark and the agency won't work it out with you, its best to walk away. Transparency equals trust and if you don't have it, chances are, you'll never have a great relationship with your agency. You should always expect 100% transparency. Period.

2

They don't give administrative account access, or access period

If your agency won't let you access your own accounts, it is very likely that there is something they are hiding from you or don't want you to see. As the client, you should be the copilot, not be locked out of your accounts.



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3

They are focused on specific metrics, rather than account performance as a whole

It is too easy for an agency to hide behind metrics. They could be blinding you with pretty numbers and percentages, when the account as a whole is failing miserably and costing you thousands more than it should be. If your agency is only giving you a piece of the pie, ask for the whole thing!

4

They don't allow you access to your Account Manager directly (by email or phone)

Not only should you be able to call your specific agent with any questions or concerns you have, but you should always have access to several agents and other people working on your account so that you will have constant contact and never be left wanting for answers. This includes actually having answers for you when you do call, and responding in a timely manner.

5

They have no way to accurately track work completed in your account

As with any other progress-driven account in business, you should have at least a weekly report that gives new statistics with descriptions of what these numbers define, and a detailed outline of a plan to either continue as is or implement solutions. If your agency refuses this courtesy (or worse - never even mentions it) this is a big red flag for your bank account.

6

The sales process took place over email without meetings

You should not trust a business partner if you have never seen their face. If you have never met your agent in person, the level of trust in your professional relationship will suffer greatly, and consequently so will your account.

7

They guarantee results

This is a surefire way to tell that your agency is full of it. Nobody can guarantee results in PPC marketing, but we can project the likelihood of lots of successful conversions. They should, of course, be able to project that you have a good enough campaign running to make a difference in your online sales, but guaranteeing specific results is a dead-end that will only leave you wanting.



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8

Their fee looks “too good to be true”

If it looks like a duck, and it walks like a duck and it quacks like a duck...

Beware of “too good to be true” situations when your company’s finances are involved. Anytime you wonder if something is really possible, chances are you’re being deceived. Watch out for this, as it could end up costing you a whole lot of money and hardship.

9

They can’t (or won’t) provide references

There is no situation in the workforce where not having references is an acceptable situation, and surely wouldn’t get you hired as an individual. So why should it be any different for an agency? No references, no deal.

10

They don’t ask for/clarify goals at the beginning of the relationship

This is the kind of agency that is probably not focused on your best interests as a client, but rather generating lots and lots of leads so that they can charge you as much as possible. Just like any relationship: communication is the key to success. If your agency has no idea what you’re looking to achieve, (or worse - doesn’t care!) then it is likely they will not be able to fulfill your needs as a client.

11

They report suspicious timelines

Some projects take longer than others, but if your agency is telling you that a simple task is going to take three weeks, you might want to start asking some questions. Likewise, if they claim to be able to complete a complicated change to your account in two days, they may not be doing a very good job.

12

They’re a “full service” marketing agency

If an agency describes themselves as “full service,” it can mean two things: one, that they do not specialize in any one area, and therefore cannot provide the accuracy and detail in any one area of marketing that a specialized agency could. Or two, that they are such a large agency that they can have a team that specializes in every area of marketing, meaning that you would never have a direct contact at the agency and may be easily forgotten or have your needs postponed for a bigger ticket client.



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13

They increase budget without presenting a plan or reason why

Budgets are the main way that companies can track and control their spending on any one expense. If there is a sudden change in your budget provided by the agency without any explanation, this is a major cause for alarm. When faced with a sudden and unexplained budget change, you should start asking where the other budget went, and what the plan for each part of the new budget is.

14

They give you a single point of contact

Only having one person to communicate with in your agency is not only a factor in slowing the process of getting anything done, but could also prove to be a major problem if that one POC is unavailable for extended periods of time. Make sure you have more than one or even just two POCs in your agency to ensure that you can always be in control of your account.

15

They don't ask for any backend data

If your agency isn't asking for this information, then it is likely that they really don't care whether anything comes from the clicks they generate as long as the lead happens. They should be asking you (the client): after the PPC has caused someone to click, what happens next? If they fill out a lead generating form, are they a good lead? How many people turn into repeat customers? How many people end up coming into a physical location or making a phone call? Most of this information is privy to (only) the business - but a good PPC manager will be interested in the "real world" conversions that their ads are generating.

16

They don't ask any background question during the onboarding process

Part of creating a new PPC account is the specifications that you learn from asking questions during onboarding. Without asking these questions, accounts are generalized and nearly identical for vastly differing companies. Will PPC be the main marketing function? How familiar is the client with PPC marketing? What will count as a conversion? Onboarding an existing account is similar, but the questions should focus more on current statistics versus goals: What are KPI goals? Is performance on target or is a key metric missing the mark? Which issue is of highest priority? Have you been working in-house or with an agency? If you are not asked these kinds of questions, chances are your account is lacking individuality.



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They don't have a structured on boarding process

The process of onboarding should be structured whether it is for a client new to PPC marketing or one with an already existing account. When onboarding a client: ask relevant & necessary questions, confirm often that both sides are on the same page and don't make assumptions about anything. Make sure that the methods of communication are sufficient, that communication is complete and that long and short-term goals are both addressed and planned for. If there is no structure to your agency's onboarding process, some serious holes may be left to address when it is too late.

18

They limit you to only tracking a certain amount of conversions, and won't include additional metrics

Not being able to see the progress of every aspect of your account is a major problem. If your agency is not allowing you access to every piece of your PPC ad progress, it is likely that they are covering up some fault not seen by conversions. If you are limited to viewing a certain amount of conversions, start asking questions that pertain to the others you aren't seeing, and ask for comparisons to those other conversions. Not being able to access every metric available in your account is a major problem and should be met head on before the account is completely out of your control.

19

They are taking short cuts building out and creating your account

Each account should take priority for account managers. If they are cutting corners and leaving out important steps in making your account as good as it possibly could be, then you should demand that they start over. Missing steps in the foundation building of an account only means disaster for it later on in its life.

20

They don't believe in ad copy testing

This is a HUGE red flag, as testing is one of the only ways of trial and error that allow the AM to see what works and what doesn't for your particular account. While some keywords may have worked well in the past, the nature of your account might make it so that these keywords don't work as well now. The preferences of the audience may have changed. The demand may have changed. Without testing, you will not be able to tell if one kind of ad could lead to more conversions than what you are currently using, and could cost you a lot of money.



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They only have limited or don't have any understanding of your attribution
If your agency can't explain to you where your conversions are coming from, especially if you have a limited knowledge of your own attribution, it is almost certain that your account (and conversions) will suffer. For example, if you can see that you aren't receiving a lot of clicks in one metric, you may want to pause it so that you won't lose money. A good account manager will be able to tell you whether this metric is still generating leads or not - if they don't understand your attribution, then it is likely that they will do whatever you say without researching it first.

22

They want you to sign a long contract with restrictive termination clauses
You don't ever want to back yourself into a corner. Make sure, before you sign a contract with an agency, that you can get away from them if they start costing you excessive amounts of money or stress. If not, don't sign.

23

They are reactive, not proactive
The mark of a good agency is their ability to stop problems before they even happen. Occasionally, this will include some damage control, but on the whole your agency should be able to foresee problems with your account and head them off before they become an expensive mistake.

24

They are unwilling to share information
Communication between agency and client is the most important key to success. Without sufficient communication, the understanding and cooperation of the account suffers, and it can cost you a hefty chunk of change to make up for the lack of progressive interaction in your professional relationship with your agency. If your company refuses to share information with you about your own account, it should set off some alarms in your head that something might not be going according to plan, and they don't want you to find out about it.

25

They constantly replace your AM
There are various problems with this. First of all, your main point of contact will never be consistent. You will notice that your account suffers from exposure to a different point of view and from changes to a person who may not have been privy to your previous AM's plan of action. If you keep getting assigned new AMs, then it's probably time to switch agencies.



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They don't provide the kind of feedback that you need

If you can't get constructive feedback for your account, you will never know what needs to change on your end to make your campaigns more effective. If you have killer ads but a terrible landing page, you are not likely to get as many conversions. The problem: if no one tells you how to fix your landing page to make it more accessible or attractive to prospective customers, the issue will never change, but continue to manifest new problems as your page gets more and more views from your ad leads.

27

They don't report changes

Changes in your account, positive or negative, mean that something that was created in your account (a new ad, bid, etc.) has altered the way your account is received. Knowing about these changes can help you to make decisions about duplicating or suspending whatever that action was to benefit your ads.

BE A TEAM

Working with an agency should feel like you're working on a team. Both should be providing the necessary information to succeed and working towards the same overall goals. If you find that some of these red flags are coming up, start asking more questions and try to get to the bottom of the issue. If your agency won't work with you and is keeping you in the dark, then it's probably time to find a new agency.





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