

Social Media Comes Up Short For Agency Prospecting

Contributed by eMarketer
Friday, 21 October 2011
Last Updated Friday, 21 October 2011

Email, newsletters top online sources for online lead generation

eMarketer expects US online ad spending to reach \$31.3 billion this year, growth one imagines would position ad agencies for gains in new clients and business expansion overall.

But according to new business relationship management firms RSW/US and RSW/AgencySearch, more than a third (35%) of US ad agencies are having trouble generating new business even in spite of such spending growth.

When it comes to identifying prospects online, RSW/US and RSW/Agency found the vast majority (95%) of US ad agencies used social media to identify potential clients.

But the results of those efforts were modest at best. Most agencies attributed 10% or less of their new business revenue to social media outreach. In fact, 88% of agencies are seeing 30% or less of their total revenue coming from social media outreach.

The report found agency blogs were the most effective social media tool for uncovering new business opportunities, more so than standard social media channels like Facebook and LinkedIn.

While agency blogs appeared to be effective, less than half (41%) of client-side marketers said they followed such blogs. This appears to highlight a discrepancy in agency performance and prospect communication preference; however, it may also suggest that blog-originated leads—though perhaps fewer in number—may be more qualified or client-ready.

Email newsletters were also productive lead generation tools and were the method of preferred agency-initiated contact by prospects.

Though US agencies appear to invest significant time and energy on social media, only 2% of prospects preferred to receive communications through Facebook and just 16% through LinkedIn.

One reason potential clients might be less inclined to communicate with agencies via social media is the perceived one-sidedness of such communication, highlighted by the fact that 79% of prospects said agencies most often talk about themselves when trying to initiate conversation.

Overall, agencies have room to improve how they approach and initiate conversations with potential clients. Though the majority of marketers prefer to make contact with agencies through email, agencies shouldn't abandon their social media-based lead generation practices. Rather, agencies would be wise to increase the quality of their email content and social media conversations in order to deliver what marketers want through multiple touchpoints.

20 October 2011