

The marketing industry's secret weapon: Supplemental staffing

 By [Matthew Jankelow](#)

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How to give your marketing team the skills it needs, when it needs them.

New technologies, and particularly the explosion in mobility, social media and analytics, are opening up seemingly unlimited possibilities for marketers. New ways to interact with customers, current and prospective; vast new sources of valuable customer data to hone campaigns and craft personalised offers... the potential is seemingly unlimited.

The challenge for marketing directors and managers is twofold. The first is the perennial one of budget. Especially in today's economic climate, marketing budgets are rising at a much slower rate than expectations for what is expected. In particular, headcounts are typically hard to get increased, even if budgets do rise.

The second challenge is access to scarce skills. Many of these new marketing opportunities require specialist skills, such as B2B social media marketing or sophisticated analytics and modelling. Very often, individuals with these skills are difficult to find, or are unwilling to accept corporate positions. Frequently, too, marketing departments may need these types of skill on an intermittent, project-by-project basis.

Get smart

Some of the smartest companies in the world are using supplemental staffing as a way to overcome these challenges and realise the opportunities that new channels and technologies are opening up. It's really a way to have your cake and eat it.

I think that supplemental staffing solutions can be customised to meet a client's specific needs, be it a specialist resource for a three-month social media or segmentation project, or indeed to take on the tactical execution of a project to free up permanent employees to focus on their own areas of speciality.

As we all know, employing a new person is fairly high risk: it's not just a question of finding the right skill set - there are also questions of team dynamics and overall cultural fit. At a strategic level, there is a strong case to be made for outsourcing highly specialised or easily ring-fenced, tactical jobs.

Much greater reach

This approach gives even a relatively small marketing team much greater reach in terms of what it can do, combined with the ability to scale capacity up or down depending on the broader business strategy. Supplemental staffing also allows a

marketing director to access the latest innovations, remaining at the cutting edge of marketing without excessive need for investment.

This approach can help marketing teams deliver on increasing business demands without increasing headcount, and access high-value skills in the most effective way. To be successful, though, marketing leaders need to ensure that they put the necessary processes in place to ensure that these supplemental resources are properly managed and integrated into the existing performance management systems. It's also advisable to ensure that knowledge is transferred into the internal team so that, at a minimum, its ability to strategise around the new capabilities is kept current.

ABOUT MATTHEW JANKELOW

Matthew Jankelow is the CEO of VentureWeb, which began as a digital agency, and now is establishing itself as a leading supplier of outsourced marketing services to global clients.
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