SOLVING THE DIGITAL MARKETING SKILLS GAP

Digital marketing is a critical piece in the growth of every business, and it's transforming the way solution providers do business in multiple ways:

1. Managed services and cloud solutions push partners beyond geographic boundaries of regional face-to-face selling
2. Today's prospects do most research online before engaging a partner, and they're just as likely to be a line of business executive as an IT executive
3. There is a skills gap in the messaging and activities needed to reach this new buyer
4. Unique resources and executive support are crucial to bridge the gap between marketing activities partners still pursue versus the ones they know are strategic

> *"We have 80% of our revenues from existing customers – we must pivot to grow new customer business. If vendors don't match us 1:1 then they are not investing with us (in that transition)."*
>
> *-Solution Provider Perspective*

Most Partners spend less than **30%** of marketing budget on digital

PARTNER CAPABILITIES & STAFFING CONSTRAINTS

Company Capabilities

- **84%** Lack marketing automation to track ROI or optimize digital marketing
- **44%** Have not engaged an outside firm to assist with marketing planning in the past 12-18 months
- **19%** Of those who engaged an outside firm, chose a digital marketing agency

Staffing Constraints

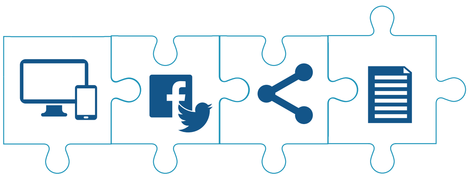
- **82%** Of marketing employees have no formal marketing degree
- **76%** Cited employees focused on, but NOT dedicated to marketing
- **38%** Companies plan to hire more full-time marketing employees in the next 12-18 months

MARKETING ACTIVITIES PARTNERS PURSUE VS. ACTIVITIES PARTNERS RANK AS MOST STRATEGIC

Partner Priorities

- **TRADE SHOWS:** #1 activity in terms of both time spent and budget spent
- **PAID SEARCH:** Bottom of list of activities partners engage in for all but the largest partners
- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Only about ¼ partners track followers or consumption of online digital content
- **CONTENT MARKETING AND SEO:** valued by partners but not high on the list of things they actually do

MARKETING SKILLS PARTNERS DESIRE



- **67%** Digital Marketing
- **60%** Social Marketing
- **55%** Marketing Technology
- **43%** Content Development

Help your partners fill the gap with more pieces of the puzzle.

5 DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES VENDORS SHOULD OFFER

1. **Automation and Process**
   Vendors must help partners build process and acquire/share automation platforms, as lead nurturing and tracking are the foundation of digital marketing.
2. **Digital Marketing Skills Training**
   Broaden training outside the scope of just technical to include skills in SEO and lead nurturing supported by content marketing and social media.
3. **Partner Managed Marketing Campaigns**
   One size does not fit all. Vendors must create a balance between self-service marketing and fully managed campaigns partners can sign-onto.
4. **External Resource Introductions**
   Connect partners with content developers, strategic marketing and branding firms and digital agencies to guide them and maximize marketing investments.
5. **Business Narrative**
   Build content and messaging that supports partner shift to vertical industry marketing, with an emphasis on business-focused solutions to line-of-business executives.

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