



Thrive!

# 50 things recruitment leaders need to ask their marketing departments

*... but didn't know to ask*

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## Let's get real – Do you know how to measure the success of your marketing?

There's no shame as a recruitment leader to say that you don't know what 'good' looks like in marketing. Beyond your branding and social media content, it's unlikely you've gotten under the hood of marketing and the complexities, data and analytics of a digital age. But chances are you're struggling to see how your marketing efforts – and importantly your marketing investment – are having an impact on your bottom line.

In a digital-first world, there's no hiding. From your website to your social media, email, paid campaigns and even job boards, data doesn't lie and instead, can open your eyes to the opportunities and possibilities of marketing as a true business development partner and growth driver.

**Whether you're just hiring your first marketer or managing a team of ten, we hope to arm you with your need-to-know questions to ask your marketer to determine if your marketing is truly moving the dial.**

**Kristie Perrotte**  
Managing Director

## Questions to establish marketing as a strategic partner

It's time we shed the reputation of marketing as the colouring in department, out-of-touch with operational and business development goals and the gatekeeper for jazzing up pitch decks or making pretty social media posts.

Today, backed by data and digital platforms that allow you to target and amplify your reach while making your recruiters more efficient and productive, your marketers need to be at the decision-making table.

### The onus is on both parties:

1. Recruitment leaders need to share their financial and strategic business plans
2. Marketers need to deliver data-led and KPI-bound strategies aligned to these goals; and in turn...
3. Leaders need to then embrace and champion marketing, cascading through the organisation and creating partnerships not silos with sales and BD teams



To get strategic marketing support, you need to ask strategic questions. Here are a few to ask your marketing lead or team.

### **1. Is our marketing plan aligned with our business goals?**

Too often marketers are not informed about the wider operational and growth targets. This prevents them from delivering a programme that's aligned with business objectives.

### **2. How many client leads did marketing yield last year?**

Marketing should be delivering leads – whether clients who submit a vacancy on the website, call via tracked numbers or demonstrate buyer's intent through email and/or multichannel touchpoints. Without this information it's nearly impossible to determine whether marketing is having a tangible impact.

### **3. What is our cost per lead?**

Once you know how many leads were delivered, it's time to work out the cost per lead and ideally, the cost per lead by channel. Your marketing team should be able to determine your client

marketing spend and divide it by the number of leads delivered. Better yet, they can determine what channel yields the best leads at the most efficient cost.

### **4. If anticipating X% growth, is the marketing budget sufficient to secure the candidates/clients/internal consultants required to achieve this?**

This question can only be answered if you're measuring customer acquisition metrics and what marketing delivered as a percentage of total business. Armed with this number, you can determine what marketing needs to deliver to support growth and whether the marketing budget is sufficient to enable this.

### **5. If you had £X additional budget, what would you do?**

Recruitment marketing notoriously errs towards organic (free) social media and there often exists a reticence towards investing in paid channels or initiatives. However, when marketing can demonstrate its return on investment, it quickly justifies any additional spend.



## Understanding which metrics matter

Recruiters love a bit of data! And recruitment leaders live by it! As such, it should also become a central focus for your recruitment marketing team.

There's data and then there's data. Don't be tempted to get pulled into vanity metrics like social likes or shares; the data available to digital marketers is as vast as it is mind blowing. From website traffic and conversion metrics, to heatmaps and A/B testing, marketing data can help you not only measure if your marketing is successful, but also which channel or medium produces the best results at the most efficient cost.

In the tsunami of data, it's therefore critical to find your lighthouse. Your illuminating beacon will be those KPIs that indicate success. We've outlined a few questions to ask your marketing teams to get you there!

### 6. What are our 3 best performing channels? Why?

Marketers have access to enormous amounts of data, and when measured and analysed effectively, can clearly demonstrate which channels are delivering the greatest return. Probe your marketer to find out not just what the data says in black and white, but the various shades that influence and contributes to what 'good' looks like.

### 7. How many candidates/clients came through the website last year?

Your website should be the hub of your customer acquisition machine, providing not only an online brochure to showcase your USPs, but a tool to drive candidates and clients from online channels, including social media, search engines, paid channels or other websites. Tracking the number of customers acquired – called conversions – from candidates applying for a job or clients submitting a job order should be at the heart of your marketing programme.



**144,187:**

The number of leads and conversations Thrive enabled for our clients last year.



### **8. What is our candidate cost per acquisition/placement per channel?**

Whether job boards, social media, PPC or other, knowing which channels yields the best quality candidates allows you to focus your resources and budget to deliver the most effective and efficient results.

### **9. What job board yielded the best candidates?**

Quite the contentious one with job boards raising prices! Job boards also offer limited metrics to evidence attribution from placement back through origin so it's important there be some tracking in place from your marketer. The next question should be, 'how many of these candidates already existed in our database?!'

### **10. What was our best performing campaign last year? Why?**

This question allows you to bypass the vanity metrics and focus on the initiatives that deliver tangible value, plus your marketer's understanding of what constitutes valuable ROI.

### **11. How are you measuring performance?**

A common misstep for recruiters is getting sucked into the vanity trap of social likes and shares. A strategic and KPI-driven marketing programme should have a dashboard (we like Google Data Studio) that measures conversions as well as customer touch points and engagements across each stage of the buyer's journey as well as across each channel.

### **12. How are you using data in your decision-making?**

Once you've tracked the data, a marketer's analysis and understanding of what matters and what levers to pull to make meaningful change is essential. Tracking without action is futile, so when setting annual strategy or reviewing quarterly reports, use the data to prod your marketer about how s/he will enhance performance.

### **13. What KPIs are most important to you?**

Again, if your marketer starts quoting about how many likes and shares you're getting on LinkedIn or how many followers you have (hint, this is heavily influenced by your spend on LinkedIn job credits), then there's some education needed. Things like candidate/client conversions, leads generated and which channels are most effective should be cited in these discussions.

### **14. Tell me the top 5 things you consider in your Google Analytics dashboard?**

It's hard to be a recruitment agency leader without the technical marketing prowess to measure a marketer's skills and knowledge. However, simply asking this question should surface some answers. Ask your marketer to walk you through how they find that information on Google Analytics and what trends they've been monitoring in their analysis.

## Questions that show marketing matters

Developing a marketing strategy backed by a month-by-month plan will help your marketers stay the course and focus on those high-level, strategic initiatives that support your growth journey. In fact, according to CoSchedule, marketers who document a well-informed strategy are **538% more likely** to see success from their marketing.

Too often the marketing team are called upon to organise the summer party or customise PowerPoint pitch deck after pitch deck – activities that take them away from customer acquisition initiatives that can have a tangible impact on the business and bottom line.

Instead, work with your marketer to ensure you have a clear objective and plan to reach your goals. While not intended to be so rigid that you can't be responsive to market fluctuations, a plan will give your marketer that north star to return to again and again. Plus, it can minimise distractions. If a request comes in which is at odds with the north star, it isn't entertained.

In summary: Help your marketer stay focussed on your strategic business priorities and you'll see more return from your marketing.

**Marketers who document a well-informed strategy are 538% more likely to see success from their marketing.**

*(Source: CoSchedule)*



## Questions to help your marketers align with your strategic business goals:

### 15. What are the greatest challenges for our marketing department?

This question is broad and could unearth a host of responses, however, the aim here is to open a dialogue and offer a safe place for your marketer to share their ideas. Importantly, when presenting challenges, they also need to provide solutions and a potential plan of action to resolve.

### 16. What are our greatest opportunities?

This is a great question to uncover potential ideas, channels and/or campaigns to explore. Make sure your marketer can provide insight into the potential return that these initiatives could afford, understanding the end goal for undertaking them.

### 17. How are we dividing our efforts between candidates, clients and internal consultants? And why?

This is a question that your marketer should be asking you and/or your business development leadership! Recruitment, like real estate, is one of the only industries that has both a 'buyer' and a 'seller' and will always require a balance of supply and demand. Understanding what levers to pull – and when – will help you focus efforts where the greatest potential return exists.

### 18. How do you allocate your marketing spend by channel/initiative?

This question may be difficult to answer without a formal marketing budget in place. If your marketing team is creating an annual marketing strategy and plan, a critical element is the budget and spend against potential return for different activities. Leverage KPI metrics, find out which channel and/or campaign yielded the best return and consider funnelling investment where the greatest opportunity exists.

### 19. How is social media contributing to ROI? How do we know it's working?

Most recruiters post content on social media, however, aside from anecdotal feedback of its contributions towards a consultant's personal brand, it can be one of the hardest channels to measure for true ROI. While social channels provide top-of-funnel metrics, including 'likes', shares and comments, it is often a branding exercise that's difficult to track through to point of conversion. Instead, think about the purpose(s) of social media and what you're hoping to achieve.





## 20. How are we approaching the various stages of the marketing funnel?

Whether a candidate or client, buyers move through awareness, interest, consideration and preference stages before they 'buy'. As such, marketing needs to attract enough people to the top of the funnel, then nurture them through to point of sale. Understanding the volume required and where leaks in the funnel might exist will enable your marketer to develop marketing programmes that increase sales.

## 21. When will our marketing efforts pay off?

How long is a piece of string? This is a difficult question with a host of variables and considerations, including your company's value proposition and reputation, seasonality, market forces, channel performance (and the list goes on). It's important for your marketer to understand this and consider initiatives that will deliver quick return to offset some of the slower burn activities. (Or as we like to say, they need to provide some amuse bouches while waiting for the Michelin star meal!)

## 22. Which areas should you focus on more?

This question requires reflection – reflection on personal strengths/weaknesses as well as reflection following metric and campaign analysis. The aim here is to identify what is moving the dial in terms of ROI and encouraging your marketer to channel their energies into those areas that are yielding the greatest return.





## Questions that establish your brand against the competition

The concept of 'brand' can be a very personal thing. Colours, imagery, logos and even fonts can elicit an emotional response that is different for everyone. However, identifying and articulating your brand, your unique value proposition and importantly what's in it for your customer, is key to positioning and elevating yourself above your competition.

As a leader in the business, it's likely you have some preconceived notions about your competitive landscape and your company's relationship within. However, the digital age opens up a whole new set of competitive criteria and benchmarks which may surprise you.

Below are a few questions to ask your marketer around your brand and positioning (and, whatever you do, don't take it personally!):

### **23. What brands do you admire? Why?**

What constitutes a 'brand' is much more complex and multi-layered than simply a logo or a colour palette. When thinking about brands, it's important to weigh up their value proposition, ethos, reputation and what benefit they provide their end client. Uncovering what your marketer admires about others can help them determine where their own brand may need refinement or an uplift.

### **24. Who are our competitors? Why?**

The answer may surprise you! While anecdotal information from the consultants on whom they're competing with is a good foundation, there are a host of marketing tools that can determine how you stack up against your competitors online.

### **25. What are 3 things that our competitors do well? Why?**

They're your competitor for a reason, so chances are they do a few things well! Here it's interesting to consider what a marketer vs a sales professional feels are a competitor's strengths.

### **26. What are 3 things that our competitors do poorly? Why?**

While it can be therapeutic or even fun to poke holes in your competitors, this question can help determine your marketer's awareness of the bigger picture, avoiding comparisons like the number of social media followers or likes, and instead focus on those areas that have more overall impact.

## Setting up marketing as an enabler of sales

**'There is no business without sales'**  
(original author unknown).

The truth is that a company cannot survive without revenue and to achieve revenue, you need sales. Marketers need to have a keen awareness and respect for this, recognising that the best marketers are constantly challenging themselves and finding ways that they can deliver marketing best practice within the context of enabling commercial opportunity.

Critically, marketing cannot be an inhibitor of sales.

As a business leader, finding ways to break down any silos that exist between sales and marketing and instead focussing on common goals and interdependencies is essential. The aim is to create a strategic business development function where marketing and sales are intrinsically linked, and mutually successful.

Achieving this is a two-way street: Marketing needs to be tuned into the needs of sales, but likewise, sales teams need to be educated and aware that marketing can be a powerful enhancer to delivering tangible opportunities.



**Over 75% of (non-recruitment) marketers are reporting on how their campaigns are directly influencing revenue. (Are yours?)**

*Source: HubSpot*



**94% of top-performing salespeople believe they receive better leads from marketing, classifying as 'excellent' or 'good'.**

*(Source: LinkedIn)*

Below are questions to ask your marketers to develop a more cohesive partnership between sales and marketing.

**27. What can you do to support the consultants?**

A successful business development function requires both marketing and sales working together to deliver financial return – they cannot operate in isolation. Marketers should deliver initiatives that support the consultants to acquire more leads and business, not simply 'jazz up' PowerPoint decks or job posts.

**28. What can the consultants do to support you?**

An integrated team requires support from both sides. Consultants should be reporting back on insights gleaned from their candidates and clients, what marketing initiatives worked well, what areas they need additional support in, etc. This will enable the marketer to be more effective in devising and delivering solutions.

**29. How do you plan to enhance collaboration with the consultant teams?**

Finding clever ways to get the consultants involved both in developing strategy and supporting the tactical delivery will make the marketer's job easier. It will also contribute to delivering a better programme and keeping the sales teams engaged.

**30. Who is best positioned in the business to help the marketing team gain more influence with the sales teams?**

Every business has influencers. Whether it's a big biller or social connector in your group, chances are you're keenly aware of those voices in your business that sway or influence others. Target that individual. Bring him or her onboard to understand how marketing can partner with sales and leverage their influence to help break down any siloes in your business.



## Value your marketer's experience

Most recruitment leaders have told us that one of the key things that's holding them back from growing their business is their own internal recruitment efforts. Employer branding and value proposition have been hot topics in recent years, and marketers typically play a key role in devising the messages and strategies to help attract these key assets!

So don't discount the insight you can glean from your marketer's own experiences. Use these poignant questions to support both your marketer's professional development as well as that of your business!

### Top three channels SMEs plan to extend their employer brand:

1. Website: 69%
2. Online professional networks: 61%
3. Social media: 47%

*(Source: LinkedIn)*

### **31. What excites you about working here?**

This question addresses two points: a) insights that contribute to your employer branding / internal recruitment value proposition, and b) their personal motivation and happiness in their job. In the current candidate-short market, both can deliver impactful insight!

### **32. What would entice you to look elsewhere?**

The job market is competitive and recruitment marketers are in demand. Benchmarking remuneration is a must but don't overlook some of the other considerations around recognition and incentives. It can be lonely being a recruitment marketer when the consultants are incentivised with bonuses and events, so consider how you can implement a scheme that your marketer can partake in too.

### **33. Do you have the tools you need to perform your job?**

What's challenging for solo marketers is the need to be able to do everything from writing copy to technical delivery. The skills and aptitude required to do end-to-end marketing is like requiring an HR manager to perform financial reporting. Giving marketers the resource to help fill the skills gap can help them excel in the wider strategy and programme delivery without having to incur the cost of additional hires.



## Some hard truths you need to know

No one likes to hear criticism, but sometimes it's necessary to create change. Marketers are in the unique position that they can review their company's strengths and weaknesses, while also considering the opportunities and threats that come from a competitive market.

Provide your marketer amnesty to give you the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Doing so will help you identify those areas of improvement while celebrating the areas of success!

**"There exists a huge opportunity for marketers to make a serious contribution and never before has strategy been more important. By building and creating the narrative, collaborating with the leadership and cascading through the business, you can create the trust and confidence you need to succeed."**

**Phil Sheridan**  
Chief Operating Officer, Org





### **34. What do you think we do well?**

This question provides a platform where the marketer can showcase some areas or initiatives that you as a leader may not even be aware of. It also measures their awareness of how marketing can impact the wider business operations. Ideally, their answers will have substance and not simply consist of vanity programmes/metrics.

### **35. What do you think we could improve?**

Now we're talking! Ask the question and see the floodgates open. Giving marketers amnesty to be honest about areas for improvement can be a powerful initiative, albeit one where the leader needs to be receptive to constructive criticism.

### **36. What can we offer that our competitors can't?**

With an estimated 40,000 recruitment agencies in the UK, it's difficult to articulate and evidence one's unique selling proposition. Simply stating 'it's our people who make us different' is not enough. Challenge your marketer to identify the key traits that make your agency different as well as articulate how you can benefit your end customer.

### **37. What can I do as a leader to support the marketing function?**

The most successful marketing functions are those that are supported by the sales and/or operational leadership. You serve as the gateway to the wider business buying into marketing, so your support and advocacy is critical.





## Questions to expose opportunities to innovate

Never before has it been so exciting to be in recruitment! The technology available is making us faster, more efficient and more robust in finding solutions for our customers and innovating to make the business better.

*Marketing is no different.*

The automation and digital tools that are at our disposal will make us better marketers. It's important that you give your marketing team scope to explore these new tools as well as the freedom and flexibility to test and make mistakes. Because, for every mistake there is a new opportunity!

### **38. Is our tech stack sufficient? What would improve it?**

Just like there's a host of RecTech available on the market, there's also a plethora of MarTech and even Rec-MarTech available. Speak with your marketer and find out if there are any new products that integrate with your CRM or other platforms in your tech stack. From email automation to chatbots, consultant social posting tools to automated job posting, your marketing technology can support customer engagement, data integrity and even consultant productivity.

### **39. Do you think we are focussed enough on marketing innovation?**

Getting the most out of marketing technology requires strong collaboration between marketing, sales and the wider business. Investing in marketing innovation means investing the resource, time and change processes required to thoroughly embed new ideas and processes throughout the organisation.

**40. What top things should we be aware of in advancements in digital marketing in the next three years? How will we prepare?**

The recruitment industry is advancing at record pace, with technology, automation and AI facilitating innovation and disruption to the status quo. Observing other industries and adopting the best digital marketing applications will help the recruitment industry to go farther.

**41. How are we leveraging automation to be more productive?**

Adopting automation doesn't mean losing the human touch in recruitment. On the contrary, it enables you to reach farther, personalise more and scale what would never be possible through manual effort alone. In an era where candidate and recruiter talent are both in short supply, finding a way to get more out of your operations, your consultants and your support functions can deliver significant return on investment.



## Question what you know about your customers

Marketing has and always will be about customers. Whether candidates, clients or (potential future) consultants, the customer is always at the centre of our world and it's our goal to get more and/or better customers for our business.

And no one knows their customers better than the sales teams. While marketing can bring black and white data and insight into customer behaviours, the sales teams can bring the colour, completing the canvas and bringing the picture to life.

Your role as leader is to bring the two teams together, drawing on insights from their respective vantage points and creating the masterpiece that will ensue.

### 42. Who are our best customers? Why?

This question helps you ascertain whether marketing is aligned with the sales team and what constitutes their definition of 'good'. Is it volume hiring? Favourable terms? Or is it more abstract like the size or company, whether or not they require a PSL or hiring manager profile? If the marketing team understands what the sales teams look for in an A-client or A-order, they can help identify and target the right messages to the right people.

### 43. Who are our target audiences?

Effective marketing requires more than a hope-for-the-best strategy. Understanding your target audiences, their pain points, what channel best reaches them and how to communicate with them is critical and requires commercial awareness.



**73% of people cite customer experience as an important factor in their purchasing decisions.**

(Source: PWC)

#### **44. What percentage of our database has an email address?**

It's cheaper to retain a customer than to acquire a new one. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in recruitment where we can acquire very high volumes of candidates and clients who then reside (and quickly become dormant) in our databases. These contacts are only viable, however, if they have a valid email address and we're able to engage with them.

#### **45. What percentage of our database are we engaging with regularly?**

Speaking of customer reactivation, this is especially important from a cost savings standpoint. One of the largest recruitment expenditures is job boards and LinkedIn licenses to attract candidates. And yet, oftentimes these candidates already reside in our database, making that advertising expense unnecessary. Regularly engaging with and reactivating candidate and client contacts can provide exponential value!

#### **46. What is our customer value proposition?**

The pandemic prompted many agencies to evolve and articulate their value proposition, often creating productised offerings. Even a contingent recruiter, however, needs to understand and articulate what makes it unique and the value or benefits it can provide its candidates and clients. Critically, the marketer needs to understand the customer value proposition and effectively articulate and promote it within marketing programmes.

#### **47. How easy is it for our target customers to find us?**

If you're looking to transition to an inbound marketing and business development programme, it's critical for your customers to be able to find you. From your brand name to your online footprint and what people are typing into a search engines about your industry or specialism, ask your marketer how your customers are finding you and what can or needs to be done to improve this.

#### **48. What are the top five pain points our customers are experiencing? How are we responsive to this?**

By understanding the challenges our candidate and client customers face, we can align our value proposition and service offering – as well as our marketing messages – to that audience. Map your customer pain points through the buyers' journey and marry them up with the benefit you provide at each stage. These messages should form the foundation of your brand narrative, content strategy and commercial messaging





#### **49. How can we make our candidates/clients more loyal?**

Recruitment is an industry grounded in relationships. It's not unheard of for a client's loyalty to follow the recruiter and their movements from company to company. To build the company's brand equity and loyalty, businesses need to get creative and marketing can play a key role in this. From devising your customer value proposition to establishing regular – possibly a combination of personal and automated – touchpoints, your marketer will have plenty of ideas around customer retention.

#### **50. How are we personalising their experience?**

In an age of digitalisation and automation, customers expect their communications and touch points to speak to them and their personal situation or pain points. Nothing is worse than a candidate getting an automated email about a role and salary that they haven't entertained for 10 years! Speak to your marketer and find out how they are using persona identification and personalisation to create a better customer experience.



## 5 tips from a 'Digital' Managing Director

1. Marketers need to share the strategy and how it will have an impact – if it isn't visible, it will go unnoticed
2. Use data to demonstrate the ROI and reasoning for decision-making
3. Over-communicate and engage the consultant teams to develop trust across the business
4. Develop continual feedback loops until you develop a digital culture
5. As a leader, reinforce the message, make the time to partner with marketing and carry the message everywhere you go

**Phil Sheridan**  
Chief Operating Officer, Org

## This is only the beginning...

The recruitment industry is in a period of transition. The pandemic gave recruitment leaders the space – and possibly the hard reality – that old skool techniques are no longer enough in a technological and digital age.

This transition will bring winners and losers. Recruiters who embrace technology to improve services, identify solutions and create efficiencies will have the advantage. Technology will only enhance what we already know is true – that recruitment is about human connection. Technology simply makes this connection more vibrant, targeted, amplified and fruitful.

Amidst this backdrop, there is no reason why marketing shouldn't play a key role at the decision-making table. When a business sets its goals, rallies its troops and forges its strategy, marketing has the capacity to play a valued partnership in extracting value from technology and adding value to the bottom line.

*It's just up to you to give it the space it needs to thrive.*

# Thrive!

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