How to Choose a Paid Search Agency

No RFP? No problem!

Use these worksheets to figure out what your company needs, and whether the Paid Search agency (or freelancer) is a match.

Prepared for you by

Paid Search Magic
Internal review: What do I need?

Before you can figure out whether an agency will meet your needs, you should know what your own needs are. Make sure there’s alignment.

1. What are my **business goals** for Paid Search?
   
   *(Yes: sales, qualified leads, etc. No: page views, clicks, cpc, etc)*

2. **What does success look like**, and how will I know if we’re successful?

3. Who are the decision makers on my team? Are **my goals in harmony** with my boss and the CEO?

4. What’s my **monthly budget**, and am I willing to spend more when we’re hitting our **goals**?

5. What’s my **promotion schedule or seasonality**, and how does this affect my budget?

6. Am I **confident in our lead / sales tracking**, or does that need another look?

7. Who on my team will help with technical / tracking issues?

8. What **platforms, engines and tracking** do I need?
   
   *(Google, Bing, analytics, call /chat tracking, CRM, other 3rd party tools)*

9. What’s my company’s **language of success**?
   
   *(Data-driven, story-driven, research-driven?)*

10. What do I need from the agency in terms of **meeting frequency, responsiveness, training, reports, and real-time data**?

11. Can my team provide **new landing pages & creative assets** that might be needed, or should that be outsourced?

**If you already have SEM accounts:**

- In your opinion, what is / isn’t going well?
- What would you like to see different?
- Can you share access with the agency (through a new or shared login)?
  - What recommendations / observations do they have?
  - If they give your account low marks, are the problems they find negatively impacting your business?
Checklist: Questions for the agency

In addition to making sure that all your needs are met, ask these questions to find out how the agency operates. Be sure that important answers are reflected in your contract.

- Do I get to keep ownership and control of the account, even after we’ve parted ways?
- Who will be my primary contact? *(Am I comfortable with their communication style, skill level, experience in my industry, and interest in my business?)*
- What are the most common challenges you see when clients’ goals aren’t met?
- What’s the scope of our agreement? What ad formats, campaign types, account work, or engines aren’t included?
- What are the biggest opportunities, threats, or weaknesses for my business with respect to Paid Search?
- Who directly pays the engines for the account media spend?
- What are your rates, and what pricing model is used?
- What are the terms of your contract / out clause?
- If we proceed, what are the next steps? When will we review strategy?

What to avoid asking

Here are a few questions that people seeking Paid Search management LOVE to ask, but tend not to help them in finding the best agency:

- Am I going to be working with the A team or the B team?
  
  *Everyone will tell you it’s the A team, so this question doesn’t accomplish much.*

- What new betas or ad formats can you use for my account?
  
  *Just because an ad type is new and shiny doesn’t make it right for your business. Don’t let FOMO (fear of missing out) make you pick an agency that talks a big game but can’t grow your business.*
Thanks so much!

PS - if you want to know *our* answers to these questions, check out our bonus podcast episode at paidsearchmagic.com/31B

We love helping people market and grow their business! If you want to chat about whether we’d be a good fit, you can book a free discovery call here: https://bookme.name/paidsearchmagic/