

# How Freelancers Drive Down Marketing Expense



A White Paper by  
**Robert Roth, PhD**

# Introduction

I wrote this White Paper to share some information about how businesses of all sizes can take advantage of marketing freelancers to drive down marketing expense and improve financial returns on marketing investments.

As I started writing, I found myself increasingly thinking about the legend of King Arthur's Court and his Knights of the Round Table. I realized that:

- King Arthur required his knights to pledge their lives to the king and do battle in his name.

Similarly, today's corporate kings and queens likewise require their marketing knights to be loyal to the company, and to do whatever it takes, to win competitive battles.

- Just as King Arthur's knights were judged on their bravery, skill, and success in conquering the king's enemies, today's corporate marketing knights are judged on their success in capturing market share, exceeding customer's expectations and increasing the financial return on their corporate king and queen's marketing investments.

Because these themes are so indelibly woven into both King Arthur's legend, and today's corporate cultures, I just couldn't resist conflating and alluding to them as a theme throughout this White Paper.

So, let's start increasing your kingdom's Return on Marketing Investments and driving down your marketing expense.

We will start by taking a quick look at today's most pressing marketing challenges. Then we will move on to share some best practices that are helping the knights at today's marketing round tables, all across the land, slay the dragons that are driving up marketing expense and driving down returns on investments.



## Today's Marketing Challenges

Today, the Kings, Queens and Knights of industry are facing a serious problem. The problem is that marketing expenses are increasing and returns on marketing investments are getting slimmer and slimmer. The marketing landscape is changing very rapidly as knights at marketing round tables are jousting with three very fierce dragons:



### Fierce Dragon #1 Marketing Expense

Marketing expense is mushrooming, and it is stressing a lot of corporate kings and queens out. Some of the fierce dragons driving this surge in marketing expenses include:



#### □ **More Channels = More Spending**

You can't just run TV or Google ads anymore. Now reaching increasingly vertical audiences involves social media, influencer campaigns, SEO/content, Email, SMS, chat, podcasts, events, partnerships and on and on. Each channel needs its own strategy, creative, tools, and team and each strategy needs its own marketing budget.

#### □ **Rising Digital Ad Costs**

Platforms like Google, Meta and TikTok work on auctions which generate more competition and higher CPCs/CPMs. In competitive industries, these auctions produce the same reach but higher prices. Competitors in crowded industries pay more just to stay visible.

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### □ **Martech Stack Overload**

Marketers require increasingly sophisticated marketing tools and platforms (CRMs, automation platforms, data dashboards, personalization engines, analytics software). These tools are competitive necessities, but they are also expensive.

### □ **Skyrocketing Content Demands**

Audiences expect fresh, relevant, high-quality content across all marketing related platforms which requires increasingly expensive creative teams, agencies, video production, UGC campaigns, copywriting, and design.

### □ **The Need for Personalization at Scale**

Customers expect experiences tailored to their personal interests. In response, companies must invest in more robust (and expensive) data infrastructure, AI tools, and segmentation strategies.

### □ **Proliferation of Global/Multilingual Campaigns**

Today, many brands operate globally which means localization, translation, and regional strategy. You're not just running one campaign — you're running ten campaign versions.

### □ **Legal Requirements**

GDPR, CCPA, and other laws mean investing in data protection, legal reviews, and compliant tech, all of which require increased back-end costs just to keep campaigns legal and secure.

### □ **In-House + Agency + Freelancer Blending**

Responding to competitive pressure to move faster, companies are increasingly blending internal teams with agencies and freelancers. Managing these relationships is challenging and, when not managed with expertise, this hybrid approach creates overlaps, inefficiencies, and ballooning headcounts.

Marketing strategy has evolved from "run a few ads" to a complex, tech-heavy, content-driven digital engine-powered environment. And those digital engines burn through cash very quickly.

## Fierce Dragon #2

# Return on Investment

For almost every knight, at almost every marketing round table, the pressure to increase and prove return on marketing investment is tremendous. Here's why:



### □ Attribution is Complex

When a customer sees a Facebook ad, then read a blog post, then gets an email, and then converts through a Google search return, it is very difficult to confidently say *"this campaign drove this much revenue."*

### □ Long-Term vs. Short-Term Impact

Some marketing efforts (like brand awareness) take time to influence sales and while corporate kings and queens often want immediate returns on marketing investments, highly profitable investments frequently do not pay off quickly.

### □ Cross-Channel Disconnection

Data lives in silos like CRM lives here . . . social media analytics lives there, and web traffic lives somewhere else. When reporting is not unified, it's hard to see the big picture and to make investment decisions.

### □ Tight Budgets & Scrutiny

Marketing budgets are often the first to be cut in uncertain times. Managers must prove that every dollar spent is driving measurable value very quickly, which generally leads to reactive and frequently unwise decisions.

### □ Tech Overload & Talent Gap

There are thousands of Martech tools promising better analytics and ROI tracking; but many companies simply do not have the on-staff talent required to use them.

The bottom line for almost every knight, at almost every marketing round table, is the pressing need to produce and acceptable return (ROI) on marketing investments.



### Fierce Dragon #3

## Capturing Attention And Exceeding Expectations

There is absolutely no doubt about it that it is becoming more and more difficult to capture customer's attention and exceed their expectations. The problem is that:



#### □ **Customer Expectations Are Higher Than Ever**

Tech giants like Amazon, Apple, and Netflix have conditioned people to expect easy 1-click purchases, instant responses and seamless experiences across several devices. Today, even small or mid-size companies are judged by these standards which require a great deal of expertise to manage.

#### □ **Customers Are More Informed & Empowered**

Thanks to reviews, forums, social media, and comparison tools, customers do deep research before buying. They come in expecting *more* — better deals, more transparency, deeper personalization — and they know when brands fall short.

#### □ **Speed is the New Standard**

Everything from delivery times to customer service is expected to happen *now*. Delays, clunky websites, or slow responses are seen as signs of poor quality — even if the actual product is great

#### □ **Fragmented Journeys = More Touchpoints to Get Right**

A customer might interact with your brand across 5+ channels (social, email, web, in-store, support) before converting. It's hard to keep every touchpoint consistent and personalized — but customers expect it.

#### □ **Too Much Automation, Not Enough Humanity**

Automation helps with scale, but poorly implemented chatbots, generic emails, and irrelevant recommendations frustrate users. People expect *smart* personalization, not just “Hi [First Name]” and “Click a box.”

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### □ **Word of Mouth (Good or Bad) Travels Fast**

Social media, review platforms, and influencers amplify every experience. One bad review or viral tweet can reset expectations or damage trust across thousands of potential customers.

### □ **Exceeding Expectations is a Moving Target**

What "wows" customers today becomes tomorrow's baseline. Companies must keep innovating — and that's tough to do consistently while also maintaining quality, speed, and affordability.

Today, competitive companies are getting better and better at capturing attention and exceeding customer's expectations. While that is a very good thing customers . . . it is a source of great frustration for marketers. And the frustration is growing as marketing talent gaps are growing wider and wider.

## Talent Gap Frustrations

For marketing knights, jousting with competitive dragons is becoming more and more frustrating. That frustration results from the fact that managing the next generation of marketing technologies requires a next generation of marketing talent.

Today, that next generation of marketing talent is in short supply, and the talent gap is growing wider.



## The Talent Gap Is Growing Wider

The gap between today's next generation of marketing technology and the talent required to manage it is growing because of:

- **Increased Pressure to Deliver ROI**

Competitive industries like tech, finance, and e-commerce are all about fast results. Without skilled tech-savvy people to execute data-driven campaigns or optimize conversions, it's tough to justify marketing spend. And that means there is more pressure on existing teams to do more with less.

- **Long Hiring Timelines**

Finding the right fit takes forever now. Demand is high, but supply of qualified candidates is low. Roles stay open for months, causing delays in campaign launches or strategic pivots.

- **Burnout & Overload**

Since good talent is hard to find, existing teams get stretched thin. People cover multiple roles—analyst one day, content strategist the next. That's continuous pressure is not sustainable and leads to faster burnout, especially in fast-paced environments.



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### □ **Stalling Innovation**

Companies want to experiment with new platforms (like TikTok, AI-generated content, or hyper-personalized campaigns), but without the right talent, it's risky or just not possible. That means missed opportunities while competitors surge ahead.

### □ **Hits To Brand Reputation**

Poor execution due to lack of expertise can hurt the brand with low-quality content, ineffective targeting, or bad UX on campaigns. In a cutthroat market, even small missteps are magnified.

### □ **Talent Retention**

Even when companies *do* find good people, keeping them is another battle. Talented marketers get poached fast, and salary inflation is real.

Businesses are increasingly turning to marketing freelancers to address the growing gap in digital marketing talent. In the next chapter we will share some best practices for closing your talent gaps in the new world of digital marketing.

## Closing Talent Gaps With Marketing Freelancers

Marketing knights are increasingly turning to expert freelancers to fill their talent gaps, particularly in the realm of digital marketing. Toward that end, many are taking advantage of these five Best Practices:

### Best Practice #1

#### Defining Specific Tasks

Clearly defining specific marketing tasks to outsource to freelancers is important for several strategic and practical reasons including:



##### 1. Maximizing Efficiency

Outsourcing well-defined tasks helps ensure that freelancers can quickly understand what's expected and deliver results without constant supervision.

##### 2. Reducing Costs

Freelancers can be more cost-effective than hiring full-time employees for tasks that are temporary (e.g., a product launch), specialized (e.g., SEO audit, ad copywriting) and labor-intensive but require minimal skills (e.g., data entry, customer contact and list building).

##### 3. Accessing Specialized Expertise

Some marketing areas, like Google Ads, SEO, and influencer outreach, require highly specialized niche expertise. Outsourcing those tasks lets you access top-tier talent without needing to hire someone full-time.

##### 4. Improving The Quality of Work

When you assign freelancers specific tasks, especially those that match their strengths, the quality is often higher. A graphic designer will produce better visuals than someone on your team doing it as a side task.

## **5. Scaling Projects**

Clearly defined tasks make it easier to scale your marketing efforts. For example, if you're launching campaigns in multiple languages, you can assign translation and localization tasks to native-speaking freelancers.

## **6. Providing Clarity**

Specific task definitions lead to better briefs, contracts, deadlines, and deliverables. This clarity helps prevent misunderstandings and allows you to track performance more effectively.

## **7. Saving Onboarding Time**

Freelancers don't need to be trained in your entire business. If you're clear about what you need (e.g., "Create 3 Instagram carousel posts per week"), you can recruit and onboard them quickly and get faster results.

## **6. Monitoring Accountability**

Specific task definitions lead to better briefs, contracts, deadlines, and deliverables. This clarity helps prevent misunderstandings and allows you to track performance more effectively.

## Best Practice #2

### Recruiting On Freelance Websites

You can use any of several freelance recruiting websites to find exceptional marketing talent, when and as you need it.

Here are a few suggestions for making the best use of these platforms.

#### 1. Choose the Right Platform for the Task

Each platform has strengths. Match your needs to the right place:

- ☐ Upwork – Great for ongoing projects and long-term relationships
- ☐ Fiverr – Ideal for fast, one-off tasks or microservices (logo design, social posts)
- ☐ Toptal – Curated talent, great for high-end marketers (comes at a price)
- ☐ MarketerHire / Growth Collective – Pre-vetted marketing talent for specific niches (growth, content, paid ads)
- ☐ LinkedIn & Twitter (X) – For networking-based hires and recommendations



#### 2. Write a Killer Job Description or Project Brief

The clearer you are, the better the talent you will attract. Include:

- ☐ The specific task(s)
- ☐ Expected deliverables and timelines
- ☐ Any tools or platforms they need to know
- ☐ Budget range
- ☐ Style/tone/brand guidelines (if relevant)
- ☐ Ask for relevant portfolio pieces or case studies

### 3. Use Filters + Keywords Wisely

Search smart!

- Use platform filters to zero in on top-rated talent with verified results
- Look for project specific keywords like “conversion-focused,” “B2B SaaS experience,” or “email nurture specialist”.

### 4. Test Before You Commit Long-Term

Start with a small paid test project to assess your freelancer’s communication skills

- Make sure your freelancer understands your brand, tone and goals
- Build trust before scaling the relationship

### 5. Build a Rolodex of Go-To Freelancers

Once you find someone great, keep them close. And be sure to respond quickly because top freelancers won’t wait around.

Using an online platform to recruit freelance marketing talent isn’t always necessary. But when it makes sense, it can make the recruiting process easier, faster, and safer.



## Best Practice #3

### Defining Clear Goals

Clearly defining project deliverables is *absolutely essential* for getting great results from freelancers. When you clearly define deliverables, you save time, avoid misunderstandings, and get exactly what you pay for.

Here's how to nail it:

#### 1. Start With the End in Mind

Ask yourself:

- ☐ What do I want in my hands at the end of this project?
- ☐ What will success look like?
- ☐ Then define deliverables based on that. For example, “3 blog posts (1,000–1,200 words each), optimized for SEO, including internal links and 1 royalty-free image per post.”

#### 2. Break Deliverables Into Clear, Tangible Items

Avoid vague goals like “run Facebook ads” or “improve our social media.” Instead, define exact outputs. For example:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manage Instagram | <input type="checkbox"/> Create & schedule 12 IG posts (4/week), hashtags, and graphics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do SEO           | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete full SEO audit report + 10 on-page optimizations      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do AI Research   | <input type="checkbox"/> Write and post one 10 page report per month                    |



### 3. Include Deadlines or Milestones

Give specific due dates (or phases, if it's a longer project). For example:

- ☐ Week 1: Keyword research report
- ☐ Week 2: First draft of blog post 1
- ☐ Week 3: Final revisions + blog post 2 draft

### 4. Define Format & Tools

Make sure that your freelancer knows about:

- ☐ The format you want deliverables in (Google Docs, Canva, PDF, etc.)
- ☐ Any tools that they will need to use (e.g., Notion, Figma, HubSpot)
- ☐ Whether version control is important (e.g., track changes)

### 5. Clarify the Revision Policy

Define exactly how many rounds of edits are included in your project, what counts as a revision (minor tweaks vs. rewriting) and how long you will take to give feedback. This is all very important information as it will prevent scope creep and keeps things on schedule and on budget.

### 6. Align on Brand Voice, Audience & Goals

Give your freelancer a quick style guide or, at a minimum, several examples of content you love. Also provide them with a summary of your audience's attitudes and behaviors including pain points and the tone and calls to action that they are most responsive to. Here are several examples of well-defined deliverables:

- ☐ 2-minute product explainer video
- ☐ Script (approx. 300 words)
- ☐ Voiceover (US English, friendly tone)
- ☐ Animation (1080p, mp4 format)
- ☐ Branded colors + logo integration
- ☐ 2 rounds of revisions and final delivery by [date] via Google Drive

## Best Practice #4

### Taking A Hybrid Approach

A hybrid marketing team—mixing in-house staff with freelancers—is a smart, flexible model that gives you the best of both worlds. Some of the most important benefits include:



#### 1. Flexibility + Speed

Freelancers let you scale up quickly when you need extra hands (e.g., a product launch or seasonal campaign). In-house staff provides continuity and keeps day-to-day operations running smoothly.

#### 2. Cost-Efficiency

You only pay freelancers when you need them, avoiding overhead like benefits, PTO, or downtime. Full-timers handle recurring, strategic work that justifies a salary.

#### 3. Access to Specialized Talent

You can bring in experts on demand for high-skill areas like SEO audits, paid media, or conversion copywriting. No need to train your internal team for every new channel or tool—just tap a freelancer who’s already a pro.

#### 4. Better Focus for Your Core Team

Your in-house team can focus on strategy, brand voice, and long-term goals. Freelancers handle execution-heavy or project-based tasks (like email campaigns or landing page builds).

#### 5. Test-and-Learn Capability

Want to try TikTok ads or a new content style? Hire a freelancer to test it out before investing fully. This minimizes risk while still letting you innovate and experiment.

## **6. Broader Perspectives & Creativity**

Freelancers often work with multiple industries and clients—they bring fresh insights and diverse ideas. This cross-pollination can inspire more innovative marketing efforts.

## **7. Scalability Without the Red Tape**

You can grow or shrink your team fast, depending on business cycles or goals. There is no lengthy hiring/firing processes. You just bring in the right talent when, where and as you need them and share a clear front end understanding of when you will likely be letting them go.

Bringing in freelance marketing talent can be a game changer because it gives you the ability to instantly plug in expert skills exactly when, where and as you need them.

Taking this hybrid approach enables you to work faster, bring hyper specialized skillset to solve short-term problems, and scale and avoid the expense of hiring full-time marketing talent for a need that might only last 3 months. Bringing in freelance talent can be especially helpful during growth spikes or campaign seasons.

And, last but certainly not least, freelancers often bring new insights and outside-the-box thinking that can refresh your marketing strategies and tactics in important ways.

## Best Practice #5

### Tracking Results

Tracking performance and results when working with a marketing freelancer is crucial to both making sure you get your money's worth, and to making smarter decisions over time.

Here's why tracking results matters and how to do it right:



### What You Need to Track

When you are investing both time and money in freelance projects you need to track how well things are (or are not going) and adjust your working relationships quickly. A good way to do that is by:

#### 1. Measuring ROI

You're investing time and budget—tracking performance shows whether that investment is paying off.

Example: If a freelancer runs Facebook ads, you need to know cost-per-click (CPC), conversions, and return on ad spend (ROAS and not just impressions).

#### 2. Maintaining Accountability

When results are tracked, expectations are clear and the freelancer knows they're being measured on outcomes, not just effort. This motivates quality work and prevents miscommunication.

#### 3. Identifying What's Working (and What's Not)

Tracking helps you double down on what drives results and pivot away from what doesn't. Example: If one blog post generates 10x the traffic of others, that's worth replicating.

#### 4. Facilitating Better Collaboration

Numbers give you and the freelancer a shared language. You can make decisions together based on data, not gut feelings.



## 5. Supporting Future Planning

Clear performance data helps you make important planning decisions including whether to continue with the same freelancer, scale the freelancing project work load up or down and possibly adjusting the scope and marketing strategy that your freelance is working on.

## A Good Process For Tracking Freelancer Performance

Following is a simple but thorough process for tracking freelancer performance. Note that the sample KPIs and metrics that I have included are just examples. You will want to replace them with your information.

### 1. Set KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) Upfront

Choose metrics that are specific to the freelancer's task. Here are a few examples:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Type of Work     | KPIs   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SEO              | Keyword rankings, organic traffic, backlinks   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email marketing  | Open rate, click-through rate, conversion rate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paid ads         | CTR, CPC, ROAS, leads/sales                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Content creation | Engagement, traffic, shares, time on page      |

Tip: Make sure KPIs are realistic and tied to business goals.

### 2. Use the Right Tools

Some useful tools include:

- ☐ Google Analytics / GA4 – Track traffic, conversions, behavior
- ☐ Google Search Console – For SEO metrics
- ☐ Ad Platforms (Meta, Google Ads) – For ad performance
- ☐ Email Platforms (Klaviyo, Mailchimp, etc.) – For open/click rates
- ☐ Social Media Insights – For content performance
- ☐ Project Management Tools (Asana, Trello, Notion) – For task tracking

### 3. Request Regular Reporting

- ☐ Ask for a weekly or biweekly performance report on:
- ☐ Work that has been completed and work in progress

### 4. Insights & Learnings

Short reflection on what's working /not working:

- ☐ Audience is responding better to pain-point-focused headlines
- ☐ Ad creative with testimonials performed best
- ☐ Blog #2 ranked on page 2 in Google—will target long-tail keywords next time

### 5. Next Steps / Plan for Next Period

- ☐ Write blog post #3 (focused on feature comparisons)
- ☐ Launch Instagram Reels campaign
- ☐ A/B test two email subject lines for upcoming promo

### 6. Blockers / Support Needed

- ☐ Website traffic is light and inconsistent
- ☐ The new product line is very popular – we need to produce more
- ☐ We need product screenshots for blog #3
- ☐ We need someone on-staff who understands Google Advertising

## Here's To A Happy Ending!

Freelance marketers help marketing knights spread joy all across their corporate kingdoms by 1) Helping Knights Slay Competitive Dragons, 2) Helping Kings And Queens Increase Royal Treasuries, and 3) Spreading Happiness Around Marketing Roundtables.

This is how they do it:



### □ **Helping Knights Slay Competitive Dragons**

Good freelancers don't just help marketing knights get their work done. They help their knights win more competitive battles by providing niche expertise, pivoting more quickly than internal staff, bringing fresh ideas and insights that internal teams might miss and being on-call when campaigns scale up to reduce bloated overhead and maximize returns on marketing investments.

### □ **Helping Kings And Queens Increase Royal Treasuries**

Freelancers help kings and queens save more gold while still winning their competitive battles.

Freelancers require no salaries, benefits, office space, or equipment. They are paid only when needed. They provide often hard to come by technical expertise (think TikTok strategist or email wizard) without onboarding or training costs. And, many freelancers offer the same talent provided by agencies, but without the markup.

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### □ **Spreading Happiness Around Marketing Roundtables**

Freelancers are happiness engines, all around marketing round tables, when they handle mundane overflow work that frees internal teams to do more strategic, creative tasks that actually excite them.

They are happiness engines when they increase the speed of project turnarounds, which produces faster results and fuels team morale.

They are happiness engines when they bring new energy and ideas that spark joy (and innovation). And they are happiness engines when they help just make things happen without weeks of internal wrangling.

Freelancers help corporate kingdoms thrive when their contributions reduce stress, contribute to more wins, and help marketing staffers actually *enjoy* the process.

As I proposed in the Introduction to this White Paper, both in the days of King Arthur's court, and in today's corporate culture, knights fought and continue to fight their king and queen's competitive battles.

I am continuing to research and write about how today's knights are bringing marketing freelancers to lend a hand at their round tables. I would be delighted to share more about your competitive marketing experiences, and to lend a hand at your round table when and as that may be helpful.

Please contact me at [bob-roth@outlook.com](mailto:bob-roth@outlook.com).

## About The Author

Hi! I'm Bob Roth, (AKA Robert Roth, PhD). I am an enthusiastic freelance marketer and copywriter.



### For-Profit Experience

My work on behalf of for-profit organizations has generated several hundred million dollars in equity value while serving as:

- President and COO at Grand Canyon Railway
- Vice President Marketing for Del Webb Recreational Properties.
- Vice President Marketing for Radisson Hotels
- Director of National Advertising for Holiday Inns

[Read more](#) about my for-profit marketing work.

### Nonprofit Experience

My nonprofit marketing and copywriting work has engaged more than **100 million** people and raised more than **\$40 million**.

Some of the nonprofit and government organizations that I have been honored to serve include the Arizona Office of Tourism, American Humane Association, Arizona Small Business Association, Butte Opera House and City of Cripple Creek, CO, Coleville Tribes, Desert Stages Theatre, Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Sedona Chamber of Commerce, the Navajo Nation, and Utah Navajo Industries.

[Read more](#) about a few of my favorite nonprofit marketing campaigns.

### Thank You

Thank you for reading this White Paper and please do [Contact Me](#) at [bob-roth@outlook.com](mailto:bob-roth@outlook.com), if your organization needs a little (or maybe a lot of) support driving down marketing expense and increasing your return on digital marketing investments.

Dr. Bob